

14 December 2021

Dear colleague,

Following the Government's announcement regarding the expansion of the COVID-19 booster programme, we wanted to keep you updated on our local mobilisation.

We would like to thank all of our vaccination teams and partners for their support over the past 48 hours. We have been working hard to mobilise and redeploy our workforce, to significantly increase the number of appointments available. We are encouraging people to continue to check our website and the national booking system, with more clinics being added all the time.

We are in a strong position locally, thanks to the support of 100% of our Primary Care Networks, alongside 13 community pharmacies, hospital hubs and the mobile vaccination team. We are confident that we have the vaccines and clinics running over the next three weeks to meet demand.

We cannot underestimate the scale of the task ahead, offering vaccinations to over 272,000 people by 31 December. Please note, that people over 18 (and 16+ in at risk groups) are only eligible for this booster vaccine if it has been three months since their second dose.

To support this mammoth operation, the NHS will have to work differently, and we are supporting our primary care colleagues, who deliver most vaccinations, to prioritise their care and services over the next three weeks to the most urgent cases. We would like to thank you, and your networks/constituents for your patience.

The delivery of vaccinations by 31 December is the NHS' greatest priority, after patient safety, as we recognise the significant risk for the NHS, and local communities, in January if we do not increase vaccine uptake. The evidence shows this vaccine saves lives and reduces hospital admission, but three doses is essential. Our hospital wards are under increasing strain from people who are acutely unwell that have not had the vaccine. To help meet the demand from Omicron, as well as winter pressures, we need people to come forward for their vaccine now.

We would like to thank you for your ongoing support to promote the vaccine across your network and communities. We recognise you may be receiving increased public queries around the vaccine and the impact on your services. Especially a surge this week (13 December), as people may seek a vaccine ahead of the festive period.

Please reassure people that there are more clinics being added and everyone who is eligible will be offered a vaccine.

To help, we have several toolkits ready for you to utilise on our [resource centre](#) to inform the public when they are eligible for boosters and how to receive their vaccination. We will also continue with our campaigns and messages to manage patient expectations over the next few weeks.

As more detail becomes known around the expansion of the programme and its implications, we will keep you informed.

Once again, thank you for your support. We cannot overstress the importance of what you are doing in the next few weeks if we are to save lives and to relieve pressure across the NHS in January.

Kind regards,



Neil Carr
Senior Responsible Officer



Dr Paddy Hannigan
GP and Clinical Lead

Vaccination Programme Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

Letter to communities – please share across your networks

Act now to support you, your family and your community against Omicron

COVID-19 cases are quickly rising with the new Omicron variant.

As we adapt to this unknown virus, and the new variant, we must ask everyone to do their bit and get their booster vaccine.

The science is clear - two doses is not enough and only a third dose will offer protection for you, your family and your community.

For those people who are immunosuppressed (weakened immune system) you will be invited for a fourth (booster) dose through your hospital consultant.

If you have not yet had your first or second dose, it is not too late. Please don't be embarrassed, the NHS will be happy to offer you a first or second dose.

Remember, it takes two to three weeks for a vaccine to have an impact, so please come forward now. Our hospital wards are under pressure, with people who have not had their vaccine. We are predicting a difficult January for the NHS, with rising COVID-19 cases, and if we want to reduce the risk of further social restrictions in our local community, we need to act now.

If you have questions about the vaccine, please don't listen to the myths. Instead, find out the facts on the NHS website. COVID-19 and long-COVID are terrible illnesses - the vaccines are tried and tested and are our best hope. Please also continue to keep testing and maintaining hands, face, space and fresh air to reduce the spread of the virus.

There are three ways to get your vaccine before 31 December 2021:

- Book online through the [National Booking System](https://www.nhs.uk) by visiting www.nhs.uk
- Phone 119 (free to call)
- Attend a walk-in clinic, the details can be found on our website at <https://www.twbstaffsandstoke.org.uk/coronavirus/how-to-get-a-vaccine-where-and-travelling>

We are increasing the number of appointments, so please keep checking for the latest availability.

Our GP practices are very busy, treating urgent cases and delivering vaccinations. Please do not contact your GP practice directly to ask for a COVID-19 vaccination appointment.

