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Sensory room a peaceful place for COVID-19 vaccination

A Voyager Point mum whose two autistic sons were the first to be vaccinated for COVID-19 in a sensory room for people with disability at South Western Sydney Vaccination Centre says the staff made her family feel like movie stars.

Belinda Hopkins says she now has the peace of mind of knowing her teenage sons Lachlan and Bradley Marsenic are fully vaccinated and protected against COVID-19 and she has thanked the staff for helping to make it a positive and relaxing experience for the family.

“The staff were wonderful and they helped my sons stay calm and comfortable during the whole process. I can’t thank them enough,” Ms Hopkins said.

“It was a great experience from the start, including parking so we were able to drive in to our allocated parking spot and be met by a nurse who walked us to the sensory room.”

The sensory room is a quiet place where people with autism or an intellectual disability can relax in a recliner or lie down in a hospital bed and receive the vaccine in private and away from noise and distractions.

It opens every Thursday from 7.30am to 9.30am at the vaccination centre and has a small range of sensory toys to help people relax. After the vaccination is completed, a staff member also walks the family back to their car.

A special vaccination squad is also available to vaccinate people in their vehicle if they have mobility or other health issues.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Amanda Larkin said having an injection can be a confronting time for anyone and the sensory room was established to help people with disability and their families.

“The sensory room is another way we are helping our community to get vaccinated and keep everyone safe,” Ms Larkin said.

“Disability and aged care workers, people with disability, their families and carers are also encouraged to get vaccinated at our supported vaccination service at Liverpool Vaccination Centre until 14 November.”

This Liverpool service runs from 9am to 4pm on Monday to Sunday. Dedicated parking is available on-site for organised appointment holders. In-car vaccination is also available for people with mobility restrictions.

People can book to use the supported vaccination service at Liverpool by phoning 0475 808 968 or emailing SWSLHD-EOC-CoVaxBookings@health.nsw.gov.au

To book a vaccination in the sensory room at South Western Sydney Vaccination Centre, phone 8781 8401 or 8781 8402. More vaccination options are available at www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/covid19/