

COVID-19 Vaccine – Information for Carers in Sussex Frequently Asked Questions

A joint communication by The Carers Centre for Brighton & Hove,
Amaze, Care for the Carers East Sussex and
Carers Support West Sussex

1. Are unpaid carers a priority for the vaccine?

Am I on the priority list?

Yes, unpaid adult carers aged 16 to 64 and young carers aged 16 or 17 are included in group 6 on the priority list for the COVID-19 vaccine. Unpaid carers aged 65 and over will be offered the vaccine earlier, as they are included in groups 2-5 which cover the whole population aged 65 and above.

The priority list has been guided by the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#), which provides independent scientific advice on immunisation to all UK Health Departments, including the efficacy and safety of vaccines and priority groups to be vaccinated.

Priority Group	Risk Group
1	Residents in a care home for older adults Staff working in care homes for older adults
2	All those 80 years of age and over Frontline health and social care workers
3	All those 75 years of age and over
4	All those 70 years of age and over 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, including unpaid carers aged 16+
7	All those 16 - 64 years of age and over

2. When will I get the vaccine?

Everyone in the priority list will be offered the vaccine as soon as possible. Exact timing for each group will depend on supplies arriving. Carers' support services in Sussex are in discussions with Sussex NHS teams and local authorities around the vaccine rollout and will endeavour to keep carers informed as timelines and appointment booking plans become available.

I am a carer over 65, when will I get the vaccine?

Unpaid carers aged 65 and over will be offered the vaccination earlier, as part of the rollout to groups 2-5 in the table above.

Do I need to do anything in advance, like let my GP know I am a carer?

You do not need to be registered as a carer with your GP to receive the vaccination in priority group 6. You may wish to tell them about your caring role the next time you speak with them, to ensure they are aware of your carer status, but please do not make an appointment or telephone your practice especially. Carer registration is not necessary for you to be invited for a COVID-19 vaccination locally.

Should I register with my local carers' centre?

Joining your local carers' organisation is a reliable way to get up to date information and advice about being a carer (including vaccinations). We can offer you support or tell you about other services or types of support that are available locally.

Carers Support Service	Website(s)	Telephone
Carers Support West Sussex	https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/	0300 028 8888
Amaze – providing a range of services for children and young people with SEND and their Parent Carers across Sussex	https://amazesussex.org.uk/	01273 772289
Care for the Carers (East Sussex)	https://www.cftc.org.uk/	01323 738 390
The Carers Centre for Brighton & Hove	https://www.thecarerscentre.org/ or https://carershub.co.uk/	01273 977 000

3. What do you mean by unpaid carer? Who is included in the definition?

The priority list group 6 covers all unpaid carers aged 16 to 64. This means that anyone aged 16 to 64, who provides, or intends to provide, care to someone with a long-term illness, physical disability, learning disability, mental health condition or substance dependence, no matter what age the person they care for is (including children), will be eligible to receive the vaccination in group 6.

Am I included even though I don't get Carers' Allowance?

Yes, you do not need to be in receipt of Carers' Allowance to be in priority group 6.

Am I included as a parent carer?

Yes, parent carers are included in priority group 6.

Am I included even though I'm not registered as a carer with my GP?

Yes, you do not have to be registered as a carer with your GP to be included in priority group 6. We are all working as part of a team of carers' organisations to come up with an agreed process for carers to be identified and invited for vaccination. This will be communicated as soon as possible, via all our organisations.

Am I included as a young carer?

Yes, if you are aged 16 plus.

If there is more than one person providing care to the same person, can we each get the vaccine?

Yes, multiple carers for the same person can receive the vaccination in group 6.

4. What about the person I care for, can they have the vaccine at the same time?

The priority list group 6 also includes "all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk," so if you are caring for a person of this age then you will be in the same priority group. However, we do not yet know if all people in this group will be called at the same time, so it is highly likely one of you will be called before the other. For those aged 16-25 who have additional needs, are needle phobic or likely to be very concerned about having their vaccination, it is suggested that the young person will respond much better to having their vaccination if their carer has theirs at the same time. We have fed this into the NHS teams and will continue to press for this to become an option when this group is invited.

If you are a parent carer of someone under the age of 16, they will not currently be invited for vaccination. Children under 16 are seen as being at the very lowest risk of getting seriously ill, even if they are disabled or have health conditions. There is no information out yet about offering vaccination for the small group of under 16s who are still considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable. This is bound to be worrying for families. One issue is that vaccines have not been tested on children, although this is now starting so there should be more information about vaccination for this group eventually.

We are requesting that consideration is given to carers who have to attend vaccination centres or GP surgeries for their vaccine with the person they care for alongside them, or the person will be at risk if left alone, e.g. people living with dementia.

5. What about the person I care for's Personal Assistant (PA) - can they have the vaccine?

Carers who employ Personal Assistants (PAs) using direct payments will be glad to know that PAs are seen as "frontline social care workers" and so are in group 2 on the priority list. This means they are eligible to access a vaccination now. There is more information here <https://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/keepsussexsafe/sussex-COVID-19-19-vaccination-programme/> The NHS expects to be able to vaccinate all health, social care and care workers, including PAs, in Sussex by mid-February.

6. Where will I have the vaccine?

People are currently being invited to attend a vaccination site, or may be invited to have their jab at their (more familiar) GP surgery, so this might be preferable for some, but as things progress we might see more options.

A list of current vaccination centre sites in Sussex can be accessed via this page:

<https://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/keepsussexsafe/sussex-COVID-19-vaccination-programme/>

7. Is the vaccine safe?

Which vaccine will I get?

NHS England will only use a vaccine if it meets the required standards of safety and effectiveness. Further information can be found on the [NHS Inform coronavirus vaccine](#) web-page.

Are there people who shouldn't get the vaccine?

Information about people who shouldn't get the vaccine can be found on the [NHS coronavirus vaccine web-page](#).

8. Where can I go for further information?

There is further information on unpaid carers and the COVID-19 vaccination as follows:

Service	Link
Government's COVID-19 advice for unpaid carers webpage	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-COVID-19-providing-unpaid-care/guidance-for-those-who-provide-unpaid-care-to-friends-or-family
NHS coronavirus vaccine web-page	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/
NHS Sussex vaccine enquiries	sxccg.vaccineenquiries@nhs.net
Carers Support West Sussex	https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/COVID-19-hub
Amaze – parent carers in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove	https://amazesussex.org.uk/coronavirus-advice/coronavirus-health-wellbeing/
Care for the Carers (East Sussex)	https://www.cftc.org.uk/coronavirus/
The Carers Centre for Brighton & Hove	https://www.thecarerscentre.org/latest-statement-on-coronavirus/
Mencap have easy read information about the vaccination	Easy Read Accessible Information About Coronavirus (COVID-19) For People With A Learning Disability, Families, Carers and Support Workers Mencap