**This update follows a number of enquiries that we have received this week at the practice and also changes to government guidance. We aim to update weekly so please don’t call the surgery about Covid vaccines and keep the lines free, unless you are unwell.**

The vaccination programme – the biggest in NHS history – is off to a strong start, and more than 2.6million doses have now been delivered across the country, covering almost one in four people over the age of 80. We were delighted to start our contribution at the weekend, and we truly appreciated the efforts of our patients who attended the Grange Health Centre where over 250 of our patients received for their first vaccine. Thank you to the many family members, neighbours, drivers and friends who helped people get there safely in the ice and snow. It was a wonderful effort on your part.

NHS teams have been working hard over the last month to deliver the Pfizer vaccine in hundreds of hospital hubs, local GP-led services and care homes, at the same time as providing care to all those who need it and the rising number of Covid cases. Many of our team of GP’s, Nurses and Admin team are able to work at Grange over the evenings and weekends to deliver vaccinations to our patients, so you will at least see some familiar faces. Working with the team at Grange means that by the end of this week we will have vaccinated over 3000 people across the Grange and South Lakes network of practices safely, with all the appropriate after vaccination care and support. If requested, please continue to go to Grange.

As we said in the winter update letter, there are currently two vaccinations being used [Pfizer](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-for-covid-19) and [Oxford University, Astra Zeneca](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca) which is easier to store and handle. We have a clinic this weekend at Ambleside just for patients who were unable to get to Grange due to mobility or other health reasons.

The [new guidance from the JCVI on prioritising giving more people their first dose](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/01/C1039-letter-instruction-on-timing-of-second-dose-of-covid-19-vaccinations-11-jan-21.pdf) also means that we will get the maximum benefit for the most people in the shortest possible time and will help save lives.

We recognise that people have concerns about when they will be vaccinated and we support the admin team in contacting patients in priority order, which can be found here [Priority Groups for Covid vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020)

We are required by the NHS to strictly adhere to these government guidelines and have no scope for changing people’s priorities. We are committed to offering the vaccination as fairly and consistently as possible on this basis. We understand how worried some people are and how difficult this has been for many, but please don’t ask us to make an exception as will not be able to do so. All of our patients are important to us and following the guidelines consistently and transparently is the only fair way we can proceed.

Unfortunately, we also have no influence or control over the ordering or delivery of vaccinations as this is linked to national supply programme. But it’s important that we remember this will be a marathon, not a sprint. The large increase in cases that hospitals are seeing and the emergence of a new variant of the virus also shows that we cannot let our guard down now and underlines the importance of offering the first dose to as many people as possible quickly. Even those who have received a vaccine still need to follow social distancing guidance.

You all have an important part to play to help the NHS do this:

* please don’t contact us to seek a vaccine, we will contact you
* when we do contact you, please attend your booked appointments
* let us know if you are unwell and can’t attend so we can give your appointment to someone else
* please continue to follow all the guidance to control the virus and save lives.

As soon as we receive each notification of a delivery, we will contact ONLY eligible patients. This will be by text for patients where we have mobile number, and we will also ring anyone who only has a landline registered with us. We are aware of Reception pressures and other difficulties with mobiles phones so patients who have been texted, are also followed-up with a phone call if they have not booked within a couple of days.

**Things you can do to help**

* Make sure we have your latest contact information – it’s essential that we can contact you to let you know when it’s time for your covid vaccine. This means mobile, landline and email and also knowing if the number is shared by multiple family members with consent
* To free up our Telephone and Reception team, please register for online services – then you can order your medication online – processing your request this way saves us lots of time and is clinically safer.
* Follow us on Social Media – (see foot of the page) this is where we will post as much information as possible, as soon as we get it. It may take us a couple of days to reply to individual messages so bear with us. Please share any information with neighbours, friends and family not using social media to get messages out into the community
* Continue to follow the [Government guidance for covid](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/social-distancing/)
* [Have the vaccination](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/) as soon as we contact you to help protect you and others

While we are all asked to stay at home as much as possible, you can still access many NHS services. Please visit [www.nhs.uk/health-at-home](http://www.nhs.uk/health-at-home) for more information and share this information with others in your family and networks who aren’t online but still need to know about the changes in how to get help

We are committed to working together with other practices and the local community to enable as many people to be vaccinated as possible. We hope we will continue to have your ongoing support as we work to deliver the vaccination programme.

Stay Safe

From everyone at Central Lakes Medical Group