

BNSSG Healthier Together partnership update

Covid-19 Vaccination – key messages from the Clinical Delivery Group

Edition 5: 24 February 2021

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1. Vaccination programme overview

Message from Dr Tim Whittlestone, Clinical Lead for the NHS vaccination programme in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG):

In BNSSG we continue to steam ahead with vaccinating our 'at risk' populations and we can now see that over 90% of the population in cohorts 1-5 (that's everyone aged over 70 and the clinically extremely vulnerable groups) are now protected by the first dose of vaccine. It is very heartening to hear that our system is already seeing a reduction in hospital admissions for these age groups beyond what we would expect from national lockdown alone. In other words – vaccination works!

Cohort 6 is large and complex and includes three main groups:

- Those who have recently been identified as having enhanced risk of severe Covid-19 according to their [QCovid](#) risk score
- Individuals with a health issue that could potentially increase vulnerability to Covid-19
- Unpaid carers.

Our Primary Care Network (PCN) colleagues are now actively using their data systems to identify these groups and approach them to come forward for vaccination with those at greatest risk being called first. Personally, I think that cohort 6 is our most complex group and there is a danger that some individuals may feel they have been left out. We have set up a new reference group with doctors, nurses, managers and data experts who are helping us to ensure that we stick to the [Joint Committee on Vaccination Immunisation](#) (JCVI) guidance. I am delighted that individuals with learning difficulties are also included in cohort 6 and there is more on this below.

It has been a busy few weeks for our engagement teams. We were delighted to see Bristol for Muslims at Ashton Gate and to welcome community leaders at our PCN facilities (further detail below). We appreciate that some individuals will take a little longer to decide if vaccination is right for them and we will keep the offer of vaccination open.

Looking ahead, we will start to think about the future and the prospect of Covid-19 vaccination becoming an annual event. Over the coming weeks we will be opening up to broader consultation across our system to understand how this could be delivered to best serve our population.

2. Latest data

This week's vaccination data (25 February), which is published at Integrated Care System (ICS) level, shows that across BNSSG we have delivered 249,446 first doses to people in the top six priority groups with 32% of people over the age of 16 now vaccinated.

3. Vaccination of Unpaid Carers

As part of cohort 6, we are now vaccinating people with underlying health conditions and unpaid carers. Unpaid carers are defined as:

- People who are eligible for Carer's Allowance, or
- People who are the sole or main carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of Covid-19 mortality and is therefore clinically vulnerable.

To be eligible for vaccination as part of cohort 6, carers must deliver personal care to the individual at risk. **This does not include, for example, shopping or cleaning.**

Further information on Registered and Unregistered Carers is available in the FAQ section on the [Healthier Together website](#)

4. People with learning disabilities

In BNSSG we are offering the Covid-19 vaccine to people with mild, moderate, severe and profound learning disabilities as part of the cohort 6 vaccination rollout, if they have not already been offered it as part of an earlier cohort.

Those eligible will be contacted by their GP in the next few weeks to book their appointment. We will make as many reasonable adjustments as possible to appointment times, duration, and venue to encourage vaccination uptake, actively involving carers and other support staff as needed. We will also ensure that people have access to appropriate information about the vaccine and the process.

We have already vaccinated people with learning disabilities living in Care Quality Commission registered care homes as part of earlier priority groups.

5. Cohort 7

National booking letters are starting to be sent out by age group to people in cohort 7 (aged 60-64) inviting them to book their vaccination at Ashton Gate or a local pharmacy.

6. Our community engagement work

We are working closely with faith-led groups, charities, voluntary organisations and community groups to help build trust and vaccine uptake among these groups.

In the past week we welcomed community leaders from Muslims for Bristol at our Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre. As well as providing food for our volunteers and staff, the group were there to capture images and videos from their experience to reassure their local communities about the vaccine and the vaccination process. Our communications team joined the visit and captured messages from members of the group. See a video with Arif Khan, Chair of the Council for Bristol Mosques, [here](#).

We also hosted a clinic at East Trees Health Centre in Eastville where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community leaders were vaccinated. We have created seven videos of these leaders, which include local business owners, faith leaders and leaders of local community organisations, talking about how Covid-19 has affected them, any concerns they had about the vaccine and how they came to the decision to get it. We are working in partnership with the individuals and their communities to promote and share these videos.

7. Stop abuse campaign:

We are supporting our primary care colleagues who are experiencing an increase in abuse from people who are angry about not being able to book vaccination appointments, either because they are not yet eligible or because there are no places available in the planned clinics. The 'stop abuse' campaign includes social media assets and web copy for practices to use to reinforce the message that staff abuse will not be tolerated.

8. Thank you from Rachel Pearce

We have attached a thank you letter from Rachel Pearce, Senior Responsible Officer, South West Covid-19 Mass Vaccination Programme, for everyone's efforts across the health and social care system for their work in delivering the programme. More than a quarter of the population in the South West have now been vaccinated – well done to everyone involved!

Keeping in touch

The vaccination programme is a complex one and moving at pace – as such, we want to ensure you receive regular and relevant updates from the CDG and the wider programme team.

Please feel free to share any feedback or communication needs with the BNSSG CCG comms team: bnssg.communications@nhs.net



In the South West (SW) we've made a fantastic start to the vaccination programme with over 1.65 million people receiving a vaccination - that is over a quarter of our population.

This success has been down to everyone involved in the programme - from those of you who worked behind the scenes to set up sites and continue to support them operationally, to those on the front line welcoming the public and administering vaccinations.

I would like to recognise and value the incredible work you have all done and continue to do during these challenging and unprecedented times. We have come so far since the programme went live on 8 December and we now have 168 sites in our region offering life-saving vaccines as part of the national drive to protect the public from the virus.

We have been working since September last year to enable our first hospital hub sites to go live in the region with Southmead Hospital in Bristol, Derriford Hospital in Plymouth and Yeovil District Hospital leading the way. We now have 21 hospital hubs, 10 large vaccination centres and 112 primary care networks (PCNs) giving out the vaccine to those in the eligible cohorts.

Sitting at the heart of communities, pharmacies and PCNs will continue to play a key role as we move through the cohorts and begin to deliver second doses. Last month, we saw 25 pharmacies across the South West join the vaccination roll-out. Throughout the next few months we will see more pharmacies standing up to make it easier for our population to access a vaccination service.

The support for the NHS has been incredible and we can be rightly proud of the partnership working that is evident across the region. With Local Authorities providing staff and transport, with business owners giving up premises and stories of catering companies supplying the workforce with free food and treats. We've also had stories of individuals who have their reasons for coming forward to support the programme, from volunteers helping the operation run smoothly to retired NHS staff coming back to give the vaccine. We are pulling in the same direction to make our way through the cohorts so that we can protect people from serious illness.

Keeping up the momentum

After such a strong start, we must keep up the momentum. This month we entered a new phase and began vaccinating people in cohort 5— those aged 65 -69, and cohort 6 - those aged 16-64 with underlying health conditions and carers. This represents a further 1m people in the SW. We will then move to vaccinate cohorts 7-9 in line with the government promise that by the end April everyone would have been offered a first dose.

There is no doubt that there is still so much more to do as we continue to drive forward the vaccination programme in the region, but we can take so many positives from the progress we have already made.

The response from the public in terms of coming forward and supporting the vaccination programme has been incredible. We've had over 10,000 people come forward for both volunteer and paid roles.

This is very much a marathon and not a sprint and I'm sure we will need everyone's support as we move increase the number of vaccinations we are giving. For those who are yet to be assigned, I want to thank you for your patience and ongoing support.

Once again, I thank you for your tireless dedication in reaching this key milestone. I am inspired by your professional and personal commitment to making a difference and ensuring that we save as many lives as possible.

Rachel Pearce

Rachel Pearce

Senior Responsible Officer, South West Covid-19 Mass Vaccination Programme