

Bath and Salisbury host large-scale NHS Vaccination Centres

The rollout of the coronavirus vaccine across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire is now benefiting from the introduction of two large-scale NHS Vaccination Centres.

Based at Bath Racecourse and Salisbury City Hall, the two venues, which open to patients this week, will be able to provide the life-saving vaccine on a mass scale.

All people currently eligible for a coronavirus vaccine, and living within a 45-minute drive of each venue, will be written to in the coming days with details of how to book an appointment.

Any person who receives a letter will then be able to choose whether to have the vaccine at either Salisbury City Hall or Bath Racecourse, or to wait to be invited to a GP-led vaccination clinic, which could be at a GP practice or other community venue.

These new large-scale centres, which will be open seven days a week, have been designed to offer people who are able to travel an alternative, potentially faster, route to receiving the coronavirus vaccine.

Gill May, Director of Nursing and Quality, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG, said: "I'm delighted to announce the opening of these two large-scale vaccination centres, which are the first of their kind in our region.

"Getting these two venues up and running with the help of our community and voluntary sector partners, such as St John's Ambulance and 3SG, will allow us to provide even more opportunities for people to get vaccinated in addition to what is already being offered at our GP-led sites.

"We know that many people in line for the vaccine are still very much mobile, and also incredibly eager to be vaccinated, and we hope these new venues will help us to carry out more vaccinations and ultimately protect more families from the heartbreak that is so often associated with coronavirus."

Details of how to book an appointment at the large-scale venues are included in the letters that are being addressed to people in the region over the age of 80.

Those over the age of 70, along with frontline health and care workers, should also receive an invitation to either Salisbury or Bath in the coming weeks.

People are asked not to turn up at the venues without an appointment as the vaccination staff at both Salisbury City Hall and Bath Racecourse will be unable to give the jab to any person without a pre-arranged vaccine slot.

Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of Wiltshire Council, said: “We are proud to play our part in this monumental effort to roll out the vaccine as quickly and safely as possible.

“A vaccine is the light at the end of the tunnel and thanks to the efforts of hugely talented scientific research teams, we find ourselves in this much more hopeful position.

“However, the rollout of the vaccine is a huge logistical undertaking involving many partners and organisations across the country and will take some time.

“In the meantime everyone must keep following the rules to keep each other as safe as possible.”

Dr Bruce Laurence, Director of Public Health, Bath & North East Somerset Council said: “I am thrilled that this vaccination centre is open in our area and I would like to thank the NHS and the many volunteers and other staff who have worked so hard to make it happen.

“This centre will make a huge difference to our communities, saving lives, reducing pressure on the health service and, eventually, helping us all reclaim our freedoms.

“But please remember that even if you have had your vaccination, you may still be able to pass the virus on to others, so you must continue to follow all the rules and guidance. Remember: hands-face-space.”

Liam Johnson, Executive Director of Bath Racecourse, said: “We are really pleased to work with Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group to assist them in using our facilities to deliver vaccinations.

“We hope that this will be of benefit to many people around the community.”

For more information about the rollout of the coronavirus vaccine across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, visit www.bswccg.nhs.uk.

Further details about the vaccine itself are also available online at www.nhs.uk.