

## Care home residents get vaccine

20 February 2022

Care home residents have celebrated getting their Covid-19 vaccinations with banners and some bubbly.

All Surrey care homes which support older people have now been visited by vaccination teams offering the first dose of the Covid-19 jab.

At Greys Residential Home, in Woking, residents enjoyed a glass of fizz and posed with placards after getting their jabs last month.

As older care home residents, they were the top priority group in the national roll-out of the vaccine, along with the staff who look after them.

Roving vaccination teams have worked intensively over the last few weeks to visit Surrey care homes administering the jabs, with high levels of take-up. The vast majority of homes had been visited by the end of January, and now even homes which couldn't be called on previously due to cases of the virus have been visited.

The vaccine roll-out in Surrey is being spearheaded by the Surrey Heartlands Partnership and Frimley Health and Care which bring together partners including local NHS services and Surrey County Council.

Sinead Mooney, Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, said: "Celebrations like these are a joy to see after the difficult months we've had.

"Thanks to the diligence of vaccination teams on the ground, we've been able to visit every care home for older people in Surrey in the space of just a few weeks.

"We're now working hard to vaccinate other vulnerable groups and frontline health and social care workers and I'd encourage everyone who is offered the jab to get it.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank care workers across Surrey for the incredible dedication and compassion they've shown throughout the pandemic.

"This vaccine milestone gives us hope but we can't let our guard down. Care homes are continuing to follow the public health advice and we must all, even after we've received our vaccine, stick to the rules so we don't let up on beating the virus."

Erica Lockhart, chief executive of the Surrey Care Association, said: "This is such welcome news. Not only have older people in care settings been vaccinated, but care staff across all settings, who have been so heroic throughout the pandemic, are also receiving their jabs.

"There's a great sense of relief across the Surrey care sector and beyond. The vaccine has given us hope that the overall risks will be greatly reduced in the not-too-distant future and I'd like to thank all those involved in the vaccine rollout for their tireless work."

## Support for Afghan Refugees

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Following the British and allies' humiliation in Afghanistan in August this year the UK Government has urged local Councils to participate in the Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme. The urgent need is to provide homes to those refugees who fled from the Taliban takeover and are currently in temporary accommodation in the UK. Funds are promised to local authorities willing to support the resettlement of Afghan interpreters and others (and their families), who worked for UK Forces, the UK Embassy and other official British interests.

The scheme supports rent and other housing costs, local authority support staff salaries and "integration support" (e.g., English language, education and health). The funds promised by the Government range over a three year period from £22,340 for one adult in a one bedroom property to £134,040 for a 2 adult 4 children family in a 4 bedroom property.

The Council Officers recommended that Epsom and Ewell Borough Council undertake support for 2 families but an amendment moved by Court Ward Councillor Kate Chinn (Labour) was accepted by all Councillors and 5 families will be supported. The greatest challenge to the programme will be identifying landlords willing to provide suitable properties.

Nina Kaye of the Epsom Refugee Network responded to the decision We are pleased to hear that the Council has voted to take up to five Afghan families being re-settled under the LES (Locally Employed Staff) scheme. These families have risked so much to support our troops in Afghanistan and as a result have had to flee their homes and their country. There are many highly skilled individuals in this group who will be a real asset to our Community. Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network will be working with the Council to support these families when they arrive, helping them to learn English and settle into life in the UK".

Joanna Sherring of Epsom Community Sponsorship stated: "Our Charity is applying to be a Community Sponsorship group in Epsom & Ewell and it's great to see such support for refugees in our community. Hopefully we will never know what it feels like to lose everything and have to start a new life in a different country. I am so proud to be part of a such a passionate group of people who want to offer the chance of a new life to a refugee family"

Epsom and Ewell is by no means alone in the County in supporting the scheme with all the other 10 District Councils supporting between 2 (Mole Valley) and 5 to 10 (Waverley).

Full details of the scheme and Government explanations are available [HERE](#)