

Protect yourself, others and the NHS

## Update on fighting coronavirus in Buckinghamshire



*19 January 2021*

Dear Resident,

The COVID-19 vaccine programme has gathered pace since I last wrote and I wanted to update you on the latest news:

- **Nearly 20,000 Bucks residents have now received their COVID-19 vaccine**
- **All Buckinghamshire residents aged 80 and above will be offered a vaccine appointment through their GP in the next fortnight**
- **All Buckinghamshire residents aged 70 and above will be offered a vaccine appointment through their GP in the next four weeks**

I know many of you have been anxious hearing about people elsewhere who've already been vaccinated so I want to reassure you that there is now capacity to deliver the vaccine across the whole county. In the south we have a new GP led site opening in Burnham next week and in the north GPs have opened their vaccine hub in Buckingham today (Tuesday). There is also now a new mass vaccination site close by, in Slough. All of this means far more Buckinghamshire residents will now be offered vaccine appointments.

Please remember that this programme is being delivered by the NHS and not the Council. We have been playing catch up with our neighbours to some extent but you will now see real pace in terms of the numbers being vaccinated here so please don't worry - if you are expecting a vaccine and haven't already heard anything yet, you will do very soon.

### **How will I get my vaccine?**

Buckinghamshire residents are being invited for their vaccines in several ways:

- via their GP, and/or

- via a letter from the NHS nationally, inviting them to book an appointment via the national booking system at either at a mass vaccination site, such as Slough, if they live within 45 minutes, or a local pharmacy led site

If you work in the health or care sectors you will be offered a vaccine through a hospital site. Residents who live in care homes or who are housebound will be offered a vaccine through their GP.

***Residents can choose whether they want to book via the national system if they get an NHS letter, or wait to get their GP appointment. If you decline a national appointment you'll still be offered one from your own GP practice.***

### **GP vaccine appointments**

Your GP will contact you directly when it's your turn for the vaccine. You won't go to your own surgery to get your jab; instead GPs have formed 9 local 'hubs' where they're giving the vaccines. Eight of these are already open and are vaccinating patients, working through [the priority list](#). You can find out which hub your surgery is linked to [here on our website](#).

### **Where to get more information about the COVID-19 vaccine**

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective and it is the very best way to protect you from getting sick from COVID-19. Some scare stories and myths are circulating about the vaccine. **It's crucial that if you do want to know more about the COVID-19 vaccine that you get your information from a reliable source such as [the NHS website](#).**

I do want to make some really important points:

- The COVID-19 vaccine, like all vaccines in the UK, has been approved for use after meeting the strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
- More than 4 million people have been vaccinated in the UK so far and reports of any serious side effects such as allergic reactions have been very rare
- The COVID- 19 vaccine **does not contain any egg or any animal products**

You can read more about the COVID-19 vaccine and the roll out on [the Buckinghamshire Council website too](#), including the answers to many of the frequently asked questions.

Please be aware too that **no vaccine is being wasted or discarded in Buckinghamshire at the end of each day**. Standby lists of vulnerable patients are in use to make sure any vaccines left over from missed appointments do not go to waste.

**Please be alert to scammers too;** sadly there are some people trying to take advantage of this situation. The NHS will:

- **NEVER** ask for payment – the vaccine is free
- **NEVER** ask for bank details
- **NEVER** arrive at your home unannounced to give you a vaccine
- **NEVER** ask you to prove your identity by asking you to send documents like your passport

### **Support for businesses**

If your business has had to close due to lockdown you can apply to the Local Restrictions Support Grant fund to get financial help. If you don't qualify for this scheme, don't worry, there is also a discretionary Buckinghamshire Additional Restriction Scheme you can apply to if your business has been severely impacted by the restrictions. [Please check our website for all the detail](#). We've paid out more than £16 million to local businesses so far from these schemes, which have been updated to reflect the most recent lockdown.

### **Stay at home**

We remain in a national lockdown and while there are signs that COVID-19 case numbers are starting to fall, the number of new infections is still very high and the pressure on the health service is intense. Even if you have had your first vaccine dose, you may still be able to transmit the virus to others so you must still follow the current rules even if you have been vaccinated.

It all means that for now, we have to **stay at home** unless it's necessary to leave for one of the legally permitted reasons. [Here are the full details of the circumstances in which you can leave your home](#).

You can see the latest Buckinghamshire case data on our [COVID-19 dashboard](#) and [local case numbers via the Government's website](#). You can also keep up to date with the latest information via our social media channels on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

The vaccination programme gives us real light at the end of the tunnel and we will get there. In the meantime, if you're finding things tough, do your best to look after yourself; eat well, make the most of your daily exercise opportunity and if you need some extra help then remember that local support services are out there - please check the [Health and Wellbeing Bucks](#) website.

Look after yourselves and each other,

**Martin Tett**

Leader of Buckinghamshire Council



**Buckinghamshire  
Council**



**Stay safe, protect Bucks**

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Buckinghamshire Council  
The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF  
[buckinghamshire.gov.uk](http://buckinghamshire.gov.uk)