

## Update from NHS Devon

October 2023

### Covid and Flu Vaccination Programme

As of 8 October, over 25% of the eligible population in Devon have been vaccinated. 130,354 Covid vaccinations and 183,661 flu vaccinations have been given to date. Currently over 30% of flu and Covid vaccinations are being administered during the same appointment.

Over 75% of care home residents in Devon have had their Covid jab – making Devon the highest performing county in England for care home vaccinations. This is a major achievement and providing protection to some of our most vulnerable patients.

Last winter saw NHS staff treating significant numbers of patients in hospital with respiratory illnesses such as flu and Covid-19. We are encouraging people to come forward for their vaccines as soon as possible through our winter communications campaign.

The vaccination programme was brought forward this year based on the latest expert advice following the emergence of the new Covid-19 variant, and the NHS is encouraging everyone eligible to book an appointment to get their flu and Covid-19 vaccines to protect those most at risk this winter.

To make it ever more convenient for people to book in for their winter vaccines, all eligible adults can book their vaccination appointment through [www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well), by downloading the NHS App or by calling 119.

Those eligible for an autumn Covid vaccine are:

- residents in a care home for older adults
- all adults aged 65 years and over
- persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group, as laid out in the Immunisation Green Book, COVID-19 chapter (Green Book)
- frontline health and social care workers
- persons aged 12 to 64 years who are household contacts (as defined in the Green Book) of people with immunosuppression
- persons aged 16 to 64 years who are carers (as defined in the Green Book) and staff working in care homes for older adults.

### **People with a severe mental illness**

People with a severe mental illness (SMI) and those who care for them, are being invited to have a flu vaccination and Covid-19 booster this winter. Preventing Covid-19 and flu is particularly important for people with severe mental illness who are much more vulnerable to both viruses.

A new film launched by NHS Devon and Devon County Council highlights the importance of having both the vaccinations and annual health checks.

The video features the voices and real-life experiences of those with SMI, exploring their experience of accessing Covid-19 vaccination clinics and receiving vaccinations, and Annual Health Checks.

You can view the video here: [Vaccine / annual health checks - Severe mental illness - YouTube](#)

### **Covid 19 Vaccination Outreach Fund**

One Devon has established the Covid 19 Vaccination Outreach Fund to enable organisations from the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector across Devon to deliver innovative projects and activities with vulnerable communities to help increase the uptake of Covid-19 vaccinations during the 2023/24 Autumn / Winter vaccine campaign. We are encouraging increased engagement within vulnerable communities to help address health inequalities.

### **Confirmed closures of Boots Pharmacy branch in Exeter**

NHS Devon have been working with Boots Pharmacy as they plan the closure of the Mount Pleasant branch in Exeter. We undertake a local exercise to ensure we understand any concerns being raised by local pharmacy providers, GP practices, Healthwatch and Local Authority Public Health Teams. The Health and Wellbeing Board are notified as part of that process.

There is also a process to ensure the pharmacy is taking the appropriate action to encourage patients to change their nominated pharmacy ahead of the closure. In this case, there are several alternative pharmacies within a mile of this location for patients to choose to nominate to have their prescriptions dispensed from. There is also a supermarket pharmacy in Exeter which patients may choose to nominate to dispense their prescriptions.

### **Industrial action**

Over 1460 appointments in Devon were cancelled during this latest period of industrial action by consultants, junior doctors and radiologists between 2-5 October.

Operationally, prolonged industrial action by frontline staff has had an impact on performance. The recovery period after these spells of industrial action also impacts performance.

### **Elective Care – progress on waiting lists**

We continue to make progress on elective (planned) care recovery over the past couple of years.

Like all areas of the country, the pandemic had a major impact on our ability to carry out elective procedures and resulted in thousands of people waiting over two years for treatment.

However, thanks to determined and sustained work by staff within our providers and our own organisation, there are now no patients waiting more than two years for treatment at Royal Devon or Torbay.

The Nightingale Hospital continues to support the reduction in elective long waiters position and has now undertaken 1000 cataract operations.

There is still more to be done to reduce our waiting lists, but this is an important milestone that is making a big difference to our patients.

### **GP Patient Survey Results – Devon rated second best in England for GP satisfaction**

Patients across Devon have had their say on local access to general practice in the latest national GP Patient Survey, published by NHS England in July.

The results show that almost 8 in 10 people are satisfied with their local practice, some of the highest achievement seen across the country.

Satisfaction rates overall have decreased slightly from last year, but Devon is still performing better than other areas, with 78% of people describing their experience of their GP practice as good.

### **Women's Health Hub and Menopause**

NHS Devon are receiving £595,000 of funding to set up a Women's Health Hub provision in Devon. As part of this process two focus groups were held at the beginning of September for women in Devon and clinicians to share their experiences and provide their views on the draft proposals. The findings from these focus groups have fed into the final proposals for NHS England.

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