

Midlothian Council advises second vaccine on the way

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

Midlothian health bosses have been told to get ready to administer a second Covid-19 vaccine from 21 December 2020.

The AstraZeneca vaccine is expected to be approved for distribution in time for Christmas and will join the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in the programme to inoculate those most at risk.

Jamie Megaw, strategic programme manager for NHS Lothian, told a virtual meeting of Midlothian Integration Joint Board that the roll out of the Pfizer vaccine, which began on Tuesday morning had already seen hundreds of care workers and vaccinators in the county receive their first jab.

He said Midlothian Community Hospital, which is acting as the county's main hub, has the capacity to administer more than 200 vaccinations a day and was fully booked.

And he revealed that while the Pfizer vaccine, which requires a second injection 21 days after the first one to ensure immunity, was the first available, the AstraZenca Oxford vaccine was days away from being given the go ahead to be used.

He told the meeting: "The AstraZenica vaccine is hopefully

going to be regulated in the next few days.

“We have been told to plan for it being available from December 21 if it goes ahead.”

Mr Megaw set out the timetable for vaccinations which were expected to take place over what he described as two “waves”.

Wave one would take place this month and through January tackling those identified as a priority – vaccinators, care workers, NHS workers and the over 80’s.

He said the second wave would focus on 79-year-olds and younger and was likely to take from February well into the summer to carry out.

Cautioning that rolling out of the vaccine would take time, he told the board that the mood at the hospital as the first injections were administered had been high among staff.

He said: “I’ve been in the building this week and there is a really great atmosphere both from people coming through and those delivering it.”

Mr Megaw said the service was confident it was prepared for the roll out of the vaccines as they are delivered.

Fiona Huffer, board member, also revealed that Midlothian had led the way in NHS Lothian directing that health and social care partnership staff would be allowed to train to give the vaccine meaning a wide range of workers from occupational therapist, physical therapist and dieticians were able to administer it.

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