

UPDATE FROM Dr Mark Howcutt 07/01/2021

Tuesday was an exciting day as we had our first look at the Aylesbury vaccination hub at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Guttman Road, Aylesbury, HP21 9PP. Setting this up has been a difficult task. As we and our Patient Participation Group (PPG) have described before, the logistics for these new vaccines are very difficult. Just as COVID is not "just flu", the COVID vaccines are also much more complex than flu jabs. This hub has been made possible by weeks of work by GP practices across the Aylesbury Vale, led by Dr Sajid Zaib of Oakfield Surgery, with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, and a group of enthusiastic volunteers including Brian Rogers from our own PPG.

Vaccinations will start next week and we will roll them out as quickly as possible. Our staff will be working at the vaccination hub. As this will include clinical and non-clinical staff, please be aware that there will be fewer staff on site at the medical centre than normal and we appreciate your patience.

We know you are impatient for vaccination - we want you to have it too! But please be patient - this will take time. We do not have an unlimited supply of the vaccine. The amount of vaccine we receive, and the timings of those deliveries are not under our control. The Government has set an ambitious target of vaccinating patients in our top four at-risk groups by mid-February. For our practice alone, this is about 1700 patients. We can do this, but it will be a big challenge. There is a strict policy determining who will be offered the vaccine first. This is devised by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and not by us. This policy is designed to ensure that people receive the vaccine quickly but fairly, according to their risks of harm from the virus. Please be aware we cannot overrule this or bump people up the queue.

As we need to invite patients at short notice to coincide with the deliveries of the vaccine, we will ring patients initially. You will not be sent a letter. We will call patients twice but will need to fill the appointments quickly once we know the vaccine is due to be delivered. The vaccine needs to be used in a short period of time so we cannot hold on for people. Calling people will take reception and admin staff away from their normal duties so please be patient when ringing or contacting the reception team. We hope over time to be able to use technology such as text messaging and online booking systems but, for now, we just need to get going.

Please start thinking about your transport options as the appointment may be at short notice. You will only be able to enter the centre 5 minutes before your appointment and if you arrive early you will need to wait in your car. The appointment should take approximately 30 minutes and you will not be able to wait inside the building after your appointment for transport to collect you due to the social distancing requirements. The PPG and parish councils have been looking at options for patients who do not have access to transport. Patients living in Haddenham can contact the FISH scheme Jeanne Watt - 291337 and Alison Green - 292088. We are collating contact details for other parishes and will give patients the information when we ring to book the appointment. The Haddenham Community Vehicle "Carrie" is available to all patients within our catchment area and the co-ordinator is David Hammond and the contact number for HCV is 07495 366779 or email haddenhamcv@gmail.com All patients will need to wear a mask for their vaccination appointment.

We know that many people would prefer to come to the practice for their vaccination but at the moment this is not possible because of the need to store the Pfizer vaccination at very cold temperatures and to use it quickly once it has thawed. We hope that the Oxford vaccine will be available to practices in the future and we are already planning to jab people in Haddenham as soon as we get the green light. However, don't wait for this to happen. It is very important that you take the

appointment if offered at the Aylesbury hub as we do not know if or when we would be able to offer a vaccination at the medical centre. We will not keep a waiting list.

Please take extra care during the new lockdown. Remember: "hands, face, space and replace" - continue to wash your hands regularly, use a face mask, make space (aiming to keep at least 2 metres away from others), and replace the air in your indoor spaces with good ventilation.

This will be a more difficult time again for everyone with the added stresses that comes with another lockdown. We are all fed up with this, some are frustrated or stressed, and many of us working in health and social care are tired. So please remember to be kind to yourself during this stressful time and look out for those around you, especially those vulnerable in our community. If you feel you need more help with your mental health during the pandemic, please remember that there is a telephone helpline available:

Adult helpline: 01865 904997

Children and Young People helpline: 01865 904998 The lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.