# Press Release | Friday 29 January 21

**11,500 vaccinations administered – QEH milestone brings hope to community**

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King’s Lynn (QEH) has now vaccinated over 11,500 people since the start of its COVID-19 vaccination programme.

The Trust opened its dedicated COVID-19 Vaccination Hub on 30 December, and has since become one of the largest centres in West Norfolk with staff working tirelessly around the clock to administer 450 doses of the vaccine every day.

In line with government policy, those who have so far received the vaccine include people aged over 80, care workers, ambulance staff, and social care staff, and patients at QEH. Members of QEH’s own workforce are also among those to receive the vaccine, with prioritisation for those considered to be at the highest risk of serious illness from COVID-19. The Trust has so far vaccinated an impressive 80% of its workforce.

QEH has received considerable praise and gratitude from the local community in response to the way it has delivered the roll-out. Gail Griffiths, who is an Unplanned Needs Support Worker for Norfolk County Council, was among those who received the vaccine on Friday 29 January. Gail said: *“It feels so good to get this vaccine. I’ve been out in high risk areas on the frontline since the beginning of the pandemic. In my job, you can’t social distance as you are giving personal care and supporting individuals in need out in the community. The service today at QEH’s vaccination centre has been very good – the system is perfect.”*

The Vaccination Team has been strengthened by both redeployment and staff coming out of retirement. Theatre Sister Katie Lockwood was redeployed to the Vaccination Hub from her role at the Day Surgery Unit at QEH. Katie said: *“This new role is so rewarding – I feel like I’m doing something to bring this horrible virus to an end! The patients are so grateful and the staff I work with are fantastic, it’s really lovely.”*

Denise Smith, Chief Operating Office at QEH, said: *“I’m so proud of the QEH team for vaccinating so many members of our local community, and our own staff so quickly. This vaccine is giving us hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel. In the meantime, it’s important that we all continue to follow the government guidance, by washing our hands, covering our face and maintaining space. This is the best thing we can do while the vaccine is rolled out to help protect our patients, their families and each other.”*

Alex Stewart, CEO at Healthwatch Norfolk, said: *“I had the privilege of speaking to patients and local community when visiting the hospital last weekend. The efficiency and smooth running of the vaccination centre showed the NHS at its best and the staff at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital should be commended for achieving the provision of over 11,000 vaccinations for residents of West and North Norfolk. It was evident that the staff were working like a well-oiled machine from the security staff helping and directing people in the car park to the administrative and clinical staff working in the centre. There was a positive buzz and patients were extremely appreciative of all that was being done.”*

James Wild, MP for North West Norfolk, said: *“This significant milestone reflects the great efforts of everyone involved and underlines the vital role that QEH’s vaccination hub is playing in protecting vulnerable people in North West Norfolk. Every vaccination helps to protect lives and bring us closer to when we can lift lockdown restrictions.”*

Cllr Alexandra Kent commented: *“It is such good news for the whole of West Norfolk that The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has now achieved and exceeded the 11,000 milestone for COVID-19 vaccinations.   We all pay tribute to the achievement of the staff in such a short space of time. It is extremely important that QEH remains a COVID-19 Vaccination hub throughout the pandemic. As an acute hospital, QEH is strategically best placed, resourced, equipped and accessible to deliver this most important service and is, of course, a superior venue to non-medical community locations.”*

Last week, QEH launched a new and dedicated COVID-19 Patient Helpline to improve communication with patients, their families, and loved ones, as visiting restrictions remain in place. The new helpline is open seven days per week and enables relatives to receive updates on the condition of their loved ones, ask questions, or raise any concerns they may have. The Helpline number is **01553 214540.** Lines are manned between 8am-5pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-4pm Saturday and Sunday.

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