

Your Health

Update for patients and the public in Berkshire West
(Includes West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading)



June 2021 - 2nd edition

All adults in Berkshire West can now book themselves in for their COVID-19 jab - so anyone aged 18 and over is asked to book as soon as possible.

More than 5.6 million people in the South East have had the lifesaving jab so far, with more than 8 in 10 adults having had their first dose, and over 4.1 million second doses also administered.

The NHS in England has delivered more than 60 million vaccinations just six months

Tehmeena Ajmal, COVID operations director for Oxford Health NHS FT, which runs all the large vaccination centres in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, said: "We're in the final weeks of this historic drive to get everyone aged 18 and over their first COVID-19 jab, having already vaccinated more than 1.8 million people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West in only six months, and ensured that more than 760,000 people have had their second jab too.

Tehmeena added: "We know that getting both doses is vital to maximising the positive impact of the vaccines so if you're offered the chance to bring forward your second jab, please do so, and most importantly come forward for both appointments, and follow the tens of millions who have already got themselves this essential protection from COVID19."

When invited, people will be able to book at one of the 1,600 vaccination centres, pharmacies or general practice sites across the country which are available through the [national booking service](#). Berkshire West sites are:

- Madejski Stadium – Mass Vaccination Centre
- Boots Pharmacy, Northbrook Street, Newbury
- Nabbs Lane Pharmacy, Kennet Centre, Newbury
- Erleigh Road Pharmacy, Reading
- Triangle Pharmacy, Tilehurst
- Western Elms Western Elms Pharmacy, Oxford Road, Reading
- Rose Street Pharmacy, Wokingham

The Primary Care Network (PCN) sites below are only bookable via a GP practice. Please wait for them to contact you.

- West Reading Villages PCN - Boathouse Surgery
- Tilehurst PCN – Tilehurst Village Surgery
- Reading University PCN – University Health Centre
- Wokingham North PCN – Woodley Centre and Wargrave surgeries

The vaccination centre at Newbury racecourse has now closed, after achieving a fantastic 66,500 jabs. One of the lead volunteers, John Hamlett, [produced this video](#) summarising its six months of operation.

Vaccines can still be booked locally via the National booking system at Boots in Northbrook Street and the Nabbs Lane pharmacy in the Kennet Centre.

Text invitations appear as an alert from 'NHSvaccine' and include a [web link to the NHS website](#) to reserve an appointment. People who cannot go online can call the service on 119 instead to book their jab.

The Berkshire Public Health Team has also produced this [short video](#) to stress the importance of your second jab, which gives you maximum protection against the Covid-19 Delta variant.

Vaccine van

A specially adapted vaccination van takes to the roads in Berkshire West later this month as part of a drive to increase uptake of the Covid jab.

Healthcare professionals and wellbeing teams will be on board the 'Health on the Move' van ready to answer Covid questions and offer people the vaccination.

Anyone is welcome to visit the van, they don't need to be registered with a GP, although the health teams will be happy to help them sort that so in future they have access to a range of healthcare professionals at a local surgery.



Details of where the van will be visiting will be published over the next few days and local people are being asked to keep an eye on social media and website updates so they know when it'll be in their area. It's hoped that by bringing the van closer to communities, more people will be encouraged to have the jab, which is the best way of protecting everyone from the virus, especially the Delta variant that is now on the rise in this area.

The van's visits are being co-ordinated by Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in partnership with local authority teams from Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire.

Katie Summers, Director of Partnerships for the CCG who is leading the vaccination roll out in Berkshire West, said: "We know that for some people it's not easy to get to a vaccination centre which is why we're bringing the van closer to you. And we know some people still have concerns about the safety of the vaccine so we've got local, trusted medical professionals on hand to help, answer questions and deal with any concerns that are making people feel anxious.

"We're working in partnership with local authorities, our voluntary and community sector and faith leaders to build vaccine confidence and focus on ensuring everyone is protected and no one gets left behind in the vaccine roll out," she added.

“We’re trying to make it as easy and convenient as possible for everyone to access a vaccine. As well as the van, we have a wide range of other vaccination sites across Berkshire West – [listed here](#).

“We all need to play our part in kicking Covid into touch and making sure our families, friends and communities are protected from the virus. The vaccination is the best way of doing this. So please pay us a visit because the quicker we all get jabbed the quicker we can all get back to doing things that we’ve missed so much,” said Katie.

Royal Berkshire Hospital teams with the English National Opera

Doctors at Reading’s Royal Berkshire Hospital have teamed up with professionals from the English National Opera (ENO) to help patients suffering from symptoms of Long Covid.

In a pioneering musical and medical venture, singers and therapists from the ENO are running online coaching sessions with patients being cared for by the hospital’s Long Covid Clinic.

The holistic online programme offers self-management tools for patients experiencing breathlessness and the anxiety this can produce. During the weekly group sessions, patients are given the tools and techniques used by singers to help them focus constructively on their breathing and teaches them to retrain their breathing through singing.

To date, people taking part in a pilot programme last year, have reported definite improvements in symptoms and wellbeing with 90 per cent saying it helped their breathlessness and 91 per cent saying their levels of anxiety had dropped. Participants also said the group aspect of the programme was a positive part of the experience and lessened feelings of isolation brought on by their illness.

Following the six-week trial last year, the programme is being rolled out to 1,000 patients.

It’s been initiated by Dr Deepak Ravindran, Lead Clinician for Berkshire Long covid Integrated Service who oversaw the setting up of the long covid clinic at the RBH last November, making it one of the first hospitals in the country to establish such a venture. Latest figures show more than 500 referrals with over 150 patients seen at the clinic. Over 80% of patients have breathlessness and more than 90% have fatigue, brain fog and pain.

More dedicated mental health support for West Berkshire schools

Children and young people in West Berkshire schools will be given more dedicated mental health support after the announcement of further funding for a pilot project launched in the area in 2019.

Two years ago, Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was selected by NHS England as one of 25 national trailblazers for the new, school-based, Mental Health Support Teams pilot, and the first set of funding was made available to help youngsters in West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading.

Now extra funding has been earmarked to extend the scheme in local schools supporting children and young people with their emotional and mental health. The University of Reading will train the team and equip them with the skills to raise mental health awareness.

The project is a partnership between Berkshire West CCG, West Berkshire Council and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Niki Cartwright, Director of Joint Commissioning for the CCG said: “The feedback we’ve had from the pilot since its launch in 2019 has been very positive and of course, the need for such dedicated mental health is more important than ever because of the impact Covid has had on our children and young people.

“Their worlds have been turned upside down by the pandemic, isolating them from their friends and the support network provided by school so it’s crucial they have quick and easy access to fully trained mental health support.

“We’re very pleased to have secured this extra funding which recognises the great work we’re already doing across West Berkshire to help children and young people deal with their mental health and wellbeing problems.”

‘The Breathing Space’ in Reading

A new facility to offer help and support for people who experience mental distress is opening in central Reading later this year.

‘The Breathing Space’ will be open each Friday to Monday in the evening offering short term crisis support to people who have been advised to attend by a professional or who want to get in touch directly. It will provide a safe, supportive, inclusive and homely environment where people can talk to others who have had mental health problems, and gain support by sharing their experiences.

The service will be run by the national charity Together for Mental Wellbeing working collaboratively alongside Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, the local Emergency Services, Primary Care and voluntary sector colleagues.

Visitors will be helped to access community resources such as the recovery colleges or secondary care mental health services, and it is hoped this service will provide better and timely support for people experiencing mental distress, as well as help ease pressure on the hospital’s Emergency Department (ED) and other emergency services.

The need for a Breathing Space facility was highlighted during last year’s review of the Mental Health Crisis Service in Berkshire West. People with experience of mental health problems said there was a need for a one-stop signposting service with more face to face interaction at times of crisis and that support should be provided when needed in a space free from judgment where staff and peers understand the circumstances that can lead to a crisis.

Niki Cartwright, Director of Joint Commissioning at Berkshire West CCG said, “We are very pleased to announce this next step towards establishing a Breathing Space (formerly referred to as a crisis café). We already commission Together for Mental Wellbeing to provide local services at Berkshire West Your Way, working alongside people with mental health issues to help them lead fulfilling and independent lives. They consistently show they have a good knowledge and working relationship with our partner agencies in Berkshire West and this, coupled with experience at a national level, puts them in a strong position to fulfil our brief and provide an exceptional service for our people.”

YOUR NHS HERE FOR YOU



Know where to go should you need medical advice



SELF CARE

For basic ailments such as cuts, grazes and an upset tummy



PHARMACY

Advice on ailments, medicines and healthier living



NHS 111

Call 111 FREE, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, or access the service online 111.nhs.uk



GP

Call your practice or visit their website to make an appointment for an illness or injury that won't go away



999

Life-threatening emergencies only

NHS 111 First

Think you need A&E? Contact NHS 111 first. The NHS will help you right away and if you need urgent care, they can book you in to be seen quickly and safely.

You can use NHS 111 either by visiting [the website](https://111.nhs.uk) or by calling 111.



JUST THINK 111 FIRST

When you think they need A&E, contact NHS 111 by phone or online.



Digital Inclusion Workshop – 30 June

More details available below and you can register [online here](#).

BOB

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire
and Berkshire West
Integrated Care System

Digital Inclusion Workshop

VIRTUAL EVENT

DATE: Wednesday 30th June 2021

TIME: 12.45pm - 4.15pm

VENUE: Zoom Virtual Event - [Register on Eventbrite](#)

ABOUT THIS EVENT

This workshop aims to bring together Community Partners, to share the work that has been ongoing to improve Digital Inclusion.

This event will inform a shared purpose and framework within BOB ICS to provide online access to all. In doing so, we will establish what good practice is in place, how it can be leveraged and identify:

- What are the biggest challenges being experienced
- What actions and activities will deliver the greatest impact

WHO THIS EVENT IS FOR

Anyone working in Digital Inclusion including:

- Patient Leaders
- HealthWatch
- Digital Champions
- Local Authority,
- Faith and Voluntary Sectors
- Tech buddies

You may want to share good practice and some of the challenges faced in your work and/or community. Let us know:

- Priority topics you would like discussed, and
- The one main thing you would like to take away from the event

AIMS OF THIS EVENT

To work openly and collaboratively to develop the draft aims of the digital inclusion strategy moving forward.

YOUR CHANCE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

This is your opportunity to participate, taking part in small, focused break out groups where you can share your views and experience, and help shape the future of digital inclusion in BOB ICS.

Register via [Eventbrite](#) and join the workshop -



New guide for SEND guide published

A new guide for parent carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been published.

It's been put together with parent carers (Reading Families Forum) in partnership with other services, to help families access information on local [SEND](#) services for children, young people with additional needs. [SEND Guide for Parent Carers | Reading Services Guide](#) the guide can also be viewed in web format. Please share this information with other families, who may benefit from accessing the guide.

