**COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery and Programmes**

**Why vaccines are important**

Vaccination is the most important thing we can do to protect ourselves and our children against ill health. They prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide every year.

Since vaccines were introduced in the UK, diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people are either gone or seen very rarely.

Other diseases like measles and diphtheria have been reduced by up to 99.9% since their vaccines were introduced.

However, if people stop having vaccines, it's possible for infectious diseases to quickly spread again.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has listed vaccine hesitancy as one of the biggest threats to global health.

**How well do the COVID-19 vaccines work?**

Anyone who gets COVID-19 can become seriously ill or have long-term effects ([long COVID](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/)). The COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and others.

Research has shown the vaccines help:

* reduce your risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19
* reduce your risk of catching or spreading COVID-19
* protect against COVID-19 variants

The 1st dose should give you some protection from 3 or 4 weeks after you've had it. But you need 2 doses for stronger and longer-lasting protection.

Most people also need a booster dose to help improve the protection from the first 2 doses of the vaccine.

There is a chance you might still get or spread COVID-19 even if you have a vaccine, so it's important to follow advice about [how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/how-to-avoid-catching-and-spreading-coronavirus-covid-19/).

**Side effects and safety**

The COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

They can cause some side effects, but not everyone gets them.

Any side effects are usually mild and should not last longer than a week, such as:

* a sore arm from the injection
* feeling tired
* a headache
* feeling achy
* feeling or being sick

More serious side effects, such as allergic reactions or blood clotting, are very rare.

[Find out more about COVID-19 vaccine side effects and safety](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/safety-and-side-effects/)

**Going Forward**

HMPPS continue to encourage both staff and prisoners to take up the offer of their Covid 19 vaccinations and boosters. Whilst staff will be able to access these in the community HMPPS/NHS will ensure that prisoners will also have access to initial vaccinations and boosters in line with the community.

We will also continue to provide information and guidance on any further boosters or vaccination advancements.