

Videoconference on Vaccinations for young people with SEND and their carers

The Our Voice videoconference on vaccinations took place on 16th March and we were joined by a panel from Public Health to answer questions from parents and carers regarding vaccinations for young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and their carers.

We were joined by a panel from Public Health which included:

Dudzile Sher Arami, Consultant in Public Health

Nitika Silha (local GP and NCL CCG Governing Body Member)

Katie MacDonald (Public Health Registrar)

Bethan Stott (School aged immunisations)

Emily Burch (Head of Physical Health, BEH)

The information below is a summary of the discussions at the session. Public Health have confirmed that this information is correct at the time of publication (31st March 2021) but please note that the situation is changing quickly, so please check the up to date position.

Eligibility for vaccinations

Who is eligible for the vaccine?

The vaccine program is currently suitable for all adults, including those adults aged 16 and over with complex medical conditions.

The Pfizer Vaccine is the only vaccine authorised for those aged 16 and over.

The Astra Zeneca (AZ) vaccine is **currently NOT licensed for anyone aged under 18.**

If a Young Person (YP) is in the 16-17 year old category, speak to a GP first before booking an appointment to ensure the Pfizer vaccine is available on the day that you book. You must book an appointment at one of the Vaccination Hubs.

How are people being invited for vaccinations?

Currently, invites are going out via text messages through the GP Federation. Ensure that your GP has an up-to date mobile number for you / your child / person you care for.

Vaccine safety and side effects

What if my child has multiple allergies and carries an EpiPen?

The Pfizer vaccination is **not** recommended for 16/17 year olds with severe allergies. The recommendation in this case is to have the AZ vaccine.

Enfield have taken the decision to give AZ as an off-licence vaccination in order to provide better protection to the Young Person. However, parent carers need to be aware of the risk that AZ is currently off licence for 16/17 year olds. It is up to the parents and carers to make this decision

Trials for AZ are being undertaken for 16-17 year olds but there is no actual data or evidence for this yet.

Those giving the vaccination at the GP sites will be clinically trained to have a discussion regarding allergies before having the vaccination. Please do have these discussions with your GP and the clinicians at your clinic and Vaccination Hub.

Is the vaccine safe for children with Autism? Which vaccine is best for those with Autism?

At the moment, links and difficulties associated with the vaccinations and those who have Autism have not been identified. This advice is for those aged 16 and over.

Both vaccines are effective for those with Autism.

It is only if the Young Person has allergies that the suitability of which vaccine needs to be given is looked at. ***Please see the response to the allergy question above.***

No advice and guidance is currently available for children under 16.

Are the vaccines given off licence to Young Persons who are in hospital (GOSH for example)?

At the moment, the Pfizer vaccination delivery is sporadic. Hence, a pragmatic decision has been made to give an off-licence vaccination (like AZ) to better protect a 16/17 year old, and so, some hospitals may decide to do this.

Only if the Young Person has allergies, the suitability of which vaccine needs to be given is considered (i.e. decided by the GP or Clinician). ***Please see the response to the allergy question above.***

Are the side effects following the 2nd dose of vaccination the same as first time round? It will be helpful to know this in order to prepare a Young Person to receive the 2nd vaccination.

Yes, there will be side effects 2nd time round, especially if one has had them the 1st time round.

It is perfectly normal and natural to have the side effects of a sore arm, mild headache and a slight temperature. Any side effects are relatively mild, and is part of the body's response to the vaccine.

Yes, do prepare your Young Person to experience these symptoms the 2nd time round.

For the 16-17 year old who has had the AZ vaccine, does their 2nd dose have to be AZ?

Yes currently 1st and 2nd doses need to be the same type of vaccination.

Reasonable adjustments

My son / daughter has a learning disability. Where can I take him / her to get vaccinated?

Enfield residents with a diagnosed Learning Disability who are over 18 can have a coronavirus vaccine at the **Chase Farm Hospital Vaccination Hub**. The Hub is committed to providing reasonable adjustments for adults aged 18 and over. More information on this can be found by clicking [here](#).

What reasonable adjustments should a parent / carer expect a GP surgery to make for their Young Person?

Those Young Persons aged 16/17 years old should ideally be receiving the Pfizer vaccine which is only currently available at the 3 sites of Carlton House, Winchmore Hill and Evergreen.

Local GP sites are **not** currently offering the Pfizer vaccination.

If the Young Person tends to get upset or needs reassurance around the vaccination, arrange the booking during a quieter time, for e.g. later on in the evenings, first thing in the mornings or at weekends.

A Young Person aged 18 and over can go to the Chase Farm Vaccination Hub (details given above)

What if my child is terrified of needles / has needle phobia? Who do I talk to?

For a Young Person aged 16/17, the team is working in conjunction with Integrated Learning Disability Services (ILDS) and other specialist teams such as needle phobia teams.

Identify the needs of your Young Person, so that you can be directed towards the right groups. Special teams are available in different hospital hubs with support staff to assist you and your Young Person.

A Young Person aged 18 and over can go to the Chase Farm Vaccination Hub (details given above)

Can parents / unpaid carers choose to take their Young Person with Learning Disabilities (LD) to the Chase Side hub, when a vaccination appointment comes up for that Young Person?

Only the AZ Vaccine (which is suitable for those over 18) is currently being provided at the Chase Side Hub and a Young Person can go there for their vaccination.

16/17 year olds who are eligible for the Pfizer Vaccine will **not** be accommodated at Chase Side Hub.

Further information regarding the Chase Farm Vaccination Hub is available on the [‘MyLife Enfield’](#) website.

Unpaid carers and vaccinations

Is a parent considered to be an unpaid carer if they have child or Young Person with a disability, and if so, can this parent get vaccinated?

Anyone who is a carer, paid or unpaid, is now eligible to get vaccinated in Enfield. Ensure that you are registered and coded in with your GP as a carer, in order to be identified as a Carer.

Additionally, parents and carers should get registered as an unpaid carer with the Enfield Carers Centre. The vaccination invite for carers is coming via a National Booking system, and Enfield Carers Centre are co-ordinating the bookings for carers.

Can the parents/ unpaid carer of a Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) child under 16 receive the vaccine?

Yes, they can, provided that they are registered as a Carer with the Enfield Carers Centre.

Can I get a vaccination as an unpaid carer at the same time as my child?

At Chase Side Hub, there is an opportunity to vaccinate a carer alongside the Young Person.

Most GP sites have been able to accommodate having both the Young Person and Carer in the same cubicle one after the other.

I am a carer for my child and haven't been contacted by my GP about getting a vaccination. What should I do?

If you think you are eligible for a vaccine and haven't been contacted yet, ensure that you are registered as a Carer. You will then get an invitation for the vaccine through either the National Booking system or through the GP surgery.

If you are waiting to hear about a vaccination appointment for an eligible Young Person (aged 16 and over), a booking link will be sent out by the GP if the Young Person has been identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and is over 16.

Anyone under the age of 16 is not yet eligible for a vaccination.

Communication with GPs

Parents / carers have found that some GP surgeries are not readily acknowledging a 16 year old with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is eligible to receive the vaccination. It takes several conversations with the surgery before a booking link is sent out.

What reassurances can parent carers have so that the same issue does not arise when a Young Person's 2nd vaccination is due?

The link for the 2nd vaccination will be sent using the same method that was used for the 1st vaccination (e.g. via a mobile phone). There shouldn't be any further issues as long as your correct contact details are on the system.

This link will usually be sent at around 11 weeks after the 1st vaccination, thus allowing about 7-10 days for a parent/carer to book their 2nd vaccination appointment.

How can I contact my GP to enquire about the eligibility for vaccination for myself or my Young Person? I am not getting a response over the phone.

Enfield GP practices are now using online consultations. You can submit your questions online via e-consult. Ask your practice if you can submit your questions online. This will allow your GP to reply to you via text or call you.

Other general information

- Do ask clinical staff and have discussions with them on the day of your vaccination if you have any concerns
- Vaccination is just part of the protection. Everyone still needs to maintain social distancing, wash hands and wear masks.
- Having the vaccine does not mean a Young Person over-rides the shielding advice for a CEV person.
- Lots of Easy Read guides are available to help you and your Young Person find the relevant information about the vaccinations
[Mencap Easy Read guide to the vaccine](#)
[MyLife Enfield website](#)
[Government Easy Read publications](#) about the vaccination
- At the moment there is no guidance available on vaccines for under 16s.
- As a Carer, you can now book using the National booking system number on 119, or contact [Enfield Carers Centre](#) to register as a carer. Enfield Carers Centre can be contacted by phone on 0208 3663677.