

Official

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To: CCG Chief Pharmacists/Heads of Medicines Optimisation  
Hospital Chief Pharmacists

Cc: NHS Community Trust Chief Pharmacists  
Superintendents of Community Pharmacies providing COVID-19 vaccinations  
Regional Chief Pharmacists  
Regional Directors of Commissioning  
Regional Vaccination Operation Centres

21 May 2021

Dear Colleague

### **COVID-19 Vaccination: Pharmacy Update**

Thank you to you and your teams for continuing to play such an effective and critical role in the ongoing delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. The programme continues to be an enormous success, not least because of your commitment to delivering it well and safely.

I am writing to ask for your further support on two specific matters.

First, there are an increasing number of Community Pharmacies using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. My letter of [28 December 2020](#) set out the expectations for governance, handling and preparation of this vaccine. The NHS Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) has developed [operating procedures](#) and standards to support this.

As senior pharmacy leaders, you and your staff now have considerable experience of working with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and ensuring that the integrity of this fragile vaccine is maintained. Therefore, under the guidance of your Regional Chief Pharmacist, please share that experience with Community Pharmacy colleagues, supporting them in the safe delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to patients.

SPS has recently published additional guidance to support Community Pharmacy-led vaccination sites which can be found [here](#). Of particular value will be support on issues relating to the storage, handling and preparation of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in line with the conditions of authorisation and the SPS guidance, both of which have been recently updated. The Superintendent Pharmacist and Responsible Pharmacist for the associated registered pharmacy are accountable for the delivery of safe and effective care. I am sure they will welcome your support.

The COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna has similar handling requirements to the Pfizer-BioNTech product. I would similarly encourage you to familiarise yourself with the SPS operating procedures for this vaccine which can be found [here](#).

Second, vaccination sites are likely to be in receipt of more than one type of vaccine at any one time. SPS has developed [guidance](#) to help vaccination services mitigate any risk of handling multiple vaccines at a single site. This will minimise the opportunity for errors to occur and ensure patient safety. All sites should implement the safeguards as outlined in the SPS guidance and may benefit from your experience to help them do so.

A recent webinar covered many of the issues outlined in this letter and is available to view [here](#) (page requires registration).

We have an opportunity to build on the great work provided by pharmacy professionals across all sectors on the COVID-19 vaccination programme and to firmly establish all pharmacy run sites as centres of excellence for vaccination services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. W. Ridge', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Keith Ridge CBE

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for England