

Our Ref: ID 1860

NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group
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Re: Freedom of Information Request - Vaccination support for blind and partially sighted people

Thank you for your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which was received into this office on 5th March 2021.

You Asked for:

1. Are you ensuring information sent to a visually impaired person about vaccine appointments or provided to them at a vaccination centre is available in an accessible format such as large print and braille? If yes, how?
2. Are you providing clear information on the location of vaccine centres, such as public transport options and alternatives for blind and partially sighted people? If yes, how?
3. Are you making sure that vaccination venues have clear signage and good levels of lighting to enable blind and partially sighted people to access them? If yes, how?
4. Are you ensuring staff and volunteers at vaccination centres are trained to provide support to people with sight loss, such as providing verbal or sighted guiding where necessary? If yes, how?
5. Are you aware of and using the sight loss sector guidance on vaccine rollout which is available here:
<https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Covid-19-Vaccine-Rollout-Advice.pdf> If yes, how have you used this?

Our Response:

1. Patient appointments are booked by telephone, text or through an online booking service. Practices will be aware of their patients "accessible information" needs and will adapt their booking/information protocols accordingly. The Vaccination Information leaflet is available in large print for patients who are partially sighted and currently, vaccination sites use the appointment cards provided by NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I). If these need to be in other accessible formats, they will need to be sourced through NHSE/I.
2. If a person with visual impairment should specifically ask for these details then the various administrative staff would look to provide a suitable alternative source of information for them. However, at the time of booking, especially if via telephone, full information about the vaccine venue and how to get there is encouraged to be provided in this call. A lot of patients are now attending their own practice for vaccinations and will therefore be familiar with the location/transport options.

3. The vaccination venues have marshals at the front door to assist patients. Our Primary Care Network's (PCN's) have worked alongside Wirral Borough Council (WBC) to install additional lighting to entrances and exits, provide signage and at some sites, provide additional flood lighting in car parks for safe entry and exit from buildings. Our PCN's are confident that they have adequate signage but would be keen for feedback from patients who are blind or partially sighted and/or their carers.
4. Whilst not all PCN'S offer specific training to support people with visual impairment, they are confident that if a person with a visual impairment needed further assistance, staff and volunteers would either be able to provide this or know which supervising member of the team would be able to offer further advice. Marshals and staff are aware to make necessary adjustments when needed and use clear verbal communication as necessary and will guide or escort patients through the whole vaccination process from arrival until departure when needed. Staff and volunteers have access to a copy of the Sight Loss Sector guidance for reference at their posts and volunteers are all given a thorough induction so that they know the local processes and which members of staff are supervising on each shift.
5. Some of our PCN's were aware of this document, however, those that were not have all printed this document to be retained on-site for future reference and to be available for staff when needed.

One of our PCN Directors would be keen to work with you to make further improvements, which could then be suggested to all of our PCN's. If this is something that you would be interested in, please contact us on the details provided at the top of this letter.

We hope this information is useful, however if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Corporate Affairs Team (contact details at the top of this letter)

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