

## **COVID-19 vaccination Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Updated: 22/04/2021

These FAQs refer to the **Pfizer BioNtech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines**.

This is an iterative document that is updated regularly in response to feedback from those using it. If you have a question that is not covered in this document, please email the City and Hackney Public Health Team on: [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk)

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## **General information**

### **What COVID-19 vaccines are currently available?**

In the UK, three COVID-19 vaccines have been authorised by the MHRA for use.

- The COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine BNT162b2 (manufactured by Pfizer BioNTech)
- The COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca
- The COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna (not currently available in the UK, information about this vaccine will be added into a later publication of this document)

Both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines are being used in City and Hackney and have been shown to be safe and offer high levels of protection. They both require 2 doses.

The Government has in principle secured access to seven different vaccine candidates, across four different vaccine types, totalling over 357 million doses. This includes:

- 40 million doses of the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine
- 100m doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine
- 17 million doses of the Moderna vaccine (expected to be delivered in the spring)

Trials of other vaccinations are in progress and may be available soon.

The aim of the COVID-19 vaccination programme is to protect those who are at most risk from serious illness or death from COVID-19 or those at risk of transmitting infection to multiple vulnerable persons. As set out by the [JCVI \(Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation\)](#).

### **How many doses of the vaccine do I need?**

For maximum protection, you should have 2 doses of the vaccine. At present there is no guidance on the interchangeability of the different COVID-19 vaccines, although studies are underway.

Every effort should be made to complete the two dose course with the same vaccine.

### **Why has the first dose been prioritised over giving second doses?**

The [JCVI](#) advise that given the high efficacy from the first dose of both Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca vaccines ([detailed efficacy data available from the green book](#)), and the [UK Chief Medical Officers' statement](#) that delivery of the first dose to as many eligible individuals as possible should be initially prioritised over delivery of a second vaccine dose.

Given the high level of protection afforded by the first dose, models are clear that initial vaccination of a greater number of people with a single dose will prevent more deaths and hospitalisations than vaccinating a smaller number of people with two doses. This means that rapid delivery of the first dose is required to protect those most vulnerable and will allow

us to get the maximum benefit for the most people in the shortest possible time - helping to save lives.

However getting both doses remains important so we would urge people to return for it at the right time.

- The second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine may be given between 3 to 12 weeks following the first dose.
- The second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine may be given between 4 to 12 weeks following the first dose.
- The second vaccine dose should be with the same vaccine as for the first dose. Switching between vaccines or missing the second dose is not advised as this may affect the duration of protection.

As vaccination centres vary greatly in location/size/staffing; there may be some sites that can facilitate administration of second doses.

### **If I miss my second jab do I need the two doses again?**

The current advice is that you need to have 2 doses of the vaccine which will be given within a 12 week time period. We know that some second dose vaccine appointments are being scheduled for 10 weeks late to allow for flexibility just in case you miss the second dose for some reason (e.g. self-isolation).

### **Can you catch COVID-19 between the two vaccine doses?**

Two doses are essential and there is currently no strong evidence to expect that the immune response from the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine would differ substantially from the AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccines. Between the two vaccines, please remember to follow public health guidance and key messages and behaviours such as 'Hands, Face and Space' - even after you have had the vaccine.

Short term vaccine efficacy from the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is around 90%, short term vaccine efficacy from the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine is calculated at around 70% (efficacy estimates are not directly comparable between the two vaccines). Protection from the first dose will wane in the medium term, and the second dose will still be required to provide more durable protection.

### **How long will it take to become effective?**

The COVID-19 vaccines reduce the chance of suffering from severe COVID-19 disease. It may take a week or two for your body to build up some protection from the first dose of vaccine. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective, so you should continue to take recommended precautions to avoid infection. Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

### **How effective is the vaccine?**

The exact effectiveness of the vaccines is unknown. Short-term vaccine efficacy from the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is calculated at around 90% and short-term

vaccine efficacy from the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine is calculated at around 70%, with high protection against severe disease.

### **How long does the vaccine last for?**

At this point it is difficult to say as the vaccine trials were not set up to answer this question. The second dose is more important for longer-lasting protection, so it's really important to go back for your second dose when you are invited for it.

We expect these vaccines to work for at least a year – if not longer. This will be constantly monitored and may change with the discovery of new variants. A 'top up' for the Oxford/AstraZenca vaccine is currently being developed and may be in circulation in Autumn.

### **Can children be vaccinated?**

Following infection, almost all children will have asymptomatic infection or mild disease. There is very limited data on vaccination in adolescents, with no data on vaccination in younger children, at this time. The JCVI advises that only those children at very high risk of exposure and serious outcomes, such as older children with severe neuro-disabilities that require residential care, should be offered vaccination with either the Pfizer-BioNTech or the AstraZeneca vaccine.

### **Can Pregnant women be vaccinated?**

There have been no specific safety concerns identified with any brand of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines in relation to pregnancy.

Please see: [Covid-19 frequently asked questions about fertility and pregnancy](#)

Real-world data from the United States shows that around 90,000 pregnant women have been vaccinated, mainly with mRNA vaccines including Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, without any safety concerns being raised. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advises that it's preferable for pregnant women in the UK to be offered the PfizerBioNTech or Moderna vaccines where available. There is no evidence to suggest that other vaccines are unsafe for pregnant women, but more research is needed.

The advice, published in Public Health England's Green Book still advises that pregnant women should discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with their clinician, including the latest evidence on safety and which vaccines they should receive.

Pregnant women in eligible cohorts who have yet to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, should be offered the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine or Moderna vaccine. This currently includes women who are pregnant in cohorts 1, 2, 4, 6 and the 45-49 year old age group. We recommend that those who are pregnant speak to a healthcare professional such as an obstetrician, midwife or GP team before booking their first dose appointment.

Women who are planning pregnancy, are in the immediate postpartum, or are breastfeeding can be vaccinated with any vaccine, depending on their age and clinical risk group. There is no known risk associated with being given a non-live vaccine whilst breastfeeding. JCVI advises that breastfeeding women may be offered any suitable COVID-19 vaccine. The developmental and health benefits of breastfeeding should be considered along with the mother's clinical need for immunisation against COVID-19; at the same time, women should be informed about the absence of full safety data for the vaccine in breastfeeding.

### **Eligibility for pregnant women:**

- Pregnant women who are frontline health and social care workers, and who are either Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) or whose risk of exposure is considered high and unavoidable (JCVI Cohorts 1 and 2).
- Pregnant women who are considered CEV as identified in their medical records, or the COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment (JCVI Cohort 4).
- Pregnant women aged 16 to 65 and in an at-risk group (JCVI Cohort 6).

For pregnant women not falling within the criteria outlined above but where the GP deems them to be at high risk (because of potential exposure to COVID-19 or risk of complications), the practice must provide the pregnant woman with a letter to bring to the vaccination site confirming that she has been clinically assessed as high risk, is recommended for vaccination and has been provided the relevant information leaflets regarding COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant woman.

City & Hackney have secured a delivery of some Pfizer vaccine for 1st doses only, and are opening appointment books today for Friday 30th April and Saturday 1st May at Bocking Street. Please speak with your GP if you think you are eligible.

## **New Variants**

### **What are the New variants?**

Public Health England has identified that there may be spread of a new variant of Covid-19, first identified in South Africa in a small number of localities across England. There are 600 cases of this variant in the UK in total. In order to gain a better understand the prevalence of the variant first discovered in South Africa, and in order to suppress it, NHS Test and Trace has started surge testing in those postcode areas.

Public Health England has identified that there may be spread of a new variant of Covid-19, first identified in India, there have been a total of 77 cases identified so far and surge testing is underway to further investigate.

### **Will the vaccine cover any mutations in the coronavirus?**

The vaccine works by 'teaching' the immune system how to fight the virus. We anticipate that the vaccine will continue to be effective for mutations in the virus this year. What we don't know yet is how long the vaccine may last, this is something that we will understand from Phase 4 Clinical Trials.

### **Will the vaccines work with the new strain?**

There is no guidance currently that the new strain will be resistant to the vaccines we have, so we are continuing to vaccinate people as normal. Scientists are looking now in detail at the characteristics of the virus in relation to the vaccines. The variant first discovered in South Africa has more differences in shape, which might mean that they are recognised

differently by antibodies and therefore the laboratory studies are suggesting a decreased binding, but it is too early to know the effect that will have on the vaccination in people.

### **Will there be a yearly vaccination for COVID-19 ?**

Viruses, such as the winter flu virus, often branch into different strains but these small variations rarely render vaccines ineffective. Researchers are constantly evaluating the data and in the future we may need a yearly covid vaccination (like the flu jab) to account for variants.

### **Are there any tests you can have before the vaccine to check your immunity?**

No.

## **Accessing the vaccine**

### **Who is being vaccinated now?**

- People aged 45 and over
- People at high risk from coronavirus (clinically extremely vulnerable)
- People who live or work in care homes
- Health and social care workers
- People with a condition that puts them at higher risk (clinically vulnerable)
- People with a learning disability
- People who are a main carer for someone at high risk from coronavirus

### **Who is eligible for the vaccine?**

There is a full list of priority groups on the government [website](#).

### **How to book a Vaccine?**

You will be contacted by the NHS and invited to make an appointment. You do not need to phone your doctor to book. Once you have an appointment, please attend as the vaccine has a short shelf life and it may go to waste.

1. You will receive a text, call or letter from the NHS inviting you to book an appointment
2. You will either be offered an appointment at one of the four local sites in Hackney, or asked to go to one of London's mass vaccination centres
3. Book your appointment as soon as you can, you may be offered an appointment for your second dose at the same time
4. Attend your appointment and set a reminder for your second dose
5. Attend the appointment for your second dose

**Book your appointment online** - When you become eligible for the vaccination you can book your appointment via the national portal by calling 119 or visiting: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus)

If you had to delay booking your appointment and the government announces new eligible age groups, you can still book your appointment at any time using the national portal details or by speaking to your GP.

**Beware of scams** - The vaccine is only available through the NHS and it is free. You will never be asked to pay or asked for your bank details.

### Key messages:

- The easiest way to arrange a vaccination is through the national booking service which can be accessed at [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination)
- The system allows patients to choose a time slot and location that suits them
- Anyone unable to book online can call 119 free of charge, anytime between 7am and 11pm seven days a week.

### Who cannot have the vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given to:

- Anyone who currently has a fever
- Anyone who has previously had a severe systemic allergic reaction to a previous dose of the same vaccine or any components of the Pfizer vaccine. Further information can be found [here](#).

The vaccine is safe if you have diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, asthma and high cholesterol. The vaccine is safe if you are taking blood thinning medications e.g. warfarin, but you do need to tell the person giving the vaccine that you take these medications. If you are not sure or have any concerns, please speak to your doctor.

### Can I have the vaccine if I am allergic to penicillin?

Yes, there are no known harmful effects of having the Pfizer/BioNTech or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines if you are allergic to penicillin.

### What if I have an allergy to the vaccine?

Vaccines are extremely safe and are given to millions of people every year without any problems. Most reactions are because of some other component of the vaccine, such as egg protein, if the person is severely allergic. When your vaccine is given, we will observe you for 15 minutes and have the ability to treat any reaction.

### Can the vaccine overload your immune system?

The vaccine will not overload your immune system. Your immune system kills millions of germs a day that enter your body, your immune system can manage the vaccine very easily.

### Are vaccines artificial?

Vaccines are man-made, but vaccines can prevent very serious conditions including COVID-19, meningitis and measles. These diseases used to kill millions of people but vaccines helped prevent this. Vaccines have saved billions of lives worldwide and are one of the best ways of taking action to look after your health.

The Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines contain a segment of genetic material of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19. The genetic material 'RNA', codes for a specific viral protein. When administered, your cells use the genetic material from the vaccines to make the protein, which is recognised by your immune system and triggers a specific response.

The University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine uses an unrelated harmless virus (the viral vector) to deliver SARS-CoV-2 genetic material. When administered, our cells use the

genetic material to produce a specific viral protein, which is recognised by our immune system and triggers a response.

Both vaccines build immune memory, so your body can fight off SARS-CoV-2 in future.

### **Can the vaccine cause autism?**

No, there have been many studies to look at the link between vaccines and autism and none of them have shown any connection between the two.

### **Should I get the vaccine if I have already had coronavirus?**

Yes, we anticipate that immunity from the vaccine may be longer lasting than natural immunity. You should wait for **4 weeks** after you symptoms finished (or **4 weeks** after a positive test result if you had no symptoms) before you get the vaccine. The current guidance does not suggest any evidence of safety concerns from vaccinating individuals with a past history of COVID-19 infection, or with detectable COVID-19 antibody, so people who have had COVID-19 disease (whether confirmed or suspected) can still receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it is their time to do so.

### **Should I have the vaccine if I have long COVID-19 symptoms?**

Yes, we anticipate that immunity from the vaccine will last longer than from infection.

### **Should I have the vaccine if I have a cold/flu?**

People who are suffering from a fever-type illness should postpone having the vaccine until they have recovered.

### **Should I have the vaccine if I currently have COVID-19?**

You should wait until at least 4 weeks after you had symptoms, or 4 weeks after your positive test if you didn't have any symptoms, and until you have recovered from your COVID-19 infection, before having the vaccine.

### **Does the flu vaccine protect me from COVID-19?**

No. The flu vaccine does not protect you from COVID-19. You should have both vaccines, but separated by at least 7 days.

### **Do you have to pay for the vaccine? And do you need identification?**

No.

Everyone who is eligible for the vaccine can get one free of charge. Even if someone is not registered with a GP they do not need to pay (however this would be a great opportunity to register!).

Patients, including NHS staff, do not require an NHS number or GP registration to receive a vaccination and should never be denied one on this basis, either in person when presenting for a vaccine, or through booking systems.

### **What if I have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)?**

Those with no recourse to public funds are also eligible for the free vaccine. You do not have to have an NHS number or formal ID to receive the vaccine. Unregistered patients who are

eligible for vaccination, and who request a vaccination will be assessed for eligibility and vaccinated. They should not be turned away or signposted elsewhere.

### **Do I need any tests before I have the vaccine?**

No, there are no tests which need to be done before the vaccine. You do not need a coronavirus test or a coronavirus antibody test.

### **If I have the vaccine, can I still pass COVID-19 on to others?**

It is vital that everyone follows the national guidance. While the vaccine will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill it does not give 100% protection and we do not yet know whether it will stop you from catching and passing on the virus, so it is still important to follow the guidance in your local area to protect those around you. National guidance will continue to be reviewed by the Government and updated when appropriate. Please find the latest guidance [here](#).

## **Safety and understanding the Clinical Trials**

### **How has Hackney reacted to the vaccine hesitancy?**

The Council, the NHS and local community organisations are working really hard to ensure people from all backgrounds feel confident to take the vaccine when it is offered to them.

You can read a blog from Hackney's Public Health Director, Dr Husbands here:

<https://news.hackney.gov.uk/dr-sandra-husbands-your-questions-answered-on-the-coronavirus-vaccine-rollout/>

The Council and local partners are doing a number of things to increase vaccine uptake locally this includes:

- a [poster campaign](#) right across the borough using local GPs
- a [booklet](#) sent to each home in the borough, which is also being translated and printed in five widely used community languages (French, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, Turkish)
- four pages of content in Council publications [Hackney Life](#) and Hackney Today sent to all homes.
- Community webinars, including ones for [Black communities in Hackney](#), Bengali and [Kurdish and Turkish](#), with more planned through HCVS.
- [A school curriculum](#) to help young people understand why the vaccine is important
- Over 30 videos produced by local medical professionals, faith and community leaders to answer FAQs on the vaccine and encourage uptake (these can be seen on the [Council youtube](#))
- A social media and digital advert campaign
- Using almost 200 [community champions](#), who are volunteers from right across Hackney, to share messages directly through community whatsapp and other message platforms
- Helping the NHS set up community vaccine takeover clinics such as the one for the [Orthodox Jewish community](#)

- Working with TfL to ensure information on how to get to the mass vaccination centres is in place in Hackney's stations and promoting the [jabs journey planner](#) on Council channels
- Working with NHS partners to ensure that vaccines will be offered at locations and venues that are convenient and comfortable for Hackney's diverse community groups

### **How has turnout improved and have people from BAME communities made reservations for the Covid Vaccine?**

People in Hackney from all different backgrounds are taking the vaccine, we will have to wait to see how our efforts to inform and encourage people to take the vaccine has affected the uptake data as this takes time to be reflected in the data. The Council is currently working with the NHS so residents can see the data on the Council website, this is set to be published soon and will be updated regularly: <https://hackney.gov.uk/coronavirus-data>

### **How do we know the vaccine is safe?**

The vaccines have gone through thorough clinical trials and the MHRA, the official UK regulator, has said that both of these vaccines have good safety profiles and offer a high level of protection, and we have full confidence in their expert judgement and processes.

There are checks at every stage in the development and manufacturing process, and continued monitoring once it has been authorised and is being used in the wider population.

### **How has the vaccine been developed so quickly?**

Scientists and researchers have been studying coronaviruses for many years and so the vaccine development process did not start from scratch. In addition clinical trials were able to be completed quickly due to large financial support from governments and a large volume of participants recruited in a short space of time. The process is just as rigorous and no corners have been cut in the process. Lots of people and leading scientists came together to support this work.

### **Was the trial pool as large as you would usually expect?**

Yes, a lot of work on coronaviruses has happened over the past ten years which has been built upon since March in the development of the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **What is the evidence to show the vaccine is safe for all communities?**

The phase three study of the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine demonstrated a vaccine efficacy of 95%, with consistent efficacy across age, gender and ethnicity. The participants were White, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian and Native American/Alaskan.

The safety data for the AstraZeneca vaccine from over 20,000 participants enrolled across four clinical trials in the UK and Brazil and South Africa has shown that there were no serious safety events related to the vaccine. Participants were from diverse communities who are healthy or have stable underlying medical conditions.

The current guidance suggests that neither of the vaccines works differently in different ethnic groups.

### **Recent research has shown blood clots may be a side effect of the AstraZeneca vaccine, what should I do if I am contemplating having the vaccine?**

Since its deployment on the 4th January 2021, an estimated 21.6 million doses of the AZ vaccine have been administered across the UK. The COVID-19 programme in England has been estimated to have prevented more than 10,000 deaths in adults aged 70 years and older till the end of March with a vaccine effectiveness of a single dose against hospitalisation estimated at 80% both the Pfizer/BioNTech and the AZ vaccines.

As of 5th April, there have been 100 reports of thromboembolic events (blood clots) across the UK following AZ vaccination, giving an overall case incidence of 4.9 per million first doses. This includes 50 reports of a very rare and specific type of syndrome of blood clots in the cerebral veins, known as cerebral venous sinus thromboses (CVST) occurring together with low platelet counts. This syndrome (otherwise known as Vaccine Induced Thrombosis and Thrombocytopenia syndrome or VITTs) has affected patients of all ages and genders, although there does appear to be a trend towards an increased incidence in younger adult age groups.

Based on a review of cases reported to the Yellow Card Scheme and the evidence of effectiveness of the COVID vaccines used in the UK to prevent serious complications and deaths from COVID-19 infection, the current MHRA advice remains that the overall benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine programme outweighs the extremely rare adverse events reported to date following the AZ vaccine.

The JCVI has concluded that in phase 2 of the vaccination programme, it is preferable to offer adults under 30 years of age without underlying health conditions putting them at a higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease, an alternative to the AZ vaccine if available. Individuals can make an informed choice to receive the AZ vaccine to receive earlier protection.

### **Do you think these new potential side effects and in some cases death, will cause even more hesitancy?**

Dr Sandra Husbands, Director of Public Health, Hackney Council said: "Like any medicine, including those you can buy over the counter, such as paracetamol or antihistamines, vaccines can have some side-effects. Most of these are mild, only last a few days and not everyone gets them. There's currently no concern that any of the COVID-19 vaccines cause anything more serious. Blood clots are not listed as side effects of either the AstraZeneca or Pfizer BioNTech vaccines - the two that are currently being rolled out in the UK. The vaccines have now been safely administered to over 23 million people in the UK."

"It's possible that for some people, who were already waiting to see how things pan out with the vaccine programmes, both here and abroad, these reports will be a cause for concern. However, if they make sure that they get good information, from credible sources and, if still concerned, they talk to their GPs, they can have those concerns addressed."

## **Are Covid tests safe? Can they cause cancer ?**

Both the Rapid (lateral flow) and PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests are safe for use. Lateral flow tests have been rigorously tested and are safe to use on a regular basis. Any suggestion otherwise is inaccurate and harmful misinformation.

1-2ug/g of ethylene oxide is used in the swabs, this is a safe amount and does not cause cancer. Any suggestion otherwise is inaccurate and harmful misinformation. Ethylene oxide is only used in the sterilisation of swabs and it is one of the most commonly used sterilisation tools in the healthcare industry, principally applied by manufacturers to keep medical devices safe.

We are working in lockstep with social media platforms to ensure they are identifying and taking action to remove incorrect claims, such as this, about the pandemic, including deliberately false information that could endanger people's health.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the UK's regulator of medicines, medical devices and blood components for transfusion, responsible for ensuring their safety, quality and effectiveness.

## **Vaccination side effects**

### **What are the side effects of the vaccine?**

Like all vaccines the covid vaccines can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

The most common side effects of both vaccinations are:

- Pain and mild irritation around the vaccination site
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Joint pain
- Fever

Most side effects are mild or moderate and go away within a few days of appearing. If side effects such as pain and/or fever are troublesome, they can be treated by medicines for pain and fever such as paracetamol.

### **Will the vaccine give me COVID-19 ?**

No, the vaccine does not have any virus in it. It only contains a component from the virus that will make your body recognise the virus if you ever encounter it in the future (think of it

as memory). If you do pick up the virus in real life, your body will kill the virus straightaway and you shouldn't feel unwell.

### **Will the vaccine change my DNA?**

No, the vaccine will never touch your DNA or genetic material, and as a result can't interfere with your genes.

### **Are ethnic minority people more likely to get side effects from the vaccine?**

No, there is no evidence that ethnic minority people are more likely to get adverse effects. It is important that those from ethnic background access the vaccine when asked as we do know that COVID-19 does affect this group disproportionately.

### **Can I have the vaccine if I am on blood thinners eg Aspirin/Warfarin?**

Yes. If you take any medications that thin the blood e.g. warfarin, the vaccine is still safe, but you may be more likely to bruise after the vaccine. It is important to tell the person giving the vaccine that you take these medications and you may be asked about them at the vaccination centre. If you are not sure or have any concerns, please speak to your doctor.

### **Is the vaccine compatible with other medications?**

The vaccine is safe and has been tested extensively, so it can be taken by people with existing medical conditions, including those on medications.

### **How safe and effective is the vaccine for people who are immunocompromised?**

The vaccine is safe for people who are immunocompromised and is likely to provide some benefit. People who are immunocompromised may not build such a strong immune response as others but we do anticipate that the benefits of the vaccine will outweigh the risk of COVID-19 to these individuals.

### **If you are vaccinated can you get false positive PCR test results?**

No, the vaccine will not give a false positive swab test result.

## **Logistics and life after vaccination**

### **Do we still need to socially distance after the vaccine?**

Yes, it is important that 'hands, face, space' is maintained whilst we are awaiting full roll out of the vaccine. We know that the vaccine reduces the risk of developing serious illness from COVID-19, however we don't know how well it stops the spread of the disease yet.

### **What is the estimated timescale for the roll out of the vaccine?**

We plan to offer everyone in priority groups 1-4 a first vaccine by mid/late February 2021. But even with excellent planning, good availability of vaccine and a major effort by everyone, it will take at least until spring to offer all the high risk groups a vaccine.

## **Where can I get the vaccine?**

Vaccinations are taking place in GP surgeries, NHS hospitals and at 4 Vaccination sites in Hackney:

- John Scott Health Centre, Green Lanes, Hackney N4 2NU
- Bocking Street Vaccination Centre, Hackney Central E8 3RU
- Clockwork Pharmacy, 398-400 Mare Street, Hackney E8 1HP
- Bees Pharmacy, 199-201 Rushmore Road, Clapton, Hackney E5 0HD
- Silverfields Chemist, 141 Homerton High Street, E9 6AS
- Haggerston Pharmacy, 201 Haggerston Road, E8 4HU
- Day Lewis Pharmacy – Stoke Newington, Stoke Newington Road, N16 8AD

Some residents will also be invited to attend the mass vaccination centres at:

- Westfield Shopping Centre, Stratford
- Excel Centre, Canary Wharf

At present City residents are invited to our Hackney vaccination centres, however we are continually reviewing where vaccination sites are in the City of London to ensure they meet our residents' needs.

## **Helping your community understand vaccines**

### **How can we encourage our communities to take the vaccine?**

We need to emphasise the seriousness of the virus and how dangerous it is to vulnerable people. We should also be emphasising how effective the vaccine is and that it is safe and has been robustly tested in full clinical trials.

You can also [sign up to be a Public Health Community Champion](#) if you live, study, volunteer or work in City and Hackney.

### **Is the Vaccine Halal?**

The British Islamic Medical Association have produced a helpful guide for the Muslim community which can be found [here](#).

### **Are the vaccines vegan/vegetarian friendly? Do they include any parts from foetal or animal origin?**

The vaccines do not contain any meat derivatives or porcine products or material of foetal or animal origin.

### **How can we ensure that we are giving factual information?**

Please use any of the resources we have provided you as community champions. We would recommend that you check all other sources of information that you read before sharing it. If

you are not sure about the validity of any information, please email the City and Hackney Public Health Team: [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk) and we can support you.

### Where can I find out more?

- Pfizer [patient information leaflet](#)
- Oxford/Astra Zeneca [patient information leaflet](#)
- [East London HCP FAQ](#)
- [Public Health England's Green Book Chapter 14a COVID-19 SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination patient leaflet](#)
- Patient leaflets on what to expect [after your COVID-19 vaccinations](#)
- Government leaflets available [here](#)
- [Coronavirus Infection and Pregnancy](#)
- [Coronavirus Vaccines, pregnancy and Breastfeeding](#)
- [Coronavirus and Fertility](#)
- [Covid Fertility and pregnancy FAQ](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination and blood clotting](#)
- Dr Husbans, Director of Public Health FAQ [Video](#)
- Please contact [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk) with any further specific queries. The inbox is staffed 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.