

## **IMPORTANT MESSAGE for care homes about COVID-19 vaccinations**

The UK Government has asked the NHS Vaccination Service to prioritise the delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations to ALL older people who are living in a care home and care home staff by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

The task to vaccinate over 4000 care home residents and twice as many staff across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin is significant but please be reassured that GP practices will be in touch directly with you to plan the roll-out in your care home as soon as they are ready.

Following extensive trials, two effective vaccines for COVID-19 are now available. Strict approval processes mean that all approved vaccines have met strict safety standards and are our best defence against the virus.

By providing vaccinations, your care home will be playing its part in protecting all residents and staff from catching and spreading the virus, as well as helping the national response to the pandemic.

Through local arrangement with the Primary Care Network, staff can receive the vaccination at your care home or in a hospital or community setting. All residents will receive the vaccination in the care home.

We will continue to share further information as it becomes available.

### **Staff COVID-19 vaccinations that have already taken place**

The Department of Health and Social Care have recommended that the second dose of the Pfizer BioNtech vaccine should now be scheduled for after 3 weeks of the initial dose and before 12 weeks. This means that if your staff were vaccinated at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and are due their second dose after the 4<sup>th</sup> January, they will now receive a rescheduled appointment for later in the month.

### **How can you prepare?**

#### **1. Leaflets**

Public Health England (PHE) has developed [leaflets](#) to support the vaccination programme and inform patients and staff about the vaccine. You should have received the following materials:

- Guide for older adults;
- What to expect after vaccination;
- Guide for healthcare workers (if vaccinating staff)
- Guide for social care workers – for social care staff
- Guide to COVID-19 vaccination for women of childbearing age, who are pregnant or currently breastfeeding.

Please ensure that these leaflets are made available to residents, their families, and staff. Although fully trained staff from the Primary Care Network will be administering the vaccine, it is advisable that your staff are familiar with their content to help answer questions from residents.

#### **2. Consent**

Three separate [consent forms](#) have been developed to obtain informed consent or agreement for residents prior to the vaccine being given. GP practices will need your support in getting consent as soon as possible, preferably directly from your residents, but where this is not possible from those who have power of attorney, or through a best interest decision. There is a separate consent form for care home staff.

For the consenting process care homes should share information with residents and their families and arrange the residents into three groups:

- Capacity for decision
- Require attorney
- Best interest decision

These consenting discussions should be recorded in a log and shared with the vaccination team.

Further information on consent and best interest decisions are available in the [guidance for healthcare practitioners](#) and in the [COVID-19 vaccination training slide set](#).

### **3. Environment**

To deliver the vaccine safely you need a suitable space and setup for all parts of the vaccination process, including:

- An area for diluting and mixing the vaccine; a room for vaccinating; and an area for observation.
- Supporting patient flow around the care home to enable social distancing for residents and minimising delay between vaccinations.

Click on the document below to read a local press release about the vaccine roll-out in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin:



Thank you for all your work throughout the pandemic and the challenges it has presented. We know this has been very demanding and we really appreciate your continued efforts to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.