

Your Health

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



November 2021

NHS services in Berkshire West launch winter campaign

Earlier this month, local NHS services in Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire launched their public information campaign to help reduce pressure on services over winter.

The new campaign aims to inform the public on small actions they can take which will help reduce demand on NHS services and help ensure they can access medical support as quickly as possible.

The campaign is focused around three areas:

Be Prepared – taking steps to avoid needing to access healthcare services such as having a fully-stocked medicine cabinet, treating colds and minor illnesses at home, supporting vulnerable relatives, and getting Covid-19 and flu vaccines.

Know the Right Place to Go – only using the Emergency Department in the case of life-threatening emergencies, using NHS 111 Online for any urgent medical queries, as well as being able to self-refer to Talking Therapies without needing to see a GP.

See Your GP Differently – highlighting the different ways you may access your GP including online and video appointments as well as face-to-face consultations.

Further information and resources are available online: royalberkshire.nhs.uk/winter.

Booster doses of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine

NHS guidance on who's eligible for a Covid vaccine booster has recently changed. You can now receive your Covid booster dose 5 months (or 152 days to be precise) after your second dose if you're:

- aged 50 and over
- aged 16 and over with a health condition that puts you at high risk from Covid-19

More than 13.5 million people have already received their booster dose, ensuring that the vital protection from their first two doses lasts over the winter months.

Use the NHS booking service to book your next vaccine dose or see the [Grab-a-Jab website](#) for walk-in services near you (see below for Reading Broad Street Mall details).

Have you had your flu jab?

The NHS is also encouraging people to have their flu jab. More people are likely to get flu this winter because fewer people will have built up natural immunity to it during the Covid-19 pandemic. Plus if you have flu and Covid at the same time, research shows you're more likely to be seriously ill.

The NHS gives the flu vaccine free to people who:

- are 50 and over (including if you are 50 by 31 March 2022)

- have certain medical conditions
- are pregnant
- are in long-stay residential care
- receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
- live with someone who is more likely to get infections (such as someone who has HIV, has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis)
- is a frontline health or social care worker

You can have the NHS flu vaccine at:

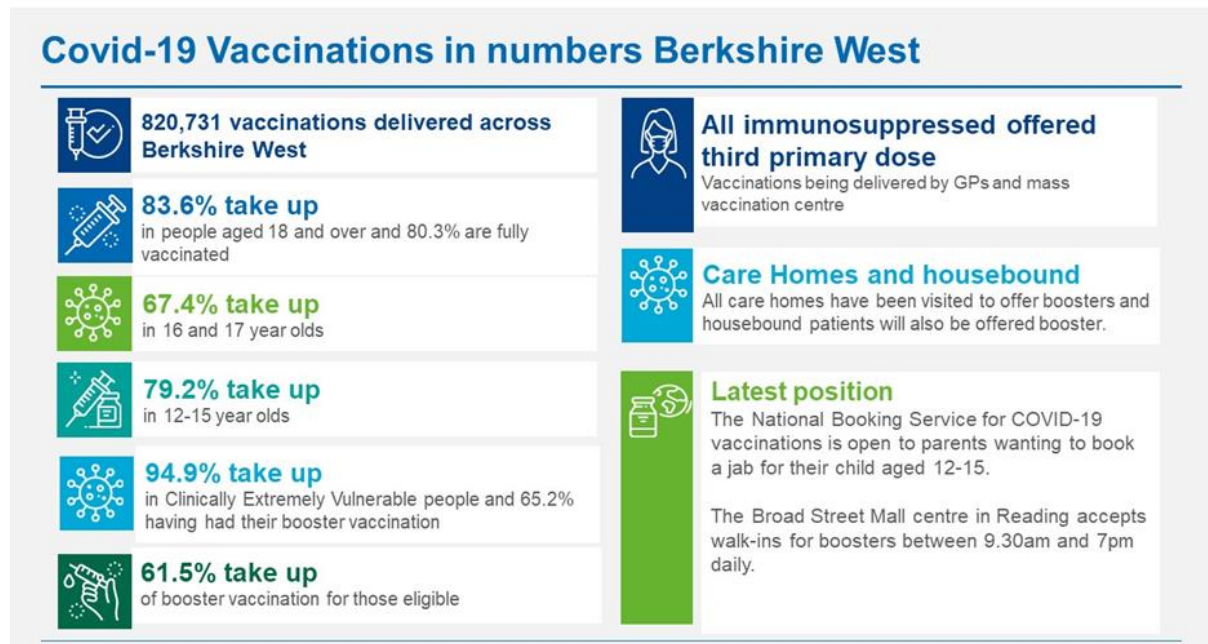
- your GP surgery
- a [pharmacy offering the service](#)
- your midwifery service if you're pregnant
- a hospital appointment

Walk in Covid vaccinations at the Broad Street Mall, Reading

The Broad Street Mall Mass vaccination site is once again open for booster, first and second doses of Covid vaccinations.

The site is open to anyone over the age of 12 and is open from 09.30 am to 7.30 pm.

Check the [Grab-a-Jab website](#) for vaccine availability.



Availability of GP appointments

We know that there's been some media reports about the 'shortage of GP appointments'. During the pandemic, GP appointments, along with many health care services had to be adjusted to ensure people were treated safely.

Post-pandemic, our GP practices are experiencing a 30% increase in demand for appointments that we expect to increase due to winter colds, flu and Covid pressures.

Therefore, some of the changes implemented during the pandemic will continue, in order to give patients more options to a wider range of health care services.

For example, the use of on-line and virtual consultations with a GP or other healthcare professionals like Physician Associates, has made it easier and quicker for many people to seek reassurance and advice for a wide range of ailments. This way of working compliments the traditional face to face GP appointments, which are still available where needed.

Other options available that people can make use of are pharmacies, minor injury units, and NHS 111.

Finally, we'd like to remind everyone that where health care professionals are able to consult with their patients by telephone or virtually, this reduces the spread of flu, Covid and other infectious diseases which are especially prevalent during the winter.

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust improving healthcare with a Greener NHS

Healthier planet. Healthier people.

Climate change poses a major threat to NHS staff, patients, and their communities. This is because there is a direct link between the health of our planet and the health of our people. The NHS is acting to reduce the harmful gases it puts into the atmosphere. Fewer emissions will mean fewer patients with asthma, heart disease, and cancer. It will also reduce any disruption to the delivery of the care we provide.

Change has already begun

Since 2010, efforts across the health service have resulted in NHS emissions being cut by 30%. Decisions have been made to invest in greener medicines, greener transport, greener buildings, and greener energy consumption.

To tie in with this work, the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust is currently finalising its Green Plan which will take it up to 2025 and set the Trust on the path to net zero carbon by 2040. The plan will be published early next year and has included ideas and suggestions from staff and stakeholders.

The Trust has already embedded several major carbon-reducing initiatives including:

- organising waste and recycling streams to ensure no waste ends up in landfill
- removing 3 km of redundant, leaking pipework and installing a low temperature hot water heating system
- using a fleet of electric pool cars which have so far saved nearly 20,000 kg of carbon emissions

The challenge ahead

Despite such progress, there is always more to be done. Together, with the help of staff, patients, visitors and our local community, we hope to achieve even more. With more people involved, the NHS can meet its target of becoming a net zero health service by 2040. The NHS was the first health service in the world to make the commitment and intends to be the first to reach that status.

Discover how you can help

Everyone can do their bit. No matter how small. The more of us who introduce small actions into our everyday routines, the more we can lessen our impact on the environment, and the more we can improve health.

Suggest how the Trust can reach its net zero target by posting your idea on its [digital whiteboard](#) or find out more information by contacting [greenroyalberkshire](#)

New Website for the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust



Last month the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust website launched their new website. The old website had been in need of redevelopment for several years and following feedback from hundreds of staff and stakeholders, the new website is:

- mobile-friendly – designed to work effectively on mobile phones and tablets
- accessible – both for people with additional accessibility requirements, as well as for all users when it comes to finding information
- visually appealing to make the user experience much more positive

Double Award Honours for Royal Berkshire Pain Consultant



L-R: Drew Thomas, BDM Henley Business School, Dr Deepak Ravindran, Consultant in Anaesthesia, Pain and Musculoskeletal Medicine RBFT, and Steve Heappy, Head of Service Delivery, Chartered Management Institute






The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust's (RBFT) Consultant in Anaesthesia, Pain and Musculoskeletal Medicine, Dr Deepak Ravindran has won two prestigious awards for his outstanding academic achievements.

Earlier this month, Deepak won the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) Awards' Learner of the Year plus the Chartered Management Institute's (CMI) Apprentice of the Year.

The FAB Award recognises the achievements of an individual learner who's demonstrated a high level of skill or competence in their learning, while showing exceptional resilience through the various challenges brought on by Covid-19.

Meanwhile the CMI Award acknowledges the outstanding achievements of an apprentice who has successfully applied their learning in the workplace to advance themselves, their organisation and the community around them.

Deepak who is also the author of the [Pain Free Mindset](#) and the Lead for the Berkshire Long Covid service, is currently completing his Honours degree in Applied Management at Henley Business School (HBS) which is part of the University of Reading.

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