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20 February 2021

To:

- Chairs of ICSs and STPs
- All CCG Chairs
- ICS and STP leads
- All CCG Accountable Officers

CC:

- NHS Regional Directors
- NHS Regional Directors of Commissioning

Dear colleagues

Next steps on the vaccination programme – vaccinating Cohort 6: Individuals added to the shielded patient list via QCovid® and Adult Carers

Thank you for your continued hard work on the vaccination programme. Please continue to work across your local system to ensure that those who have already been invited or are eligible take up the vaccination.

This letter is to ask for your help to reach out and encourage two key groups included in cohort 6 to get vaccinated: those newly identified as needing to shield; and those who are adult carers.

Individuals added to the shielded patient list as a result of the COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment (QCovid®)

Adults on the shielded patient list (clinically extremely vulnerable adults) are receiving priority access to vaccination against COVID-19. On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer a number of people have been identified as at similar risk to the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) population, based on a new data-driven tool called the COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment (QCovid®).

We wrote to Primary Care Networks (PCNs) on 13 February asking them to focus efforts on inviting the clinically vulnerable and those who care for them (Cohort 6) because of General Practice's expertise and ongoing relationship with people with long term conditions:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/vaccination-of-jcvi-cohorts-5-6-and-additional-funding-for-vaccination-in-residential-settings/>

However, we want to ensure that all services are available to this group and that they are offered vaccination as soon as possible. Therefore, we are making capacity available in vaccination centres and community pharmacies to adults in this QCovid® cohort. They can now book via the national booking service at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination at any time, or call 119 free of charge, between 7am and 11pm seven days a week.

Please help ensure this group is vaccinated as quickly as possible by:

- Using local communication networks to encourage this group to book straight away through their PCN LVS, vaccination centre or community pharmacy. A letter from the National Booking Service will not be issued until 24 February so please use local networks and channels to communicate so this group can book now.

- Working with your Local Vaccination Services and GP practices to help signpost this patient group, where needed, to the extra capacity available for them at the vaccination centres and community pharmacy.

As a precautionary measure, individuals aged 19-69 who have been identified by this assessment and added to the shielded patient list (SPL) will receive the following correspondence from 18 February and into next week:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962167/Clinically_extremely_vulnerable_letter_identified_high_risk.pdf

More information on how this group was identified and the process for adding them to the shielded patient list can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/guidance-and-updates-for-gps-at-risk-patients/>

Adult carers

According to the JCVI and [Public Health England Green Book](#), adult carers are “*those who are eligible for a carer’s allowance, or those who are the sole or primary carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of COVID-19 mortality and therefore clinically vulnerable*”.

Two data sources are being used to identify those who are eligible within this definition: those flagged as carers in GP systems, and those assessed by DWP as eligible for Carer’s Allowance. Those who have a carers flag on GP systems are being called by PCN LVSs, as in many cases they will accompany the person they care for if they are also being vaccinated in cohort 6, for example those with learning disabilities.

From Saturday 20 February those identified within these groups will be able to book via the National Booking Service. To support maximising all available capacity and vaccine supply in your area for adult carers, local systems are asked to take the following action:

- a) Use local communication and engagement networks to advise eligible adult carers (i.e. those known to be eligible for Carer’s Allowance) that they can make a booking via the NBS or 119 in advance of receiving their letter of invitation. Local Authorities have strong community and third sector networks which can support systems to explain and communicate this to local communities.
- b) This initial phase of adult carers do not need to provide any evidence of eligibility as they are already identified as eligible and will be able to book with their personal details or NHS number.
- c) Carers under 18 will not be able to book using the National Booking Service. Those under 18 will need to be invited by their LVS where they can receive the Pfizer vaccine.

Thank you for your continued support.



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