

## Cover Sheet

Public Trust Board Meeting: Wednesday 13 January 2021

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**Title:** Experiences of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine

**Status:** For Information

**History:** Regular patient experience report

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**Board Lead:** Chief Nursing Officer

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**Confidential:** No

**Key Purpose:** Assurance

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## **Executive Summary**

1. This paper describes the experience of five people who received their first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at the Churchill Hospital in December 2020.
2. They all reported how relieved they were to receive the vaccine.
3. Two experienced slight tenderness in their arm the next day, but otherwise, no side effects were reported.
4. All reported the excellent safety measures in place at the vaccination clinic, both to receive the vaccine and to work there.
5. These accounts highlight the need for continual promotion and awareness of the COVID-19 vaccine in order to ensure good uptake.
6. Their experience provides an initial insight into experience of coming into hospital for the vaccine. This will feed into further work to capture patient experience and feedback and also any concerns of the accessing the COVID-19 vaccine.
7. This is an example of excellent teamwork across disciplines, and emphasises how successful that can be.

## **Recommendations**

8. The Trust Board is asked to:
  - Note the contents of this paper.

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## Experiences of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine

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### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper presents the experience of five people who attended the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic at the Churchill hospital in December 2020.
- 1.2. The purpose of the paper is to learn from their experience of coming into the clinic for their vaccination.
- 1.3. This paper also demonstrates the rapid response that was implemented by a multidisciplinary team (MDT) at OUH so that the vaccination programme could start on 8 December 2020.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. On 2nd December the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, was approved by the United Kingdom (UK) Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).
- 2.2. This is the first COVID-19 vaccine to be approved for use within the UK and represented a hugely significant moment in the response to the pandemic.
- 2.3. The vaccine had to undergo a strict approval process which means that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, and any other vaccines approved in the future, will not only be safe, but also the best defence against the virus.
- 2.4. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advises that the first priorities for any COVID-19 vaccination programme should be the prevention of COVID-19 mortality and the protection of health and social care staff and systems.
- 2.5. With this in mind, the process to roll out vaccinations was first for those people who are either most at risk or need it because of the work they do. This includes those people over the age of 80, people living and working in care homes and NHS Workers in a high-risk clinically vulnerable group.
- 2.6. Delivering the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is complex as it needs to be stored at very cold temperatures and moved carefully, so the request came to deliver it initially at Hospital Hubs.
- 2.7. The Churchill Hospital at OUH was chosen as one of 50 hospitals in England to be able to provide the vaccine. This hub serves Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and West Berkshire.
- 2.8. The Vaccine Clinic was set up within the OCDEM (Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism) building at the Churchill. The resus training team vacated the space to enable the vaccine unit to expand. The vaccine team are grateful to them for their assistance and understanding.

**2.9.** The Pfizer/BioNTech is lipid-based, which means that it doesn't tolerate movement. The Pharmacy team at OUH have used the guidance from Pfizer/BioNTech and taken into consideration the local environment to develop local guidelines for safe implementation. A sequence process is used to ensure safe storage, preparation and administration.

### **3. The Churchill Vaccine Clinic**

- 3.1.** Vaccination began on 8 December 2020. On the first day approximately 80 people were vaccinated.
- 3.2.** The clinic is open, Monday-Saturday (08:30 – 16:45) and currently vaccinates approximately 350-400 people per day.
- 3.3.** On arrival, people are given a questionnaire about their medical history. If there are any concerns about the responses given, they are referred to the consultant on site.
- 3.4.** There is a recovery area where people are monitored post-vaccine for 15 minutes.
- 3.5.** There are approximately 18 staff working at the clinic from a multidisciplinary team, comprising: one consultant, one lead nurse, two pharmacists, seven vaccinators, two admin staff and five patient flow coordinators.
- 3.6.** Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place to ensure scheduling, day-to-day running of the service and patient flow.
- 3.7.** Safety measures are in place to record any adverse events. These include; dedicated incident reporting system (on the OUH Ulysses system) and a 'Yellow card' reporting system (this is UK system run by the Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to collect and monitor information on suspected safety concerns or incidents involving medicines and medical devices).
- 3.8.** COVID-19 vaccinators comprise those who were already influenza vaccinators for 2020. They received additional training in order to administer the COVID-19 vaccine. They are from a variety of disciplines, including: children's nurses, adult nurses, research nurses, ITU nurses, midwives, pharmacists and doctors.
- 3.9.** For this paper, five people were interviewed, including three OUH staff who are clinically vulnerable, one OUH staff who became a COVID-19 vaccinator and one member of the public. Their accounts have been summarised into themes, which are provided below.

## 4. Patient experience and the COVID-19 vaccine

### 4.1. Experience of life during the pandemic

- The pandemic had affected participants in different ways. Some had to shield at home, some were able to continue working, but were anxious working with patient facing roles.
- The pandemic had created mental and emotional stress to them all in various ways.
- For those who were required to shield, they reported the impact this had on their family members, who became very anxious about going out and coming into contact with anyone who had coronavirus.

### 4.2. Emotional response to the news that the vaccine had been approved

- All the participants reported joy and relief when they heard that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine had been approved.
- It was described by one interviewee as '*light at the end of the tunnel*'.
- All were excited and were keen to have early access to the vaccine.

### 4.3. Invitation to receive the vaccine

- The OUH staff who received the vaccine reported that they had received an invitation from the Occupational Health Department to come forward. After responding that they would like the vaccine, all were given an appointment in a matter of days. They all appreciated this prompt response.
- The member of the public reported that he had accompanied his father-in-law to another clinic for routine care at the Churchill. Whilst they were, his father-in-law was offered the vaccine which he accepted. He was delighted to receive the vaccine.

### 4.4. Receiving the vaccine

- All interviewees reported that receiving the vaccine was a '*very straightforward process*'.
- The clinic was reported to be very efficient with safety measures in place to ensure social distancing.
- The member of public in particular was really impressed at how well the clinic was set up and reported it was all '*very stress free*'.

#### 4.5. Administrating the vaccine

- The vaccinator reported that she was really proud to be part of the multidisciplinary vaccination team. She reported that within her usual clinical role she has felt the pressure of coronavirus, but in a different way than those clinicians who have been on the frontline and been witness to the devastating impact of the virus.
- She reported that this was an opportunity to be able to be part of efforts to combat the virus.
- As an experienced flu vaccinator for many years, the vaccinator felt that the physical handling of the equipment was not challenging, however, due to the fragile nature of the vaccine there are strict rules about preparing it.
- The vaccinator reported that everyone who receives the vaccine has a story to tell about how the pandemic has affected them. She feels it is very humbling to be able to listen to their stories and hear how important it is to them to receive the vaccine and how grateful they are. Many of whom were elderly and due to coronavirus have been socially isolated, one patient told her receiving the vaccine was '*the first step in the road to freedom*'.
- The vaccinator feels momentum for the vaccine has gained and that the emotion and gratitude expressed by those who have received the vaccine has also gathered.

#### 4.6. Side effects

- Two interviewees reported that they had a slightly tender arm the following day. This tenderness lasted for one day.
- Otherwise there were no side effects reported to the vaccine.

#### 4.7. Emotions post-vaccine

- All interviewees reported that when they told their friends and family that they had received the vaccine that they were all very pleased and excited for them. One interviewee reported that his families' relief was 'palpable' when he told them that he had received the vaccine.
- All interviewees reported that it was a huge relief to receive the vaccine '*it's just magic*'. All reported that that they would feel even more relieved when they had received their second dose.

- All continued to be hyper vigilant to ensure that they protected themselves and others from coronavirus. One interviewee reported that since having the vaccine the anxiety for activities such as travelling on the bus, had diminished and *'mentally it had provided some comfort'*.

#### 4.8. Going forwards

- All acknowledged that there may be some uncertainty about the COVID-19 vaccine, particular now that the new strain has been identified.
- There was an acknowledgement that it is a new vaccine, but that all were reassured that the vaccine had been rigorously tested and was safe.
- For those who had shielded during the pandemic, there was an acknowledgement that if they caught COVID-19 they would be seriously ill and this was very worrying for them and their families.
- They all felt that the vaccine provided protection for themselves and for those around them.
- The member of the public reported how he had never had the influenza vaccination as he felt that *'he would take his chances'*, however felt very strongly that the COVID-19 vaccine was so important to ensure to address the pandemic.
- One interviewee reported that he now had a *'different perspective to be able to carry on'*.
- All interviewees highlighted the need for social distancing and other protective measures to continue.
- One interviewee highlighted the importance of the vaccination saying: *'everyone who dies is somebody's mother, father, brother, sister, friend. Nurses carry final moments with them. We owe it everyone to protect ourselves and each other'*.

### 5. Positive themes

- 5.1. Everyone reported that there were excellent safety measures in place at the vaccine clinic.
- 5.2. The vaccination team's philosophy is *'safe for patients, safe for staff'*.
- 5.3. Everyone reported that there is good adherence to personal protective equipment (PPE), handwashing and social distancing within the Vaccine Clinic.
- 5.4. No untoward events have been experienced post-vaccination.



- 5.5.** There are good mechanisms in place to trouble shoot any problems. These include a daily safety huddle each morning, which is led by either the lead nurse or consultant to ensure that a consistent approach is taken.
- 5.6.** This has been an example of teamwork across disciplines, and emphasises how successful that can be.

## **6. Negative themes**

- 6.1.** There were no negative themes about the receiving the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at the Churchill.

## **7. Actions undertaken and to be taken forward**

- 7.1.** The Vaccine Clinic has been fully operational since 8 December 2020.
- 7.2.** During the first week of vaccinations, individual prescriptions (PSD) had to be arranged for each for each person attending as there was no patient group directive (PGD). The PGD came out at the end of week one which made it possible to change the flow of patients through the unit and streamline movement.
- 7.3.** The lead consultant at the Vaccine Clinic has brought together a group of 30-40 senior doctors who volunteer to cover the rota six days a week from 8 am to 5pm. In addition, he is able to discuss individual cases with a Professor of immunology to help us ensure safety and adherence to the guidelines.
- 7.4.** Support has been provided from the digital team as well as those involved with admin and logistics.
- 7.5.** Since 21 December the staff vaccination programme has been expanded to include staff that work in areas where there is potential contact with COVID-19 positive patients. This includes: emergency departments, cardiology, the John Radcliffe stack, intensive care, porters, cleaners and catering staff.
- 7.6.** On 4 January, the vaccination programme will include those attending for their second dose, in addition to those attending for their first.
- 7.7.** The ergonomics of the environment present a challenge how to manage this; however the multidisciplinary team are working to ensure a smooth patient flow.
- 7.8.** Mechanisms will be in place to enhance monitoring of those who have received their second dose to ensure that there are no adverse reactions.
- 7.9.** The Vaccine Team have a '*no waste philosophy*'. If there are any doses left at the end of the day, the team actively contact staff working in high risk

clinical areas so that they can receive the vaccine. This is a highly effective strategy as to date only one dose of vaccine has been wasted.

## **8. Next Steps**

- 8.1.** These interviews provide an initial insight into experience of coming into hospital for the vaccine.
- 8.2.** Their experience will feed into further work to capture patient experience and feedback and also any concerns of the accessing the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 8.3.** Due to the fragility of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine it can only be administered from the Vaccine Clinic at the Churchill. It is anticipated that when other vaccines are approved that it will be possible to provide more vaccination sites across the Trust.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1.** Their experience provides an initial insight into experience of coming into hospital for the vaccine. This will feed into further work to capture patient experience and feedback and also any concerns of the accessing the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 9.2.** The relief expressed by those who had received the COVID-19 vaccine is immeasurable.
- 9.3.** Safety measures within the vaccine clinic were reported to be excellent, both by those coming in for vaccination and by those administering the vaccine.
- 9.4.** Continued awareness is essential to ensure that everyone feel safe and motivated to come forward for the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 9.5.** The vaccine team are enormously grateful to all those who have contributed from the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Nursing Officer, to the receptionists and admin team.
- 9.6.** The Vaccine Clinic is a truly multidisciplinary effort, with a diverse and rich group of individuals, all with the common goal of ensuring the safe and effective delivery of the vaccine.

## **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1.** The Trust Board is asked to:
  - Note the contents of this story.