

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE 14/01/2021

Practice Operations

Earlier last week we were put back into a National Lockdown until at least mid-February. Please see <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> for further details.

For our practice operations, not much will change in the practice as we already have very robust tried and tested processes for working in the pandemic and we continue to use telephone triage first and bring in only those patients we need to see face to face and for routine care.

Our priority remains continuing to do the work we can with the resource we have and will be using our COVID Levels communicated previously (See <https://compasshousemedical.com/coronavirus-update-27-10-2020/>) to monitor demand and we will escalate up and down the levels on various days and weeks based on how many staff we have off isolating or working at the COVID vaccination clinics.

This enables us to continue providing the best care we can with the resources we have available at the time, whilst keeping everyone safe. Currently Minor surgery and ear syringing are the only services we are unable to provide due to safety reasons.

We are currently operating at “COVID normal” level and have had a few escalations to level 1 over the winter period so far but we have managed to get back to normal level within a few days of those escalations. As staff continue to be pulled in multiple directions, working both in practice and at the Vaccination Centre, along with the increased number of COVID cases locally, then there are likely to be further escalations through the levels over the next few months and we will continue to keep you updated via our website and Facebook if we have to change levels.

We continue to ask that you only attend the practice when invited to by a member of staff – you will only be allowed to enter the building if you have a pre-booked appointment and you will be pre-screened and temperature checked at the door.

Please do not attend if you have any of the symptoms related to Coronavirus - a new cough, a temperature above 37.8 or any new loss of sense of taste or smell.

Please only attend alone, unless you require a carer to aid mobility or provide support. If the patient is a child we ask that only one parent attends with that child (siblings can attend as well if no other child care is available to the parents).

Please attend on time for your appointment and arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before your appointment as we have strict numbers of people we have to stick to in our waiting rooms at any one time to ensure social distancing is in place.

If you do arrive early you may be asked to wait outside until a time closer to your appointment, so this could mean waiting outside in bad weather. Please also remember your mask at all times.

Shielding Patients

For those patients who have been advised that they need to go back into shielding and where you need a routine care appointment, you will be offered one during the first hour of the day.

This will add a higher level of protection for our most vulnerable patients because we have the fewest number of people on site at this time and there will be no known COVID symptomatic patients on site as these will be seen later in the day.

Torbay COVID Vaccination Programme update

Our most at risk patients have started to receive their COVID-19 vaccinations at the Riviera International Conference Centre (RICC) in Torquay. This is a joint initiative with all the practices across Torbay.

The vaccination consists of two injections 12 weeks apart and both injections are needed for maximum protection. Information about the vaccine is available on the link below.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>

The vaccination supply to us is currently very restricted and we have to vaccinate according to strict criteria, per the graphic below.

Patients are invited according to clinical need and we have no ability to override the criteria. We are currently working through risk groups 1 and 2, which are our residents and staff in Care Homes and our over 80's population, working in reverse age order. I am sure you can understand we have a lot of people in Torbay in these top two priority groups and we will contact you as soon as it's your turn to be invited for a vaccination.

Please avoid calling us about the vaccine at this time as we are using all our resources to notify those who are eligible now and arranging their appointments.

Currently the supply of the vaccine to us is sporadic and we often only get a few days' notice that we will be getting a delivery of vaccines. We then have a limited time to call patients, book them in and deliver those vaccines.

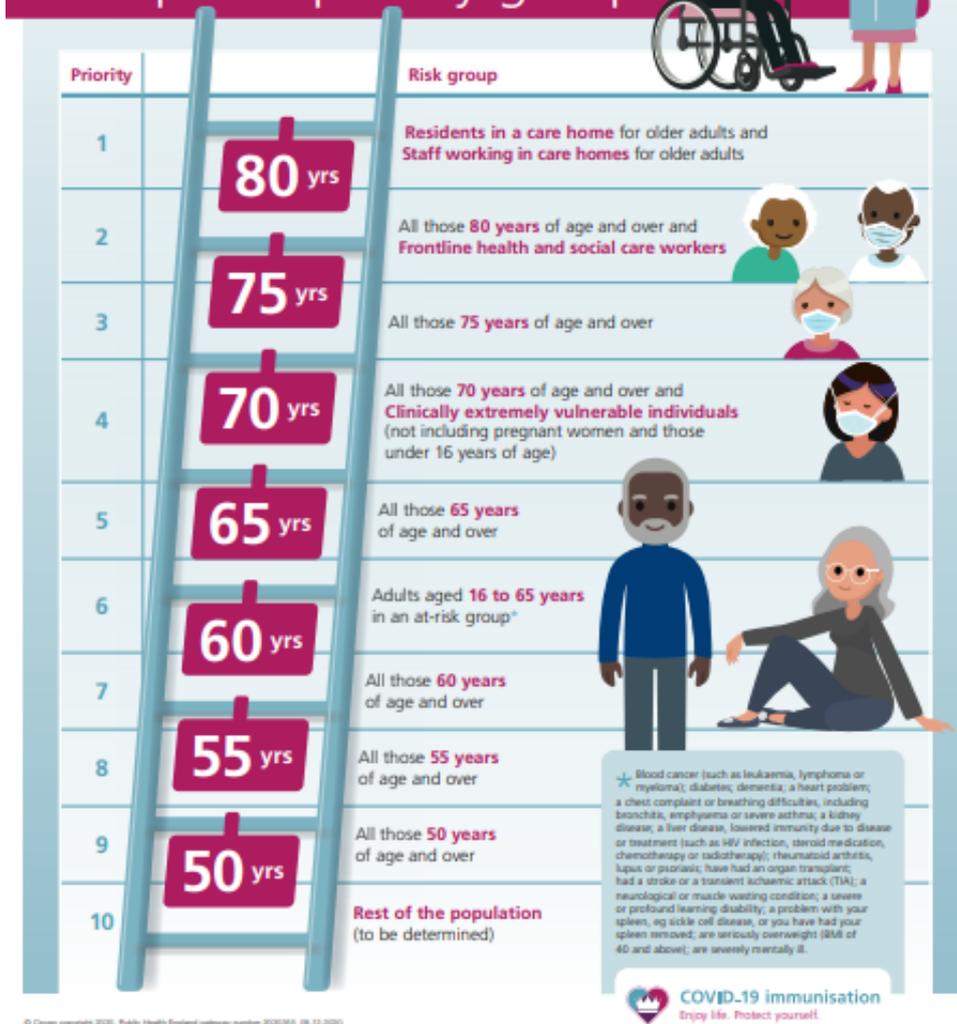
Whilst we hope that the deliveries will increase and settle into a regular pattern, it means we currently have limited choice for appointments and no timescales with how long it will take it to work through the priority groups.

When we have more information and start to move onto the next group, we will update you.



COVID-19 vaccination

First phase priority groups



<http://bit.ly/FirstPhasePriorityGroups>

All patients registered with a GP practice across Torbay who are eligible for the vaccination will be vaccinated at RICC and parking is available onsite.

RICC was chosen due to the strict social distancing measures that need to be in place to protect patients and the special conditions the vaccine needs to be stored in, along with the very strict timescales for the two doses, meaning it can only be achieved on a Torbay-wide level at one location.

Here is a short video which has been put together to show you what to expect on the day. Please do not turn up at the centre unless you have been contacted by us with an appointment.

<http://bit.ly/TorbayCovidVaccinationService>

Transport

If you are struggling with transport to RICC, the Torbay Community Helpline have some volunteers that can help. Please contact them direct using the details below.

Aiding the people of Torbay during the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond, with neighbourly support.

01803 446022 10am-6pm, Mon-Fri, 9:30am-12:30pm Sat

Online form: bit.ly/torbayhelpline

Health and Social Care Staff

All Health and Social Care Workers will be receiving their COVID-19 vaccination at a hospital hub and your employer will be receiving information on this by the end of January so please do not contact the practice regarding your vaccinations.

Workforce

Members of staff from all Practices in Torbay are working to deliver the COVID-19 Vaccine to patients at the Riviera Centre. Nurses, GPs, Healthcare Assistants, Admin staff and Managers are all spending time working at the site each day, instead of at their Practice to try and deliver the vaccine to protect our most vulnerable.

We do not have any additional staff above and beyond our normal team, many of whom are now working 7 days a week to ensure we offer this service to our patients on top of running our GP practices.

This means that it is harder for us to offer our normal services and you may experience delays in getting through on the phone or seeing your preferred member of staff. Therefore, please do bear with us.

As a surgery we remain open and here to help you. Our staff are working harder, working longer hours and are under more pressure than ever before. Please help us to get through this difficult time together by being patient with us - we are managing this programme on top of the usual high

demand at this time of year and we are all working as hard as possible for you so we can get back to a more normal way of life as quickly as possible.

Stay Safe,

The Compass House Team