



Derby & Derbyshire Local Medical Committee
Norman House
Heritage Gate
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Derby
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13th January 2021

Thank you for contacting your surgery regarding COVID-19 vaccinations.

We are responding on behalf of your surgery as the representative body of Derbyshire General Practice. **The COVID-19 vaccination programme is not controlled by your local practice** and thus any complaints related to the vaccination programme should not be directed at them.

We can fully appreciate the upset, anger, frustration and anxiety that everyone is experiencing at this present time and will try and explain the current situation.

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is an enormous undertaking with millions of patients needing to be vaccinated in a very short period of time. Patients need to be vaccinated safely, adhering to social distancing guidelines AND in a [strict order](#) as decided by the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI). The groups that need vaccination by mid-February are, in order: -

1. Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers.
2. All those 80 years of age and over, plus frontline health and social care workers.
3. All those 75 years of age and over.
4. All those 70 years of age and over, plus clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (this is the group who received letters from the NHS about 'Shielding'. You can find the shielding information [here](#)).

General practices have no ability to change this list, nor the order, and are unable to promote groups or individuals to a higher priority. The [JCVI list](#) states that those patients who are younger and who have underlying medical conditions, but who are not in [the clinically extremely vulnerable group](#), will be in priority group 6.

In addition to the challenge of the sheer number of patients who need to be called for their vaccination, there are also other issues which are outside the practices' control including: -

- unpredictable deliveries of vaccine leading to last minute appointment cancellations.
- changes in the programme when new vaccines are approved.
- changes to when people can have their second dose of vaccination. This has been determined by the Chief Medical Officers, not your GP, and GPs have been told they must no longer make exceptions to this.

General Practice is delivering this huge vaccination programme **in addition to providing usual patient care**, i.e., urgent, routine, planned and unplanned work. Phone lines are exceedingly busy as practice teams field usual calls, as well as calling patients in for vaccinations according to the priority groups. All of this vital work has caused a massive increase in the number of phone calls coming into surgeries such that delays in answering the telephone will be inevitable.



Staff are incredibly stretched and are experiencing the most difficult times they have ever had on a professional and personal level. Please understand this huge challenge and that ultimately all **practices are trying their best with the resources they have available in the middle of a global pandemic.**

When your priority group is ready to be vaccinated **you will be contacted by your surgery.**

For answers to further questions including: -

- When will I get my COVID-19 vaccine and why can't I contact you to find out more?
- Why has my friend in Derbyshire had their COVID-19 vaccine before me? Have I been forgotten?
- Why has my relative's second COVID-19 jab been cancelled?

Please see our [FAQ Sheet](#).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Markus".

**Dr Kath Markus
Chief Executive,
Derby and Derbyshire Local Medical Committee**