



Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre Memories of staff and volunteers



Facts and figures



Opened Monday

**11 January
2021**



235,048
vaccinations
given



307
staff and
800
volunteers



19
staff members
from Ashton Gate
Stadium transferred
to work at the
vaccination centre



3 days

to transform the
Ashton Gate Stadium
South Concourse into a
large-scale vaccination
centre



On 31 July
the vaccination centre
kept running alongside a
Bristol City football match
against Aston Villa with
7,500 spectators



Closed Wednesday
**4 August
2021**

Introduction

We opened the Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre to the public on Monday 11 January 2021, which was a truly incredible achievement. It had taken us just three days to transform the stadium into a large-scale vaccination centre with the help of a military team.

Over the course of the next seven months, an amazing team of staff and volunteers from the NHS, St Johns Ambulance, Ashton Gate Stadium and many other charities and community organisations worked together to give a total of 235,048 vaccinations before we moved the centre to the University of the West of England in August 2021. Moving the vaccination centre was another important and positive

milestone - lockdown was coming to an end and the stadium was able to go back to hosting all of their sporting events, welcoming back the fans who had been absent for so long.

We thought it was important to capture some of the memories of those involved in setting up and working at Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre.

As you will see for yourself as you read the following pages, it meant so much to all of us to be part of the vaccination programme, playing our part to help as many people as possible during the Covid-19 pandemic. We all felt like we were making a difference, and indeed we were. This has been the most uplifting and positive experience of my nursing career.

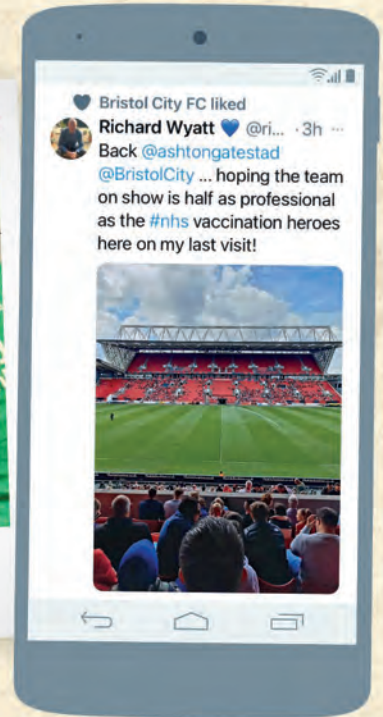


Anne Morris

Thank you to our friends at the West of England Academic Health Science Network for helping us to document these experiences and to each and every one of the 1,107 members of the Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre team. Your contributions have been extraordinary, and I feel very proud of all we have achieved together.

Anne Morris, Chief Nurse - Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire Vaccination Programme

People



People

I got to meet some amazing people and learn their stories.

The first day I was very nervous. It seemed so big and there were so many people but I soon got addicted. A lot of the staff said they were addicted. Addicted to the feeling of hope you got from the people you vaccinate. The stories they told. Some cried, most were very grateful.



Some people were nervous and could be quite abrupt and rude. Always be polite and try and calm them down. There is always a reason why they are acting that way.

It was a privilege to hear people's stories and why they were getting involved and to see how much it meant to people getting vaccinated.

Everyone working as a team with great care shown to the public, some of whom were very nervous.



Nick The Gas ❤️👍👏 @... · 1d ...
Just taken my father for his second vaccine. Despite it being at Ashton Gate (🤢) the efficiency, speed and politeness of all staff was once again 100%. In and out in under 15 mins. Brilliant.

People



Meeting and working with such a range of lovely people from all walks of life.

We received lots of thanks from others including receiving hot dogs, pies and other goodies as a thank you for the work being done.

I always felt welcome by the Ashton Gate Security Staff who I worked with on front desk, which really did help me feel able to get back out and help people as I have lacked confidence recently.



A preacher came in once with 100 Krispy Kreme donuts. All he wanted was to say a prayer for us. All those big burly men stood there for the prayer!



I really adored the security team! Especially Jimmy. They were so very professional and calm.

I absolutely loved the easyJet cabin crew I worked with. Those guys are amazing.

People

collaboration between people from all walks of life, all wanting to make a difference.

It reminded me how much I missed the people interaction.

It was interesting chatting with the other workers I was working with (EasyJet cabin crew, undergraduate and PhD students, chefs, head of Sirona, beautician, physio etc). It's always good to feel 'I'm doing my bit in a crisis'.

I enjoyed working with all types of people from different backgrounds.

I enjoyed talking to the public and assisting the NHS staff.

I learned I like dealing with the public more than I thought I did.

I enjoyed meeting people and checking them in.



People

The Ashton Gate team were an inclusive part of the team - not an addition. Their contribution made the work for the NHS team much easier.

Very experienced clinical staff (retired or still working) shared their experience with those who were new to healthcare and vice-versa.

All working together from such diverse backgrounds.
There was not a them and us.

Everyone working at the centre was energised and motivated to contribute to the vaccination programme. It was an exciting atmosphere to work in.

The Ashton Gate Marshalls were an invaluable asset to the safe and effective working of the site.

I made friends I never would have made without vaccinating.

Using different skills to help each other.

People



"Pfizer chief Keith" was a total shining star amongst the team. As well as looking after the vaccine, he baked amazing cakes (individually wrapped) and provided a secret stash of chocolate for anyone that needed a "pick me up".

I experienced human nature at its very best. I watched my fellow colleagues calming frightened people scared of needles but desperately needing this vaccine.

People were able to still make you smile when times were so hard and scary. All it takes is a smile to make someone's day.



I've loved people watching, seeing all the different people of different age groups coming through and the many similarities and occasional differences between them. I've loved some of the little chats I've had with so many different people on their way through. I still can't accurately predict which people will be keen to accept a sticker after their jab and who will refuse the offer.

Planning and process

While it took just three days to transform the Ashton Gate Stadium South Concourse into a large-scale vaccination centre, operations continued to change and evolve in light of both national and local requirements. Coordinating the efforts of more than a thousand volunteers and staff was no mean feat!

Team members shared with us their thoughts on leadership, communications and logistics, as well as many lessons learned to pass onto future teams involved in similar work.



Sabine Hauert @sabin... · 2h ...
Finally #vaccinated 🙌! One more shot to go. So grateful. Very slick operation - everyone was so friendly at #Ashtongate. Thanks #NHS #Moderna and all the researchers!

Carol Vorderman @carolvorders
If it's helpful to see how well this is organised at every stage....outside in the car park beforehand, you are guided through by happy people (very comforting), the whole thing is laid out perfectly. THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS AND NHS xxxx

Bristol's Ashton Gate Stadium is ready to welcome its first COVID-19 vaccination patients next week.
Remember, when its your turn for vaccination you'll get a letter inviting you book. Please don't turn up without a booked slot.

@ashtongatestad
@BNSSG_CCG @NHSEngland



- 5 Questions to be Answered
- 1 Do You Have An Appointment For A COVID-19 Vaccination Today?
 - 2 Do Your CURRENTS Have Any COVID Symptoms?
 - A New Continuous Cough
 - A High TEMPERATURE / FEVER
 - 3 Are You Self-Isolating Due to Notification From YOUR 4 Nearest or Closest Household to Contact Today. 10 DAYS
 - 4 Have You Had ANY Vaccinations in the Last 7 DAYS
 - 5 Have You Seen Anyone for COVID-19 in the Last 14 DAYS



First vaccines arrive!

Ally Stuart @AllyStuart · 11h
Just had my second jab at Ashton Gate. Wish @BristolCity had been that impressively organised there this season. Incredible scenes



100k vaccinations lunch



Inside the lunch box

Planning and process

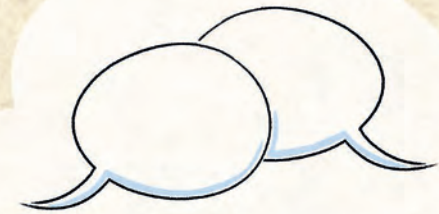


I was impressed at the organisation of the whole event. Our managers showed excellent leadership.

We showed the ability to come together under great pressure but work as a fab team.

Great organisation throughout.

I watched a huge massive programme unfold, it evolved week after week. I'd have a few days off and they'd change the way we worked to something better. More streamlined, more efficient and better for our patients.



Effective communication ensured a culture of safety developed.

Planning and process

We all worked together to ensure the person coming for vaccination was at the centre of all decisions made.

It was very repetitive and so we found ways to keep ourselves motivated and positive through the long shifts. Much easier when people were coming through. It could get a bit boring when it was quieter.

People need to be listened to. Listen to the people on the ground doing the job.

Ensure that all team members are given a chance to be involved in sharing ideas of how the operational aspects could work. Speak up if you have any ideas. Share your knowledge.

Everyone has something to input. Regardless of role, everyone was encouraged to contribute their ideas for improvement as "no-one has set up a vaccination centre before".

Everyone just did what they could to get the job done together, giving the illusion that everything is running smoothly.

Planning and process

A clear focus on the goal of vaccinating the population as quickly and safely as possible was apparent throughout the programme.



Get people to work quickly, doing something challenging. Don't make them wait to use their training.

We all worked long hours and showed commitment to the programme.

"Start well,
End well"
shift briefings.



Significant changes to the programme nationally were often challenging to manage. It took tenacity and resourcefulness to identify and implement solutions quickly to manage the constant and immediate change.

Planning and process

We changed the layout of the vaccination centre frequently mainly due to the changing nature of the programme. During the vaccination programme we moved from having 3 vaccination pods with 6 vaccination stations to 30 vaccination stations (when the 2nd concourse was opened).

Daily meeting was focused, clear, collaborative and a safe culture to facilitate open discussion.

All changes were necessary but often felt disruptive to staff.

Have a way of collecting constructive feedback to use to improve the system. Have a way of communicating changes / improvements to all staff.



1960maan @1960m... · 2h ...
Replying to @MrhKelly
@ashtongatestad an...
Fantastic work, had both jobs done at the Gate just to get in there again. Organisation was spot on, just brilliant work by all involved.

Planning and process

We were all working long hours. Sometimes humour was the only way to deal with the constant change we were managing. "It's a global pandemic and this is a national emergency" became our strapline within the AG management team.

Difficult to manage with a high volume of staff working part-time. A few days off and the concourse looked very different.

It was really interesting to experience a team without much of a hierarchy. There were "the reds" and then the rest of the team, regardless of what our roles may be outside of the centre.

Hold briefings with the volunteers at the beginning of both their morning and afternoon shifts.

I had a great orientation from someone who was very clear and covered everything. Really important that this happens for all staff to maintain safety.

Personal

Helping to set up and working at Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre had a very personal impact for most people, with many talking about their individual motivations, their experiences of personal growth and development and the opportunity to learn new skills. Many recounted their own special memories they will hold forever from this time.



Personal



I wanted to help.
I'd felt scared during
most of the pandemic
and saw the vaccine
programme as a way
out of the nightmare.

It taught me
appreciation of
healthcare professionals.
understanding of
differences in attitude
and approaches.

I went from being a fairly senior person in
my previous professional life (journalism)
to being an absolute beginner!

I quickly learnt all
the new procedures
and particularly
enjoyed vaccinating
and working with the
vaccination team.

Good to push myself
out of my comfort
zone and work in a
different setting.

Personal

I found I have not lost my confidence and can be resilient and flexible when required.

I learned so much by working alongside such experienced members of the team.

I enjoyed helping the public trying to make their vaccination experience easier.

Gaining a bit of extra knowledge from nurses and ambulance crew to help me as a student nurse.

I felt that I had made a difference, that my skills and contribution were recognised, and this gave me the confidence to apply for a new role.

I enjoyed being part of a greater concerted effort and volunteering.

Personal



I was able to communicate in British Sign Language (BSL), utilising the new skill I am learning at City of Bristol College, meaning I could make the service a tiny bit more inclusive in a small way which is my whole reason for learning BSL.

I was quick to learn and enjoyed leading the team when a leader was needed. Also tutoring new volunteers in best practice.

I showed determination, pleasant co-operation, stamina, a sense of humour!

I got the opportunity to reinvent myself as a healthcare provider (of sorts).

Personal

The experience of working with such a varied group of people from all different working backgrounds was amazing. Great to take into my future nursing career to show how much varied knowledge can build a valuable efficient and friendly team, making work life a joy. I would be intrigued to know if many people have changed their careers since.

It really did make me feel more positive about myself. I always left there feeling happy.



I loved Ashton Gate. I'm not into sports at all but I'd love to go see a game now. One Sunday it was super hot and the doors to the pitch were open. Strictly out of bounds and ever the naughty one I sneaked out and stood looking at the stadium and that green pitch, it was brilliant sunshine and I thought how lucky I was living in Bristol and working in that lovely place.

Personal

I felt self-worth being part of a well organised team and giving something back to community.

I work in the charity sector and often run teams of volunteers. The experience of being a volunteer myself and being managed was hugely helpful to how I will operate in future.

In future I'll be more willing to volunteer for other projects.

Gave me a sense of doing something useful to help in the pandemic - something I could later say I'd done to help.



I felt privileged to work alongside the more experienced members of the team and learned so much during my secondment. I felt that I had made a difference; that my skills and contribution were recognised, and this gave me the confidence to apply for a new role.

Pride

A strong thread running through everyone's recollections of being involved in Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre was a sense of pride in the NHS and a keen feeling of being part of something important with a shared sense of common purpose.



Pride

We all felt a deep sense of care and pride in helping and being part of such an important initiative, to vaccinate as many people as possible.

Everyone can pull together in times of need.



Being part of something extraordinary felt like we were making history.

It reminded me of the magic of the health service, and why I chose the career I have chosen.

It was nice to do something that was playing a small part in getting things back to normal. Felt like we were all part of one big team

Pride

It was a privilege to do this role.

It was a calm amidst a storm of negativity. Making a positive contribution to the vaccination effort made me less anxious about the pandemic and its negative impacts in society and on my family.

Sense of purpose and personal satisfaction from lending a hand.

collective commitment. Real selflessness and shared aims.

NHS staff unfailingly courteous, patient, professional and caring, and also hugely appreciative of volunteers.

It was rewarding to feel like I was playing a part in returning life to normal.



I gained a sense of supporting a national scheme to confront a global crisis.

TIME CAPSULE

We asked people to imagine they were collecting things to put into a time capsule: what would you include to capture your experience of being involved in the Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre?

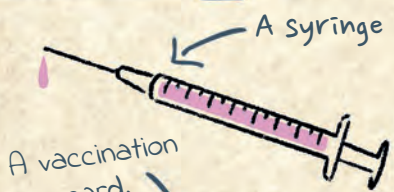


Photo of an elderly lady with tears of gratitude in her eyes after her first vaccination.



Great Job

The pictures and messages people drew on the walls of the pods.



A syringe



Simple reminder of the vaccines being offered at the centre.

My scrubs and mask I hope one day we will not have to wear them.



Lanyard and vaccination centre badge - I was so proud to wear them



Photo of the patient queue of people waiting their turn to be jabbed.



A box of tissues for tears.



The pictures of the footballers on the ceiling. Every day I'd look up to see who I was sat beneath.



Photo of a tiny nurse being lent on by a tall muscular young man who was feeling faint as she gently helped him out of the vaccination bay to a chair.



Maybe a Bristol city shirt too just to say that's where we done it.



Shoes for the memory of sore feet after a long shift!

A reminder of snatched sustenance!



My lovely teal uniform.

My uniform, as for me it makes me feel I was able to be a part of a team of people to make a difference.

Blimey we got through a lot of them!



A pack of clinical cleaning wipes and hand sanitizer.



I kept all the plastic needle caps of every vaccination I administered - very excited to count them out.



I remember a 100 year old patient coming along for their 1st vaccine travelling in a taxi on their own and being so pleased to receive the vaccine as they hadn't left their home in almost a year. This will always be in my memory.



There are good people in our world who only want to help make things better.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who shared their memories and stories of helping to set up and work at Ashton Gate Vaccination Centre, including:

Jerry Watkins,
countess Mountbatten's own
Legion of Frontiersmen

Jo Smart,
North Bristol NHS Trust

Dr Susan clompus

Alice Payne

Annabel Smith,
St John Ambulance volunteer

Debra Sainsbury,
North Bristol NHS Trust and Sirona

Jen Davies

Paul Channing,
St John Ambulance volunteer and carer

Tania Dorrity,
St John Ambulance volunteer
and NHS vaccinator

Ann Pearce,
North Bristol NHS Trust

Carrie,
GoodSAM and VANS volunteer

Elizabeth,
VANS/RVS GoodSam volunteer

Nathalie,
volunteer

Kelly Allen,
Student Nurse and Bank
Healthcare Assistant

Ruth,
St John Ambulance



www.weahsn.net/ashton-gate-vaccination-centre