

Position Statement around use of the Covid-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca (AZ) to vaccinate housebound patients

There have been queries around the movement of the AZ Vaccine once the vial has been punctured; we have worked with the National Infection Prevention and Control team to agree a way forward that reduces the risk of microbiological contamination of the unpreserved AZ vaccine and therefore the risk of infection to patients. The following statement is our recommendation.

There are no concerns from a *movement stability* perspective of transporting the AZ Covid-19 vaccine from house to house to support vaccination of housebound patients. The vaccine should be stored at +2 to 8°C until first use. If it is moved during this period, the cold chain must be assured and maintained. After the vial has been punctured, the vaccine should be used as soon as practically possible and within 6 hours. Once punctured the 6-hour expiry must be recorded on the vial. The vaccine may be stored between 2°C and 25°C during the in-use period.

During transport of the punctured vial the following infection control considerations must also be in place:

- Ensure existing local guidance on standard infection prevention control precautions is followed. This will include hand hygiene with the addition of a staff requirement to wear a fluid resistant surgical mask.
- In addition, after vaccination, decontaminate the vial and secondary packaging using an alcohol wipe rather than a detergent wipe before putting it back into the vaccine porter (/bag used to carry the vaccine) for onward transport in view of the unknown risk from other infectious pathogens within the environment in the home. The vaccine porter (/bag used to carry the vaccine) should *only* be decontaminated leaving the home if there is contamination or if the person in the household has a known infectious pathogen.
- As standard practice for this vaccine, swab the vial septum with an alcohol swab prior to **every** dose withdrawn and leave to dry for 30 seconds.
- The SPS SOP AVH7 Transporting AZ Covid-19 Vaccine outlines best practice for transporting vaccine from home to home. It advocates transporting the vaccine in a validated cool box to further limit the risk of microbiological contamination of an unpreserved vaccine and segregation of punctured and un-punctured vials.

With thanks to colleagues in NHS Scotland who shared work they have done in this area.

Clinical Workstream
National Covid-19 Vaccination Programme
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