

Stellar Healthcare is arranging the appointments on our behalf so please do not contact the surgery to book your appointments.

UPDATED TIMINGS ON THE SECOND DOSE OF THE VACCINE

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is well underway in Hertfordshire and west Essex, starting as planned with the most vulnerable groups. This will continue, with some changes to the timing of the second dose of the vaccine meaning more people will be protected sooner.

Updated [guidance](#) has been issued on the second dose of both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines. Both vaccines need two doses to be fully effective, although both offer considerable protection against COVID-19 after the first dose. By delaying the second doses it's possible to offer first doses to more people more quickly.

In Hertfordshire and west Essex, each group of practices will decide based on their local situation whether to go ahead with second vaccinations that have already been booked, or whether to reschedule them to another time within 12 weeks of the first vaccination.

It is therefore really important that everyone who has already booked an appointment for their second dose of the vaccine still attends at that time, unless they have been contacted to re-schedule their appointment.

All new bookings will be scheduled in line with the new guidance, which says that the second dose should be provided up to 12 weeks after the first vaccine. It is important that people receive both doses to be fully protected against COVID-19. Please note that it takes a few weeks after getting the second dose for the person's antibodies to reach their optimum level.

We are continuing to immunise as many people as possible with their first dose and will be extending the vaccination programme as supply of the vaccines increases.

Vaccinating people on this scale is a huge challenge and new vaccination centres will open across our area this month. People in the [priority groups](#) will be contacted as soon as possible – in the meantime please **do not** contact your GP practice or local hospital about the vaccine at this stage as staff are extremely busy working on their vaccination plans as well as continuing to offer their usual services.

If you need medical help please continue to contact your GP practice or call 111 if you need urgent help or outside of GP practice hours or 999 in an emergency.

If you have any questions about the vaccine please go to

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-guide-for-older-adults>

Or <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirusvaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>