

Briefing

11 January 2021

Armed forces healthcare briefing and latest updates on COVID-19

This fortnightly brief is intended to keep you up-to-date on the provision of NHS services for the armed forces community, as well as latest information and guidance relating to COVID-19.

COVID-19 updates

Shielding advice reintroduced for those who are extremely vulnerable

As England enters a third [national lockdown](#) to limit the spread of the virus, [shielding advice](#) has been reintroduced across all areas of England for those who on medical grounds are defined as extremely vulnerable. NHS advice for people at high risk from coronavirus (shielding) is available [here](#).

COVID-19 vaccination

The NHS is currently offering a COVID-19 vaccine to people most at risk from coronavirus. The vaccine is being offered in some hospitals and hundreds of local vaccination centres run by GPs.

It's being given to:

- some people aged 80 and over who already have a hospital appointment in the next few weeks
- people who live or work in care homes
- health care workers at high risk.

The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). [Read the latest JCVI advice on priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccination on GOV.UK](#)

Introduction of the Oxford University / AstraZeneca vaccine

Patients at Oxford University were the first to receive the [new AstraZeneca vaccine](#) last week. With two vaccines now approved, this allows a significant expansion of the vaccination programme, with more vaccination sites opening in the coming weeks and months.

Moderna vaccine approved by UK regulator

On Friday 8 January the [COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna](#) was given regulatory approval for supply by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

To stay up to date with the latest news and information on the vaccine, please visit the [NHS website](#).

Please see [here](#) for documents relating to the vaccination programme, as well as Public Health England [COVID-19 vaccine campaign resources](#).

If you have any further information needs, please contact carrie.fleming@nhs.net.

Care and support for the armed forces community

Defence select committee

This week, the [Defence Select Committee](#) will revisit its inquiry in the last Parliament into the provision of mental health care for the armed forces and veterans to see what progress has been made on its recommendations and how the system has responded to the pandemic. Formal meetings will take place on 12 and 26 January 2021.

New GP national referral pathway to NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service for minor illness now available

GP practices across England can now refer patients with minor illness symptoms, for a same day consultation with a community pharmacist, using a new national referral pathway to the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS).

As practices begin to deliver the COVID-19 vaccination programme, this greater use of pharmacists' expertise can help increase capacity within general practice for the treatment of patients with higher acuity needs.

The pathway has been introduced following successful pilots around the country, which showed it to be effective and convenient, with high patient satisfaction scores.

Armed forces families engagement

Thank you again for your support with promoting and responding to the NHS England and NHS Improvement engagement on improving care for armed forces families. We received nearly 1,400 responses from a mixture of questionnaires, focus groups and one to one interviews. These responses are in the process of being independently analysed, with key findings, recommendations and next steps to be set out in an engagement report. This will be published in the forthcoming months, along with details of next steps and how to continue to be involved in this important area of work.