**Prisoner Vaccine Q&A**

**Prisoners**

1. How soon will I get the vaccine?

The vaccination is currently offered to people most at risk from coronavirus. This is done on age and clinically vulnerability. Clinically vulnerability means you have an illness or condition which makes you more at risk from coronavirus.

The priority list is:

* those aged over 80 years
* those aged over 75 years
* those aged over 70 years
* adults on the NHS shielded patient list. You will have previously been told by healthcare if you are on this list.
* those aged over 65 years
* adults under 65 years with long term conditions
1. How will I know when I am eligible for the vaccine?

You will be written to or told by healthcare staff when it is your turn to have the vaccine. Remember that older people and people who have specific illnesses that make them more vulnerable will have the vaccine first so you may need to wait for vaccine.

1. Why are the older prisoners getting it first?

Scientists and health professionals know that older people or people who are clinically vulnerable are more at risk from coronavirus. Therefore these people are getting the vaccination first to help protect them. We are following the same priority list that the community is.

1. I have an underlying health condition, does that mean I will get priority?

It depends on what medical condition you have but the healthcare staff will know if this means you should get a vaccination. They will speak to you about the vaccination when you are due to have it.

1. Who will administer it?

The healthcare staff will give you the vaccine.

1. Is it safe?

Yes. The vaccines used in the UK have met a strict standard of safety. There have been lots of trials and safety checks which had to happen before the vaccine was approved for use.

1. Are there any side effects?

Most side effects of the vaccine are mild and should not last longer than a week such as:

* As sore arm
* Feeling tired
* A headache
* Feeling achy
* Feeling or being sick

You can ask for painkillers such as paracetamol l if you need to take it.

1. I am from a Black and Minority Ethnic background will I get priority for the vaccine since we seem to be suffering more from it than others?

The vaccination is currently offered to people most at risk from coronavirus, based on age and clinically vulnerability. Clinical vulnerability means you have an illness or condition which makes you more at risk from coronavirus. There are no current plans to vaccinate based on race or ethnicity.

1. Will it stop people spreading the virus?

The vaccine should give you good protection against coronavirus and reduce your chances of getting very ill but you may still be able to get or spread the virus. That’s why we need to continue with an adapted regime and social distancing while there are still lots of cases in prison and the community.

You should stay more than two metres away from other people where you can and make sure you wear a face covering when you are advised to. Wash your hands regularly and always sneeze or cough into a tissue and then throw it away. Try to avoid touching your face as well. These will help prevent the spread of lots of nasty illnesses as well as coronavirus.

1. What if I am released before I have had the second vaccination, how will that work?

As part of your release plans, you will be supported in registering for a doctor in the area you are moving to. Your second vaccination will be completed this way.

If you are moving to an Approved Premises, you will be signed up to a doctor as part of your introduction when you arrive.

1. I don’t want to be vaccinated, can I refuse?

You do not have to have the vaccination but it will help to protect you from potentially getting very unwell if you get coronavirus. It may save your life.

If you decide you do not want the vaccination now, you can change your mind later.

You may find it helpful to speak to a member of healthcare staff to understand more about the vaccine. There are also leaflets we can share with you.

1. Will our regimes change as a result of us getting vaccinated?

The vaccine should give you good protection against coronavirus and reduce your chances of getting very ill but you may still be able to get or spread the virus. That’s why we need to continue with an adapted regime and social distancing while there are still lots of cases in prison and the community.

You should stay more than two metres away from other people where you can and make sure you wear a face covering when you are advised to. Wash your hands regularly and always sneeze or cough into a tissue and then throw it away. Try to avoid touching your face as well. These will help prevent the spread of lots of nasty illnesses as well as coronavirus.

**Prison staff**

1. Are prison residents a priority for the vaccine?

We are following the priority grouping which has been set out by the Government. This means that people will be vaccinated based on age and clinically vulnerability.

This is in line with the existing health care provision for people in prison, which should be consistent with that in the wider community.

The priority list is:

* those aged over 80 years
* those aged over 75 years
* those aged over 70 years
* adults on the NHS shielded patient list
* those aged over 65 years
* adults under 65 years with long term conditions
1. Will they get it in the prison or outside in hospital?

Healthcare staff will be vaccinating prison residents inside the prison, as with other inoculation programmes.

1. How will prison residents find out that they are eligible?

Healthcare staff will let prison residents know if they are eligible

1. Where will it be recorded when prison residents get the vaccine? Will we be expected to update their NOMIS record?

The NHS will be updating medical records and there will be a way for HMPPS to record the numbers of prison residents who have had the vaccine but this is still being finalised.

1. What happens if they refuse the vaccine? Will they have to be held somewhere else in the prison?

As with all medical treatment, prison residents have the right to refuse to be vaccinated. This won’t impact on their current regime.

1. Will incentives be offered to encourage take up of the vaccine?

No. This can potentially protect people from getting very sick if they get coronavirus and that will be the message given to people who are eligible.

If you are speaking to any prison residents about the vaccine, you should encourage them to have it if they are eligible. There are leaflets and easy read material you can share with any residents as well to support your conversations.

1. How soon will I get the vaccine?

At the moment, the government’s priority is to vaccinate the most vulnerable people and therefore HMPPS staff will be vaccinated in the community and in line with the priority roll-out.

The priority list is:

* those aged over 80 years
* those aged over 75 years
* those aged over 70 years
* adults on the NHS shielded patient list
* those aged over 65 years
* adults under 65 years with long term conditions
1. Why haven’t prison officers been prioritised considering the environment we work in?

Occupational prioritisation could form part of a second phase of the vaccination programme and we have a strong rationale for prioritising prison and probation staff, which we have shared with DHSC. Our Ministers are also supporting this prioritisation of HMPPS staff as key public sector workers in conversations with their counterparts.

1. Why are some members of staff working in the prison, like healthcare, getting the vaccine but not the rest of us?

Health and social care workers are prioritised in the initial phase, if there is any vaccination left over at a site once the people have been vaccinated by age or clinical vulnerability.