

Patient message – Alton
Covid Vaccination Programme, Phase 3
August 2021

Autumn ‘booster’ Covid vaccines – local plans

Local GPs, working with the Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group, have agreed how to deliver the autumn ‘booster’ phase of the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination programme.

This new phase starts in September. Our plan is designed to give one additional vaccination dose to people aged 50 and above - altogether, in our local ‘A31’ area, that is about 16,000 people.

The main elements of the local plan are:

1. Continue using the large vaccination site at Jameson House – delivering approximately 6,500 vaccinations a week to people across North Hampshire, seven days a week
2. Run satellite clinics within Alton to support overall capacity, at weekends, from local GP surgeries. The estimated capacity of this element is up to 1,000 vaccines per month.
3. The Boots Pharmacy site within Alton will continue to operate as part of the national booking service – capacity is up to 400 vaccinations a week
4. Mobile teams will deliver vaccines into residential homes, nursing homes and the homes of people who are housebound.

This will deliver enough capacity for about two-thirds of the local population to be vaccinated in Alton.

Once again, the possibility of setting up a dedicated site in Alton was considered at length. In an ideal world nobody would have to travel for any health care, but in reality difficult choices have to be made, and balances struck. Having two options in Alton itself, alongside the main site in Chineham, was decided to offer the best overall outcome.

The key benefits of this model are:

1. Critically, it causes least disruption to all other primary care services, allowing doctors and nurses to continue with all the other care that people rely on
2. It provides two different options (including the national booking service) for local bookings
3. It provides an ‘outreach’ service for those who simply cannot travel.
4. It delivers the economies of scale needed for large-scale, rapid protection of the population.

The local vaccination programme has been very successful – locally 77% of adults are fully (double) vaccinated, and a further 13% have had one jab. That is above the national rate, and the second highest across North Hampshire. This has been achieved because of the tireless dedication of staff and volunteers, and the tremendous response of local people to participate in such numbers. We thank everyone involved for their fantastic, ongoing support.

Questions and Answers

Does this mean that everyone will have to travel to Chineham?

No, not at all. The precise numbers will depend on people's choices, but we expect that there will be capacity around two-thirds of the eligible local population (about 16,000 people) to be vaccinated in the town.

But will this new plan mean that vulnerable people, and those without transport, won't be vaccinated?

Right from the start, teams have visited the most vulnerable people in their homes (and care homes), to ensure they didn't miss out. In addition, there will also be two separate ways to get vaccinated locally – Boots, and the locally-run satellite service. GP surgeries can also use their local knowledge to help identify those who may find travelling difficult, and who would benefit most from a local booking.

Why make people travel – won't that make them less likely to get jabbed?

Importantly, there will be significant capacity for many people to be able to choose to get vaccinated locally. Also, the uptake rates for the Alton area have been consistently high throughout the vaccination programme – the second highest in North Hampshire, by early August.

Why be part of the centralised service in Chineham at all?

A few reasons for this. But mainly, if local surgeries delivered their own, smaller service they would lose the economies of scale gained from the centralised service in Chineham – there would be a bigger disruption to surgery staff, and they would be less able to keep delivering the 'day job' work (urgent care, screening, managing long-term conditions, and so on) which is so important for everyone.