

Coronavirus – first Scottish vaccinations take place at the Western General

The first vaccinations against coronavirus have been given in Edinburgh to those who will be carrying out the vaccination programme.

Initial supplies of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine have been arriving at NHS health boards all over Scotland since the weekend and the government says they are being stored at the required ultra low temperature ahead of the start of the vaccination programme.

Scotland's Deputy Chief Medical Officer Nicola Steedman was at NHS Lothian's Western General Hospital to see the roll-out begin, with vaccinators being vaccinated first. After that, the focus will be on vaccinating residents in care homes for older adults and their carers and other frontline healthcare workers all in line with guidance from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

People over the age of 80 will then receive their injections, as supply allows. As those being vaccinated need two doses at least 21 days apart, 50 per cent of the vaccines will be kept back in to make sure we can give the second injection within the advised timeframe.





Deputy charge nurse Katie McIntosh administers the first of two Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine jabs to Vivien McKay Clinical Nurse Manager at the Western General Hospital, in Edinburgh, on the first day of the largest immunisation programme in the UK's history. Care home workers, NHS staff and people aged 80 and over began receiving the jab this morning. PA Photo. Picture date: Tuesday December 8, 2020. See

PA story HEALTH Coronavirus. Photo credit – Andrew Milligan/PA Wire

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said:“This is obviously a very welcome milestone in our collective fight against the pandemic and I am very grateful to all those who have worked so hard to ensure Scotland is ready to deliver these first COVID-19 vaccinations.

“Science has given us hope and we are starting on a journey which will eventually allow us to return to the lives we want to lead.

“Following clinical advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) we will begin with those groups which have been prioritised to address 99 per cent of preventable deaths associated with COVID-19. These include elderly care home residents and staff, frontline health and social care workers and a number of other groups who are at risk of serious harm and death from this virus.

“We ask everyone to be patient as we work through these groups as quickly as vaccine supply allows and we urge you to go for the vaccine when it’s your turn.

“Meantime it remains very important that as we vaccinate, we all stick to the necessary restrictions and public health advice to keep suppressing the virus to as low a level as we can.

“A vaccination programme of this scale is a significant logistical challenge and requires a major nationwide effort. But it is one we undertake with optimism and determination to succeed.”

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Nicola Steedman said:“I felt genuinely privileged to see this long hoped for and clinically crucial vaccination programme begins at NHS Lothian’s Western General Hospital in Edinburgh, and I would like to sincerely thank all those involved in the vast amount of work which has

allowed us to reach this absolute milestone in our Covid-19 response.

“The arrival of these first Covid-19 vaccines is a huge turning point for us all, and will protect those most at risk from the serious effects of the virus, but we can’t relax yet. Even after the first people are vaccinated it will be important for now that everyone continues to follow the Scottish Government’s guidance for their area and above all to follow FACTS. These will continue to be the most important things we can do to protect ourselves and others from the virus, as we continue to roll out the vaccination to all of those who need it.”

Clinical Lead for the Covid Vaccination Hub at NHS Lothian’s Western General Hospital Pauline Bell said: “I am incredibly proud to be leading the team of vaccinators here at the Western General Hospital, for this unique and hugely important vaccination programme.

“An enormous amount of planning and preparation from across the organisation has been undertaken to get us to this point, so I am looking forward to finally welcoming staff into the clinic.

“As we prepare to administer the very first vaccinations, we reach a crucial juncture in the fight against COVID-19, the beginning of the journey towards a return to normality.”

