

## Frequently asked questions

### **Vaccine development**

#### **What vaccine will I get and when will it be available?**

We don't know this yet. While there are a number of different vaccines being developed and trialled, we don't yet know which will be approved for use by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), or when this might happen for each. The MHRA will also decide how and where vaccines can be used. We expect that one or more will be available in early 2021 but there is a chance they could be ready before the end of the year so we are working to be ready for that.

#### **How can we be confident that the new Covid-19 vaccines will be safe?**

The NHS will not offer Covid-19 vaccinations until it is safe to do so and a vaccine has proved to be safe, effective and in the best interests of the public. All vaccines have to pass strict safety tests and be approved by the MHRA, which is the independent UK regulator for medicines and vaccines. The amount of money and resources that have been invested globally in developing a vaccine is unprecedented and has enabled this to happen much faster than usual. However, the vaccines will still have to go through all the usual safety processes and evaluation. The MHRA has prioritised the review of Covid vaccines and agreed to receive data throughout the trials to speed up their review process, but it will still be carrying out a full assessment to make sure that any vaccine is safe, high quality and effective before it will approve its use.

Further information about how vaccines are tested, licensed and monitored is available on the Vaccine Knowledge Project website. This website provides independent information about vaccines and meets the World Health Organisation's criteria for providing high quality information.

### **Who will get the vaccine**

#### **Who will get the vaccine first and why?**

Like seasonal flu, it is important that certain groups who might be more vulnerable receive their vaccination first. The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is responsible for advising the Government on the priority groups to receive the vaccine based on the latest clinical and scientific data. Currently, the JCVI is advising that vaccines should first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people aged over 80 and health and social care workers, before being rolled out to the rest of the population in order of age and risk.

The JCVI will continue to update this advice as pharmaceutical companies provide more information on conditions for use of any vaccines and more information becomes available on vaccine effectiveness, safety and clinical characteristics. This will in turn be reflected in the NHS's plans.

The JCVI's latest recommendations are available [here](#).

### **How are you ensuring a fair and ethical approach to who gets vaccinated?**

We are following the guidance from the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on who should receive the vaccine first, which is based on the latest clinical and scientific information. There are also extensive preparations underway to ensure people across the country can access a vaccine, regardless of where they live and to make sure all communities have the information they need and understand how to access a Covid-19 vaccination.

### **What about key workers?**

The government is working to plan for key workers in sectors such as education, public services, transport, national security, food and other necessary goods industries who all provide vital services.

### **Planning and delivery**

#### **How will the NHS deliver the vaccine when it is available?**

At a national, regional and local level, the NHS, local authorities, voluntary and community sector partners and government organisations are working together to ensure we are ready to offer people a Covid-19 vaccination as soon as one becomes available.

Detailed planning is underway, building on the expertise and strong track record the NHS already has in delivering immunisations like the annual flu vaccination programme, to ensure that a COVID-19 vaccination programme does not impact on other vital services. This includes considering the vaccines' storage and delivery requirements, as well as ensuring the NHS has developed different ways to provide the vaccine to priority groups as soon as possible.

As clinical trials progress and we understand more about the requirements of the vaccine, we will continue to refine our plans to ensure we have the right resources in the right place.

#### **Where will people be able to get the vaccine?**

We don't have a confirmed vaccine yet or know exactly how the potential vaccines will need to be stored, distributed or administered so extensive planning is underway for a number of different scenarios. We are building on the excellent models we have for delivering the flu vaccine: primary care will play a key role in achieving this and we are aiming to deliver vaccinations in a range of community and primary care locations, plus new dedicated vaccination centres, which can carry out large numbers of vaccinations. Planning will factor in the differences in geography and communities where people live and access to public and private transport to make sure people are able to get a vaccine as easily as possible.

#### **Will the NHS be ready if a vaccine is approved before 2021?**

Yes. The Government has asked the NHS to be ready to deliver a Covid-19 vaccine from the start of December, should one or more become available. We are continuing to refine our plans so that we will be ready to mobilise and offer vaccinations as soon as a vaccine is approved.

#### **How will vaccine services be staffed and will there be enough people to deliver the vaccines?**

Vaccinating millions of people as quickly as possible, while keeping other important services going, will require the recruitment of thousands of additional vaccinators.

The NHS is working with local employers as well as national partners to initially redeploy as many trained and experienced vaccinators as possible, including those working in primary care. Experienced vaccinators working for NHS trusts and other employers will also be among the first to help deliver the vaccine. We will also be offering opportunities to former NHS staff who signed up to help the NHS during the first wave.

In addition, we are working with NHS Professionals to identify people with the right skills to become vaccinators and provide any extra training required. Third sector partners, led by St John Ambulance, will also help recruit the important non-clinical support roles we will need to ensure clinics run safely and smoothly, as well as some volunteer vaccinators.

### **What training will vaccinators receive?**

Patient safety is paramount and all staff providing vaccinations will be fully trained to do so. Staff who have already trained as vaccinators will receive additional training on delivering the Covid-19 vaccines and full vaccination training will be given to all other health professionals who will be supporting the vaccine programme. Public Health England will continue to be responsible for vaccination training and all training will be followed by strict assessment and continuous supervision.

### **How will health and social care staff get the vaccine?**

We are working with employers and staff representatives to establish the best way to ensure that health and social care staff can get vaccinated as soon as possible. As is currently the case with the seasonal flu staff vaccination campaign, this is likely to be mainly led by individual employers, with additional arrangements in place for social care staff.

### **How is the NHS ensuring residents in care homes and care workers will have access to the vaccine?**

Significant work is underway to ensure residents and staff of residential, care and nursing homes across the country can have quick and easy access to a vaccination as a priority. Planning is happening at local, regional and national levels to ensure we get this right.

The NHS is also working in partnership with Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and representatives from care agencies to ensure plans take account of the needs of overnight as well as day centre residents. For this group, the NHS will organise for experienced vaccinators to visit residents where they live, working closely with care home managers, to ensure they along with staff, have the easiest possible access.

### **How will the NHS make it easy for social care workers to access the vaccine?**

Social care workers, along with healthcare workers, will be one of the first groups to be offered a Covid-19 vaccination. As with current plans for residential, care and nursing homes, the NHS is working with local authorities, employers and DHSC to agree an approach that will make it as easy as possible for care workers to book a vaccine.

### **How can you be sure these delivery models will work?**

We are building on tried and tested approaches such as those used for the flu vaccination so are confident our plans will work. In addition a series of tests and practice exercises nationally has helped to refine and improve plans and build in feedback from a range of voices, including volunteer members of the public, GPs, NHS partners, Royal College of Nursing and health service operations teams.