

Update from Dr Clark Senior Partner Swanage Medical Practice

With numbers of COVID-19 positive patients increasing through January and the vaccine arriving in Swanage and Purbeck area, how have we fared?

From about 7 cases at any one time in December (in the Swanage area) this rose to 30 then 60 and is now slightly down to 30 at beginning of February.

Very many thanks to everyone for staying at home, social distancing and washing hands. Without these measures, cases would have continued to rise and be very much higher now.

Our local hospitals have been working at capacity to care for the severe cases, seeking back up capacity for Intensive care and rehabilitation.

The Hot Hub where we see potentially COVID-19 positive patients at Fernside in Oakdale, is being used to capacity and is seeing Purbeck patients as well. The COVID-19 remote monitoring service has increasingly monitored the symptoms and oxygen level of at-risk patients enabling admission in time for successful intervention.

This new variant virus has shown us its increased ability to transmit and unfortunately an increasing number of our local residents have been unable to recover from it.

This has included a number of our care home residents. I would like to send condolences to all those families affected from myself and everyone at Practice.

I would also like to thank all the care staff, nursing staff and practice staff who have worked extensive and traumatic hours caring for these patients. They deserve all the support possible.

Friday 8th January we heard the vaccine would be coming to Purbeck and Thursday 14th was our first vaccination day, managing 377 Pfizer vaccinations at the Wareham CVP (Covid Vaccination Hub) mostly people over 90 .

Very many thanks to the staff at the Wareham CVP clinic, the team of volunteers and local practices who have all put in many extra hours to enable this and the continued normal GP practice services. Also to the community that has rallied round and got very nearly every one to their allocated appointment. We are very thankful that we have had to deal with very few requests for appointment changes from this age group and would ask this continues. All appointments will

already be allocated and any time dealing with such prevents staff helping other patients.

On Monday 18th January we started vaccinating in the 8 local care homes, their residents and their staff, and completed all that wished or could have the vaccine by the end of the week.

On Monday 25th January a dedicated team of 2 district nurses started vaccinating housebound patients on a geographical basis of those identified, 2 areas in Swanage on Mondays and Tuesdays and Wareham on Wednesdays. This team have now done nearly 200 home visits with about another 100 to go. These visits are strictly for those patients who are physically unable to leave their home.

As of February 5th we have now done 6,867 vaccinations, 2697 aged over 80 , 1,972 aged 75-79, 1,326 aged 70-74 .

By February 12th we will have offered or done a first vaccination to the vast majority of those in Priority Groups 1-4. This includes those mentioned above, as well as health and social care staff and those in the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable group (CEV / Shielding group)

We hope soon to be given the go ahead to invite Priority Group 5 (65 to 69 year olds)and then Group 6 t(he Clinically Vulnerable (CV) group). Priority Group 6 is very similar to those under 65 who would normally be offered a Flu jab. Each practice will identify patients using a mixture of age and other factors to prioritise the order to call in within this group.

We are very lucky now to be receiving a regular vaccine flow but are still unable to put any orders in for it and get little warning as to when it is arriving and which form it takes. The invitation is for a Covid vaccination type unspecified, except for those who have a history of anaphylaxis to multiple drugs or of unknown cause, who will be offered the AstraZeneca vaccine at specific clinics. Generally, we cannot be certain which vaccination the hub will be using when you arrive and if you are unwilling to have the one in use you will be asked to leave.

It is great to see so many of our high-risk residents getting vaccinated and know we will get to everyone in turn. At present our second vaccinations are booked, a few at 10 weeks but most at 12 weeks. This means that unless we can increase our rate of vaccination significantly there will be a 12 week period from the 25th March when only a limited number of first vaccinations can be done. I hope the vaccine supply will have improved and we will have taken on increased numbers of volunteers and staff by then to prevent this. Please see our website for details as to how to volunteer.

Vaccination is going to be our way out of the pandemic, please support everyone in the community to take it up and help the NHS deliver it.

For the time being though, most people have not been vaccinated and any reduction in protective measures by those vaccinated or not will result in a resurgence of cases, so we must all continue all the measures to deny the virus its chance.

Other good news in Swanage is that the new year brings new voices (and faces to those needing to come in to the Surgery) to our team.

Dr Kate Thompson joins us as GP Registrar for her second year in a GP practice.

Christina Boghian joins the Practice nursing team

Shelly Basharan, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, joins our Duty team and will also be available for more routine consultations.

Dr Andrew Mackintosh who has already been helping us has agreed to join our team as GP Partner in March.

With the vaccine, new staff, excellent surgery team and supportive local community we can look forward to getting the virus under control and progressing the care we can offer to all.

Remember: “HANDS (wash), FACE (mask), SPACE (2m)”

Dr Jason Clark, Senior Partner

Swanage Medical Practice website: www.swanagemedical.org