February 2021

**Personal Assistant Vaccinations: Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Can eligible staff or carers who live in other areas of the UK have their Suffolk priority transferred to that area?

Suffolk is able to offer the vaccine and prioritise eligible Suffolk provider staff and carers. We have made this local arrangement with Public Health, so carers have the choice to travel to West Suffolk Hospital, Ipswich Hospital or James Paget Hospital if they can safely and appropriately do so.

If eligible staff and carers live at a significant distance and not close to the borders of Suffolk, they will have to wait for whatever the local arrangements are, in their area.

2. Can we attend a local vaccination centre nearer to where we live?

All eligible provider staff, and personal assistants/ carers employed through the direct payments system are prioritised and will be offered the vaccine alongside other social care staff, as above. If your local surgery is offering vaccinations to you as you also fall into another priority group you are able to attend the surgery. If this is the case please do not book a hospital slot, as someone else will be able to use this.

3. I have been contacted directly by my hospital or GP surgery and offered a vaccination. Where should I attend?

Please ensure that you book where is most convenient for you. It is important that you do not make two appointments, as many people will be trying to book.

4. Can eligible staff and carers book other family members using the booking form?

No, this is not possible as the priority list is for frontline health and social care staff, and those employed via direct payments to care for vulnerable adults. We would please ask you not to book other family members, as you will be turned away. All hospitals will hold a list of eligible people.

5. Who is my line manager when completing the booking form if I am a personal assistant/carer employed via direct payments to support a vulnerable child or adult?

When completing the booking form, ignore the employee number section or put N/A as you won’t have one. For “Line manager” please put down Carer Personal Assistant Mailbox - CarerPA@suffolk.gov.uk as this results in a confirmation email being generated and sent to that person, with details of your appointment dates so that they can support you.

When you put Carer Personal Assistant Mailbox as the line manager, the person opening the mailbox will then receive confirmation that you are booked on and can keep a record of this.

6. Is the vaccine mandatory?

The offer of the vaccine is available to eligible frontline health and social care staff, and those employed to care for vulnerable adults via direct payments- but is not mandatory. However, if you do not wish to have the vaccine, this may impact on your ability to care for adults and to support them in all areas of their lives.

7. What do I need to take to the appointment as confirmation of booking and ID?

You must take a copy of the eligibility letter emailed/posted to you, and if you have it an ID badge. If you do not have an ID badge, please take some form of photographic identification e.g. passport or driving licence.

8. The booking form keeps saying there are no appointments available. What should I do?

New appointment slots are being added regularly. Due to limited availability, these slots are being booked quickly so please keep checking.

9. If I have tested positive for COVID do I have to wait before being vaccinated and if so for how long for?

You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you are self-isolating or ill.

Ideally vaccination should be deferred until clinical recovery - around four weeks after the onset of symptoms or four weeks from the first confirmed positive specimen in those who are asymptomatic. There is no evidence of any safety concerns from vaccinating individuals with a history of COVID-19 infection, or with detectable COVID-19 antibody.

10. If you are a close contact and are self-isolating should you attend your vaccine appointment?

You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you are self-isolating. You will need to cancel and re-book your appointment.

11. If you have had a vaccine and after two weeks or more you experience COVID-19 symptoms should you still get a test/self-isolate?

Yes. You may still become infected even after vaccination. Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and arrange testing.

12. If I have regular testing at work do I still need to continue to be tested if I have been vaccinated?

You may still become infected after vaccination, although you should be less likely to develop a severe illness. You will still need to follow the guidance in your workplace, including wearing the correct personal protection equipment and taking part in any testing programmes. See :- COVID-19 vaccination: guide for older adults.

13. Where can I get further information on the vaccine?

Please read the links in the eligibility letter sent to you. If you do not have digital access, please contact Helen Robinson 01473 260354 who will be able to share the information with you.