

Board of Directors

Briefing Paper – Covid Vaccination Service

The Covid Vaccination Service in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin started on Tuesday 8th December, after MHRA authorised with new, stringent processes to ensure safe delivery of the PfizerBioNTech vaccine, with the first patient vaccinated on Thursday 10th December. The breath of the programme and the timescales involved are extremely challenging, but the programme is a true whole-system approach, involving healthcare and Local Authority teams. For every local system, a lead provider has been identified. Within Shropshire Telford and Wrekin, SATH was identified, since the Trust is able to receive the vaccinations to Pharmacy hubs with the specialist ability to store vaccines at super- cold storage requirements. Work has been led nationally on the governance processes and clinical procedures associated with the vaccination programme, and the Trust and system has adopted these.

Phased vaccine supply means that the bulk of vaccination for high risk groups will inevitably take place between January and April. The national message is that great vigilance is still required before then to prevent a third wave of Covid. All those vaccinated will need a booster jab 21 days later. The NHS will contact people in the nationally-announced priority cohort groups from the JCVI- with the first cohorts for over 80s and care home staff and residents, when it is their turn to receive the vaccine. Patient-facing health and care staff are also in the high priority cohort groups because of their heightened risk of exposure to the virus. Any appointments not used for the initial groups will be used for healthcare workers who are at highest risk of serious illness from covid.

Although the Pfizer vaccine is typically delivered by a simple injection in the shoulder it is complex to move, store and prepare. It needs to be stored at -70C before being thawed out and can only be moved four times within that cold chain, beginning in Belgium before being used. Therefore, we began delivery from a “Hospital Hub” (at the Shrewsbury Hospital site) followed by GP-led Local Vaccination Services from the week of 14th December. The Shrewsbury site is now providing on average 250 vaccines per day in a 12 hour shift (8 am-8pm). More hubs, centres and GP practices will join on a phased basis in the coming weeks as vaccine supply allows.

The NHS has rapidly put in place new delivery channels tailored to the particular logistical requirements of the first Covid vaccine to be approved:

- Hospital Hubs: NHS trusts will act as hospital hubs where patients and staff can be vaccinated on site. These hubs are where we know the Pfizer vaccine can be stored safely. In the local system, following on from the Shrewsbury hospital site, more hospital hubs will come on line in January.

- Local Vaccination Services: To make it as easy as possible for those who are eligible to access a vaccination safely, Local Vaccination Services will also be available. These community and primary care-led services will include GP practices.
- Vaccination Centres: The NHS will also establish vaccination centres, where large numbers of people will be able to go and get a jab. The first will open at the Telford International Centre in the early New Year, and will offer the physical space to deal with large numbers of people while maintaining social distancing.

Clinical Safety and Effectiveness

- The RSH SECC vaccination hub has medical oversight by at least one senior doctor (GP, Consultant or senior SAS doctor, complemented by further senior doctors or trainee doctors daily.
- Now that the vaccine can be given without a prescription under PGD (patient group direction), the doctors consent the patients and are available for questions by patients and other healthcare staff – this speeds up the process and ensure higher rate of vaccination in those with relative contraindications.
- Care is taken to safely transfer the vaccine from the specialised freezer to SECC and also to carefully draw up the right doses from the vials without interruptions – very little wastage has occurred so far.
- The vaccine is given by IM injection currently by trained nurses – this may change in the near future with a change in protocol imminent to ensure faster progress and rollout, which would otherwise lead to severe staffing challenges.
- Both in the drawing up area as well as in the vaccination area there are anaphylaxis treatment kits provided.
- A fully kitted resuscitation trolley is provided.
- An AED device (Automated External Defibrillator) is also provided within SECC
- Any severe drug reaction or other medical emergency requires use of the BLS or ALS protocols followed by a 999 call – this is due to the distance of the SECC to RSH ED.
- Nationally there have been several anaphylactoid / anaphylaxis reactions reported, but it is not clear if this is due to the vaccine itself.
- All adverse reactions thought to be due to the vaccine must be reported to the national command cell and on the MHRA yellow card scheme.
- A certain residual risk of incidents remains, due to the high ratio of over 80's with multiple health problems attending

Of note, Shropshire is one of the few systems nationally, where we are managing to vaccinate the prescribed ratios of over 80s / care home staff / vulnerable health care staff.