

## Media Release

**Date: 26 February 2021**

### COVID-19 Vaccination Update #2

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It is just over a month since our last vaccination programme update and we have now delivered over 21,000 doses of vaccine.

The vaccination programme is being delivered by a number of different teams. Our Community Nursing Teams have been involved in the vaccination of health and care workers and have also commenced a home visiting service to those eligible for the vaccine who are housebound and their carers.

Our colleagues in Primary Care have ensured that nearly all care home staff and residents and all those aged over 80yrs have received both doses of the vaccine and continue to deliver the vaccine to those classed as extremely clinically vulnerable. If you believe you should have been included in the over 80yrs or extremely clinically vulnerable groups and have not been offered a date for your vaccine yet, please contact your GP for more information. Details of those classed as extremely clinically vulnerable can be found here: <https://covid19.gov.gg/guidance/vaccine/eligibility>

The Community Vaccination Centre continues to deliver the vaccine on a large scale. Invitation letters have been sent to the 65-70 year olds (cohort 5), which means that we have attempted to make contact with everyone in priority groups 1 to 5 to invite them to make an appointment for their vaccine. That said, almost a third of people that have been contacted have yet to book their appointment. This could include some people that don't want a vaccine, but it could otherwise include those that have recently changed address which might mean we may have their wrong contact details on file.

If you were 65 or over before January 2021 and believe that you have been missed, please contact the Vaccination helpline on 707607.

The data set we are using to invite people for vaccination appointments comes from our Primary Care colleagues. If you are ordinarily resident in the Bailiwick but not registered with a GP you should consider doing so and then speak to them about passing on your details so you can be included in this vaccination programme.

Due to a recent change in guidance regarding the gap between the first and second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, we have been moving c5000 2<sup>nd</sup> dose appointments to reflect a 10 week gap rather than a 6 week gap. By next week everyone who called to book their vaccine appointments BEFORE 12 February who should have received their new appointment letter. Anyone who called after the 12 February and is receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine will already be on the 10 week schedule,

### **Facts about the vaccine:**

The two vaccines that are currently available, AstraZeneca and Pfizer BioNTech, will save lives and reduce hospitalisation. The development of the vaccine focussed on prevention of people dying from COVID-19 or becoming extremely unwell and immunising those most at risk of morbidity and mortality from a COVID-19 infection continues to be the main aim of phase one of the vaccination programme.

What we don't have the evidence for yet is the length of the protection the vaccine offers. . Once we have more data about how the vaccines perform, we will know the best way to use them to save lives. For example, we may need to provide 'boosters' as we do in other vaccination programmes.

Some people have asked whether they need to have the vaccine if they have already had COVID-19. The answer to this is YES. If you are an identified priority group, the JCVI have concluded that getting vaccinated is just as important for those who have already had COVID-19 as it is for those who haven't.

You may experience some side-effects from the vaccine. Most of these are mild and short-term, lasting no longer than a week, and not everyone gets them. These may include:

- A sore arm where the needle went in
- Feeling tired
- A headache
- Feeling achy
- Feeling or being sick

Please remember that the vaccine CANNOT give you COVID-19 as it DOES NOT include any live vaccine.

As Dr Brink said at the media briefing on Wednesday, more and more evidence is emerging about how the vaccines might reduce transmission of the virus. However, if you become infected, you CAN still infect others once you have been vaccinated and you should continue to follow the guidance on social distancing, wearing face coverings and washing your hands

frequently. As we know that people can still transmit the virus after vaccination we still have measures in place to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

For example, visits to care homes are still restricted. We know this is a decision that causes distress for the residents and their families. This is being kept under constant review but we have to protect the residents and the staff who have to care for them. Vaccines are not 100% effective and some people will still contract COVID-19 – albeit they are likely to be less unwell and less likely to require hospital treatment. If care home staff become infected with COVID-19 (despite being vaccinated) care homes would be unable to provide the right level of care for its residents. We have already seen this with one care home who had to temporarily move their residents to the PEH whilst their staff recovered.

#### **Vaccine fiction:**

There is a lot of information online that is misleading. False information can lead to health scares, false accusations and potentially damaging hoax stories. It is important that you look at reliable sources of information online and don't contribute to the spread of harmful content by sharing information online.

The UK Government has developed a SHARE checklist to make sure you are not inadvertently believing and then sharing harmful content. Full details can be found here: <https://sharechecklist.gov.uk> This checklist is not only useful when looking at information about COVID-19 vaccines, it is a useful tool for all information you are searching for on the internet.

#### **Supply of vaccine:**

We are allocated a proportion of the UK's allocation of COVID-19 vaccine based on our population size.

The vaccine is sent to us in batches depending on how many are being received in the UK each week. This means that some weeks we will receive a large number of doses, and other weeks we receive far fewer. As we have said many times, we could run the Community Vaccination Centre 7 days a week if we needed to but we are entirely dependent on the supply of the vaccine.

This can be seen in our vaccination statistics updates. The most recent one shows that a much lower number of doses was delivered over the last week or so compared to previous weeks.

We are running a 'just-in-time' vaccination programme. As soon as we receive the vaccine we have appointments scheduled to use that vaccine as quickly as possible. We are, however, reliant on the supply of vaccine being received in the UK and then dispatched to

the Bailiwick. Unfortunately supplies are sometimes delayed either into the UK on onwards to Guernsey for various reasons which may result in appointments being re-scheduled at the last minute.

### **Transport to the Community Vaccination Centre:**

We are aware that there are some individuals in our community who have not taken up the offer of a vaccine because they are unable to get to the Community Vaccination Centre. The following transport options are available:

- You can drive yourself.
- A member of your household can drive you.
- A friend or family member (not from your household) can drive you. You must both wear masks. You must sit in the back seat with the windows open.
- You can cycle or walk yourself, if it is convenient for you and you feel confident in doing so.

If none of the above options are available to you then it is also possible to make use of the following services:

- St John has a pool of volunteer drivers who can arrange to pick you up and drop you home. All the necessary safety and infection control measures are in place to ensure you are not put at risk. If you wish to use this service, please call 727129 or email [transport@stjohn.gg](mailto:transport@stjohn.gg)
- Health Connections runs a Voluntary Transport Service who can assist in getting Islanders to and from their vaccination appointments. For more info, please call 01481 747227 or email [transport@healthconnections.gg](mailto:transport@healthconnections.gg)
- You can book a taxi to pick you up, wait for you outside while you are in the CVC, and then deliver you home. Standard taxi charges will apply for this service. Again, all the necessary safety and infection control measures are in place.
- While it is the least recommended option with regard to your own safety, the scheduled bus service may also be used.

Further details can be found here: <https://covid19.gov.gg/guidance/vaccine>

**Ends**