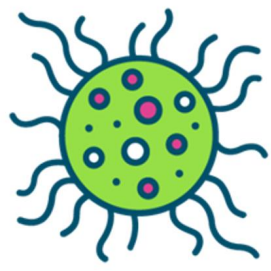


How are you doing?

Gathering feedback from those who have received their
vaccinations in Luton during the pandemic

Vaccinations



Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic had been happening for over a year and the vaccination programme got underway late 2020. There are currently two vaccinations being used in the UK – Oxford Astra Zeneca and Pfizer/BioNTech. Both of these vaccinations require two doses, between 3 and 12 weeks apart.

Vaccinations started being given in the UK in December 2020, with the first Pfizer vaccine being given on 8th December in the UK and the first Astra Zeneca vaccine given in the UK on 4th January 2021. Vaccinations were initially given in hospital hubs, or national centres. As the vaccine was rolled out more, there were more sites used, including local community centres and GP practices.

The priority for those getting the vaccine was predetermined by the government and Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). The most vulnerable being first, and working towards the less vulnerable members of society. Vaccines were offered to those in care home and over 80 years old first. The health and social care front line and key workers were also in the first cohorts.

Priority	Risk group
1	Residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults
2	All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3	All those 75 years of age and over
4	All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (not including pregnant women and those under 16 years of age)
5	All those 65 years of age and over
6	Adults aged 16 to 65 years in an at-risk group (see clinical conditions below) [footnote1]
7	All those 60 years of age and over
8	All those 55 years of age and over
9	All those 50 years of age and over
10	Rest of the population (to be determined)

At the end of February 2021, there had been 17,179,491 people in the UK who had received their first dose of the vaccine, with 598,345 people in the UK having received their second vaccine. Locally, according to data published on 25th February 2021, 39,201 people had received their first dose and 1,763 had received their second dose of the vaccine (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics>).

Overall Vaccination Activity

- In the week ending the 28th February an additional 2,249,002 people were reported to have received an NHS vaccination for COVID-19 in England. This took the total number of people vaccinated with at least one dose as of the 28th February to 17,179,491.
- Of those vaccinated, 598,345 people have received a 2nd dose, taking the total number of vaccinations given to 17,777,836.

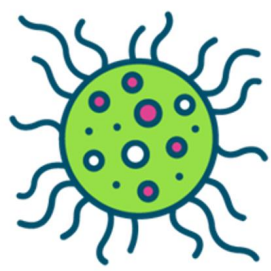
Image taken from: [COVID-19 vaccination first phase priority groups - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-vaccination-first-phase-priority-groups)

Healthwatch Luton had received information and feedback of experiences of those who had received their first doses, and some who had received their second dose, as well as those who have been volunteering at the vaccination sites. The feedback from those who have visited local sites has been mostly positive, with staff being commended as being friendly and helpful, as well as flexible. Reasonable adjustments were noted as being made, particularly for older patients and those who were deaf. There was comment that there was not any information available in Braille or for a person with sight impairments. There was feedback about confusion over who could get their vaccine where, and also if GPs were allowing different people to have their vaccines, based on who their GP was.

LINKS:

[Information for UK recipients on COVID 19 Vaccine AstraZeneca - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-vaccination-first-phase-priority-groups)

[Information for UK recipients on Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-vaccination-first-phase-priority-groups)



Case studies

Those who have already received one or two doses of the coronavirus vaccine have given feedback about their experiences, from booking the appointments, the whole journey through to how they found the appointment and any side effects they may have felt afterwards.

“I had my vaccination at the Academic Centre in Milton Keynes Hospital. I was given the Pfizer vaccine. Before being given the opportunity to have my vaccine I was a little wary of the vaccine and how it might affect me now and in the future. When I was offered to go for my vaccine, I had a mixture of feelings. I was feeling guilty for having the vaccine ahead of some other people I knew who were CEV (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable) or older than me, or even in different job roles to me. I wanted to make sure I was helping everyone within Luton and the system by having the vaccine, but that still did not take away from the feelings of guilt and apprehension I had. The booking process was really easy – I was sent a link from the Local Authority and booked my appointment for within the next couple of days. There was a lot of availability and a lot of choice for times and dates.

Once arriving at the vaccination centre, the staff were really great. There was a ‘security’ person on the external door, making sure people had the correct day and time and when inside the booking in process was very straight forward and simple. The staff working took details and gave a form, which was quick to fill in. Whilst waiting to go through to the next room, staff were sanitising chairs as they were left and making sure everyone was adhering to social distancing and wearing face masks. Once in the next area, was able to go through medical history and if there were concerns about the vaccine being appropriate, there was an option to be seen by a doctor before being administered the vaccine.

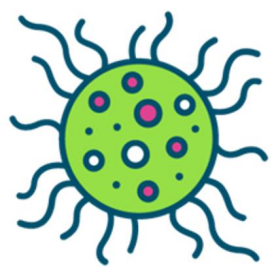
The vaccine room itself was well lit and ventilated meaning I felt less anxious and the staff in there were also really friendly and put people at ease. There was a lot of conversation and the vaccine itself was not too painful. After the vaccine was given, I had to sit in an adjacent room for 15 minutes and was then allowed to leave.

My arm was sore and bruised within an hour and whilst I did not have any major side effects, I did feel very drained and tired for a couple of days with localised discomfort only lasting 24 hours or so.

At the time of my vaccine, I was told I would receive contact to book my second dose within four weeks. I received a letter for this within a couple of weeks and it contained a time frame I needed to book within. This has now been booked for seven weeks after my first dose.

I felt overall, the process was quick and simple, and the staff are doing a really great job.”

- A professional working and living in Luton



Case studies

“I had my vaccination at the MK Academic Centre. The vaccine given was Pfizer. I felt guilt initially for having my vaccine before my own parents, but then NHS and LA overview ensured us having it as professionals was really important. Language around ‘taking the vaccine away from others’ made me really struggle – but understand now how professionals need to help support those who are vulnerable. Did feel unethical – but also wanted to support programme. The booking process was very easy through the Local Authority link given.

The process at the vaccination centre was exceptionally good – from the moment of arrival to leaving. Initial IT problems delayed booking in – but wasn’t in rush – the core NHS caring and empathetic nature of volunteers and staff at the centre made everyone seem at ease. I overheard staff supporting a man who had never been vaccinated before (he was in his 50s and had a large amount of anxiety) no judgement just pure caring and support provided. Was really impressed.

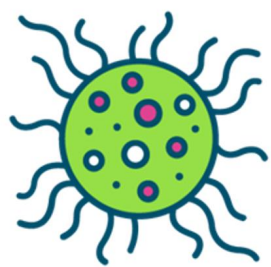
I did not get any side effects. I had localised bruised feeling in my arm the evening of the vaccination but otherwise nothing else. I was relieved to have my vaccination done.

I was concerned there was no date set for the second dose, but I received a link within two weeks and rebooked it for seven weeks after my first.

I think the vaccination programme is an exceptional display of the NHS working at its best. From the volunteers to the staff to the experience at the centres. I have witnessed caring, supportive actions to the public, and even with minimal issues have found it to be one of the most exceptional programmes of our lifetime. The communications, issues with patient coding at GP’s and national, confusion around national or local vaccination settings are all aspects of this programme, which are important to address with regards to this roll out taking place ongoing through the year – but the actual vaccination operations has been phenomenal in the timescales the NHS have been targeted with.”

-A professional working and living in Luton





Case studies

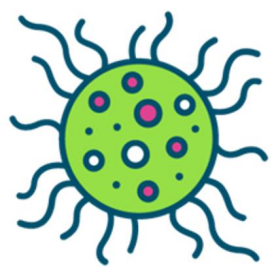
“I had the Pfizer vaccination at Medici on 19th January. I was pleased that I was on the list and was grateful to get it that soon and sort it. The booking process was excellent. The process at the vaccination centre was very well managed. A score of 11 out of 10. I was just pleased, gave a slip of paper, ring this number for second jab if not heard by this date. Follow on process. When booking the second vaccine I was advised to ring a telephone number (and not my GP) if no appointment received by 29th March. Clear information. It was organised perfectly. My husband had the same experience. I was sat in the car waiting and it was nice to see the GPs come outside and chat to volunteers in the car park, making sure they were ok and got them drinks etc. They were looking after volunteers, which was a nice gesture. .”

- A retired person volunteering and living in Luton

“I had my vaccination at Redgrave on 26th February. I had the Astra Zeneca vaccination. I was not sure if I was able to have vaccine until arrival at vaccination centre due to having chest infection. GP & 119 could not assist and advised to ask at the vaccination centre. The process for booking was pretty straightforward using the NHS app and having a choice of where you can go. The centre was well organised with plenty of staff who were friendly and accommodating. Staff directed you accordingly to where you had to go and cleaning of chairs etc were done before allowing someone else to use the chairs. Staff spoke to you and provided relevant leaflets. With the vaccine I only had a sore arm which wore off within 48 hours. I was able to book via NHS website the next day for follow up appointment, which is on 14th May. I was advised second vaccine is normally 10-12 weeks. I didn't have any concerns regarding the vaccine, even though people that I know that have had vaccine said they have had other side effects relating to it..”



- A carer living and volunteering in Luton



Case studies

“I had my vaccine at Bushmead on 14th February because of my age. I had the Pfizer vaccine. I booked through my GP, booking by phone 4 days before the vaccination. I found the process at the vaccination centre excellent and I did not have any side effects. I have pre-booked my second dose for in April, which is approximately nine weeks after the first dose. It was well organised, short and sweet.”

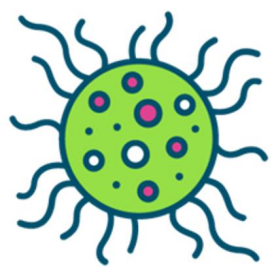
- A retired person volunteering and living in Luton

“I had the Astra Zeneca vaccine at the Redgrave Centre. I had thought when the vaccine becomes available, I would happily take it to protect myself and my family.. I did not book the vaccine, I was volunteering at the vaccination centre and at the end of the day there were 2 doses left in a vial and they asked volunteers if anyone wanted the vaccine. Prior to the vaccine, I was asked a few questions about my health- if I was in good health, had I had flu vaccine in recent weeks, my medical record was traced on the computer, I was told about the vaccine and the side effects. Staff were really friendly and supportive. I was given my vaccination card and some leaflets on the vaccine, told to take paracetamol if I felt mild side effects. I had no side effects just a sore arm as expected. I thought they had an efficient process, well organised, friendly staff and the centre was well organised with people going in the back door and out the front door, lots of staff and volunteers, in and out in 10 minutes. I had no side effects just a sore arm as expected. I was told I would be contacted in the next 12 weeks about an appointment for the second vaccine.”

- A professional working and living in Luton

“I had the Astra Zeneca at Medici on 5th February. Did not have any thoughts about the vaccine as I have been reading what the medical advisers were saying about the vaccine. I knew I had to have it as I am classed as clinically extremely vulnerable person, and it would give me some protection. Was a little nervous on the day. Received a text message to call a mobile number on the morning of 3rd Feb, called the number straight away and the appointment was made for the 5th Feb at 1.50pm. I was surprised that I got an appointment for 2 days later. The process was excellent. Everyone kept to the social distancing and chairs were wiped down after people sat in them. Went into a separate room with a nurse who asked some questions e.g Have you had the flu vaccine in the last 7 days and do you have any symptoms of Covid 19. She checked my name and date of birth to make sure I was the correct patient, and was told what vaccine I was having. Had to wait 15 minutes after vaccine as I was driving before I was allowed to leave the centre. The only problem I had was with the parking as the car park was full when I arrived and had to wait for a space. I had the shivers 4 hours after the vaccine and went to bed, but they had gone by the morning. My husband was worried and if they got worse he was going to call 111 for advice. I was given information on who to call if not heard anything by 14th April for my second vaccination. I am glad that I have had the 1st vaccine”

- A volunteer living in Luton



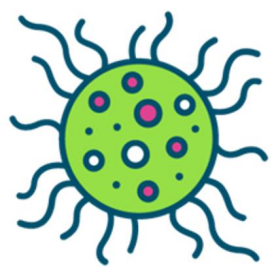
Case studies



“I had my vaccination at the Stevenage hub in February. I had the Astra Zeneca vaccine. I just wanted to read up on information about the vaccine beforehand. I booked online and it was quick and easy. It was very well managed and organised. It all went smoothly and I was in and out in ten minutes. But I was very anxious as I haven't been indoors in a clinical setting or have had to interact with so many people in a while. To put it in perspective I was guided by, in total, 20+ marshals in high visibility jackets from where to park to where to walk to where to sit etc and then asked various questions about my identity, work and survey about the vaccination centre. I was given a leaflet by the nurse after I had the vaccination, which said read prior to your vaccination! Nurse had laminated sheets with questions and statements in big font for me to read from and answer, which I found very helpful as my anxious brain couldn't listen very well, but I could read and answer. I had a very strong immune response starting with a headache within 9 hours and have experienced almost all the side

effects including severe fatigue which has continued for at least three weeks. It has affected my ability to function and work. Within the first week I was asked to go for a covid test due to the symptoms I was experiencing but the result was negative. I wonder if I would have had the same immune response with the other vaccine. My second dose is booked for the end of March which is approximately 6 weeks.

- A professional working in Luton



Case studies

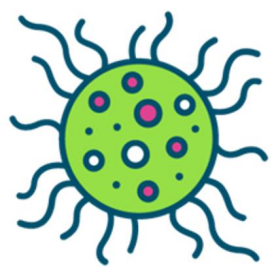
“I had the Astra Zeneca vaccine late January at the Redgrave Centre. I was going to have the vaccine. I had no negative thoughts at all. To book, I had a letter from NHS, online booking for day after receiving letter. Quick and easy no problems. The process at the vaccination centre was Brilliant, very slick and efficient with excellent staff. I have booked second vaccination for 20th April 2021 at time of booking first dose.”

- **A retired person volunteering and living in Luton**

“I had my vaccination at Redgrave Children’s and Young People Centre on 18th February. I was given the Astra Zeneca vaccine. I feel that having the vaccine is a collective effort that will help contain the virus and protect people. The staff were helpful and friendly and fully informed me of the side effects that may occur and why they might occur. I had body aches, chills and fatigue around 10 hours after the vaccination but that only lasted a few days. My arm was sore for around five days. My second vaccination has been booked for 10 weeks after my first dose.”

- **A professional working and living in Luton**





Case studies

“I had the Astra Zeneca vaccine at the Legrave Centre on 6th February. I knew I’d get mine quite quickly due to my health and had no thoughts either way about it. The doctors called me, told me where and when to go and what time. The process at the vaccination centre was great. Very well covered by volunteers. I had no side effects. I was told my next jab was due 10th April and if I hadn’t heard anything, I needed to call. No other thoughts, knew it was something I’d do whatever happened.”

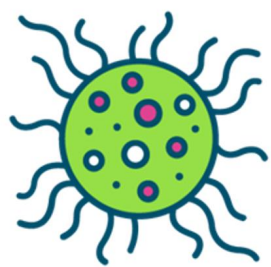
- **A volunteer living in Luton**

“I had the Pfizer vaccine at Strangers Way in January. I did think about the quickness of it being ready but I heard a professor talk about it and that all of these have been worked on for some time. I didn’t have to book it. I had a phone call on Sunday morning from Bute House Medical Centre with invitation to go for a vaccine on the same day. They asked me to come as soon as I was ready. No appointment was made. Centre was very well organised. My son took me to the centre. Marshalls were out there pointing to the right direction. My son was allowed to go in with me and temperature was taken. They asked me questions about my health and if I was right or left handed. They wrote down the time of the vaccine as I had to wait for 15 minutes in the centre to make sure I did not have a reaction. Nurse had asked if I was right or left handed and I wish I had asked for it on my right arm as I lie on the left side so it hurt while sleeping. But otherwise no pain and didn't feel unwell. No side effects. I got a booklet which said we are unable to give you a date but contact your GP surgery if you have not heard by 26th March about your second dose. There will be approximately 10 weeks between doses. I was happy about the whole thing and it ran very smoothly.”

- **A retired person volunteering and living in Luton**

“I had my vaccination on 15/02/21 at Redgrave Children's Centre. Enough parking space in the car park. Went straight in, verify ID at the front desk at the entrance. Inside the hall there were 7/8 tables with 2 nurses on each table. Went to one of the tables, they checked my ID, NHS No etc. Asked me few questions such as allergy/ pregnancy/ if I had any temperature or had any vaccine recently etc. Had my jab and went to waiting area in the middle of the hall where there were around 15 chairs spread out 2m apart. Finally left after 10 min. It was very pleasant experience. Staff and volunteers helpful. After the vaccination, I had body ache which lasted a couple of days. No further issues.”

- **A professional working and living in Luton**



General feedback

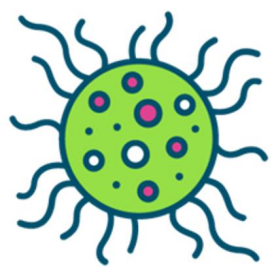
Feedback received by Healthwatch Luton about the vaccine has included a lot of different information.

There have been issues with people being coded correctly at their GP practice to ensure they are in the correct cohort for the vaccination. One person was CEV and had been told by their hospital consultant to shield and they would be in the CEV cohort for the vaccination. They were not coded correctly at their GP practice as they had not put the health conditions in correctly at the time of diagnosis, meaning they were 'missed off' the list. However, they were able to speak with their practice manager to get this resolved and an appointment booked in locally.

Another issue with coding has been for carers. More than one person has had difficulty ensuring they are correctly coded as a carer at their GP practice. If a person relies on another, for their day to day living and they would not be able to maintain this living if their carer was to be taken ill, they need to be coded as a carer at the practice. Communications have not been great for those who are carers and understanding if they are entitled to the vaccine or not. There is a need to be in receipt of Carers Allowance or similar to be entitled to the vaccine as an unpaid or informal carer.

Someone who is volunteering to support the vaccination sites has stated they are well organised, friendly and welcoming. If vaccinations are left at the end of the day, they are being offered to volunteers and NHS staff. As well as vaccinating those who are within the priority groups, they are vaccinating in excess of 100 NHS and care staff at the end of the day. The centres are being flexible also, when people are coming along with relatives or those they care for, and there is some opportunity to vaccinate those at the same time without appointments. However, some people who have been advised to go along to the Leagrave site, by the Lewsey rapid testing centre were told they could not be vaccinated there as their GP was within a different PCN.





Overall feedback

It has become apparent through this vaccination programme that is a national roll-out, how important it is for medical records to be up to date and people have their conditions, needs and situations correctly coded at the GP practices. Whilst there has been national guidance from the JCVI and local support from local authorities and clinical commissioning groups, there has still been confusion over criteria and need of vaccine. If a person is an informal carer and does not receive Carers Allowance benefit, they may not be able to access the vaccine as someone who is in receipt of it would. This needs to be addressed to ensure that it is the same for all informal or unpaid carers.

It would be useful for the process to be understood and standard with all GP practices how they define an unpaid carer and how a person can make sure a GP practice knows they are an unpaid carer to ensure correct coding on the system. This is something that is to be shared within the Carers work Healthwatch Luton are carrying out this quarter.



It has been discussed that there may be an annual booster for coronavirus and this would need to be rolled out to all those who have received the initial vaccinations. There needs to be consideration for this and how this will be communicated with the wider public.

There is a low uptake to the vaccination programme in particular areas or particular age or ethnic groups. There needs to be work around myth busting and understanding why the uptake is lower and how to combat this.