



Monday 13th December 2021

Communication to patients

The Prime Minister announced last night that all eligible patients (those over 18) would receive their Booster Jab this year. At this stage we are not clear whether there is enough capacity in the system for this to be achieved and, if so, how it will be achieved. We are clear that it cannot be achieved without some fundamental changes to current workload. Practices involved in the Booster campaign cannot, at the same time, deal with demand for appointments, and they will have to introduce some form of total triage and workload prioritisation. This in turn may lead to more complaints and aggression from patients and there needs to be a major national initiative to get a message out to patients to curtail their expectations.

We are also not clear what is expected over the Christmas period.

As the situation becomes clearer, both nationally and through local discussions, we will update our advice to you. There is a NHSEI webinar taking place this afternoon which may bring some clarity. In the meantime, here is a 'crib sheet' for you to adapt to your local circumstances which may help you manage queries from patients (with thanks from Sussex LMC).

There are three parts to this:

1. Key points for reception teams / answer phones
2. Website text
3. Text message for those who are eligible for the booster – please share this today with all registered patients aged 18 and over. The CCGs will cover the cost of this, so please share this text as soon as possible.

Key messages for reception teams

About vaccination appointments:

- Thank you for your interest in your vaccination
- Vaccination services are working extremely hard to roll out the booster programme and to make as many appointments available as possible
- After last night's announcement the national booking system website is very busy but please keep checking. **More appointments will be added from Wednesday 15 December.** You may also be contacted by your local service over the next few days
- You must be 2 months from the date of your second vaccination to arrange your booster – and you will be able to have it when you are three months from your second vaccination
- The best step if you are at 2 months from the date of your second vaccination is to go on the National Booking System website or call 119 where you will be able to see all available appointments. More appointments are added every day. If you can't see a local service, try later in the day or the following day
- All the vaccination services are working at pace to increase the number of appointments they can offer.

About GP appointments:

- Unless you hear from us, your appointment will continue as planned
- If we need to change anything, we will make direct contact with you
- We understand that NHS England will be issuing further guidance shortly and we will be having further discussions about what may need to happen to support the vaccination programme but at this current time there is no change to your planned appointment.

Website text

Message to our patients – update on the COVID-19 booster programme

The NHS and its partners are working extremely hard to roll out the COVID-19 booster vaccination programme to our communities.

All adults are eligible from Monday 13 December, and you will be able to book via the National Booking System from Wednesday 15 December.

Please do not contact the practice over any vaccination queries or try to book through the practice as this will stop patients with medical conditions being able to get through.

You can book your booster for 3 months from the date of second vaccine, and you can access the National Booking System to book the appointment from 2 months.

We are working at pace to increase the availability of appointments so that there are plenty of options for people on the National Booking System. Some local vaccination services will also contact patients directly.

New appointments are being added every day across our vaccination services. Further availability will come online from Wednesday 15 December.

We will be working with all our sites to take further steps to increase what they can offer again, including opening later and on more days.

All these appointments will be added to the National Booking System. We encourage everyone who is aged 18 and over, is yet to have their booster and who is approaching 3 months from your second vaccine to use the National Booking System to arrange your appointment when you are able to do so.

In terms of any planned appointments with <insert name of the GP practice>, there are no changes at the current time, and everyone should attend your planned appointments as normal. If we need to make any changes, we will contact you directly.

See more about the vaccination programme in <insert name of region>, including the vaccination services: <insert local website link>

Text template

All adults are now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination booster at three months from the date of your second vaccine.

If you have not yet had your booster, you can use the National Booking System from Wednesday 15 December.

Please do not contact the practice over any vaccination queries or try to book through the practice as this will stop patients with medical conditions being able to get through.

New appointments are being added every day. Please keep checking the website or call 119. You may also be contacted by your local service over the next few days.