

- To: • ICS leads
• STP leads
- cc. • SAIS providers
• CCG accountable officers
• PCN-led local vaccination sites
• Community pharmacy-led LVS
• NHS regional directors
• NHS regional directors of commissioning
• Directors of public health
• Local government chief executives

NHS England and NHS Improvement
Skipton House
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13 December 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Second phase for children and young people aged 12 to 15: next steps for COVID-19 vaccine deployment

We are writing to set out next steps on second dose vaccination for healthy 12- to 15-year-olds following [the Government's acceptance](#) of the updated advice from the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

The JCVI advice states that:

“All children and young people aged 12 to 15 years should be offered a second dose (30 micrograms) of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at a minimum of 12 weeks from the first dose.”

A full copy of the advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-vaccine-response-to-the-omicron-variant-jcvi-advice/jcvi-advice-on-the-uk-vaccine-response-to-the-omicron-variant>

A further system letter will be published prior to service go-live, with a package of contracting materials, including specification to be sent directly to systems via NVOC. The Patient Group Direction and National Protocol to support the delivery of second vaccination for this group are now available in readiness for commencement of vaccination no later than 20 December.

Next steps for deployment

This second phase provides systems with a hybrid model of delivery which delivers both an in-school and out-of-school offer. All systems now need to put plans in place to vaccinate children as quickly and safely as possible. As well as ensuring comprehensive coverage for first doses, local providers should also ensure that children are able to access their second dose as close as practicable to their 12-week eligibility.

Winter break offer – readiness for 20 December 2021

There will be children and young people who become eligible for a second dose from the week commencing 13 December and therefore systems will need to ensure capacity is in place over the winter break to offer vaccination out-of-school no later than Monday 20 December 2021. Systems should now review their out-of-school offer, maximising capacity for those aged 12 to 15 years as quickly as possible.

All vaccination services that are part of the NBS and have the appropriate staffing and assurance in place are now asked to ensure appointments are planned and made available to enable the booking for this age group to begin.

Spring term offer – readiness from 10 January 2022

In-school offer

Vaccination for this group continues to be deployed primarily by school age immunisation service (SAIS) providers, working with local partners to minimise inequalities and ensure comprehensive coverage, and local systems should continue to prioritise support for their local SAIS teams.

All SAIS providers now need to ensure they have sufficient capacity in place to deliver in-school vaccination starting in the spring term. We expect most schools to require multiple visits so vaccines can be administered to all consenting pupils. All schools should have received at least one visit before February half term. It is acknowledged that re-visits to school may fall after the half term break, with vaccinations available towards the end of Spring term to ensure children who received their first dose at a later date, or contracted COVID-19, have the opportunity to be vaccinated. The second phase will run until the end of the Spring term, 31 March 2022.

Local providers should deliver COVID-19 vaccinations to all children and young people in a school setting of more than 35 eligible pupils, alongside other in-school vaccination programmes. Where schools have fewer than 35 eligible pupils, we recognise that vaccination in the school setting may not be appropriate. Therefore systems must put alternative arrangements in place to ensure timely, accessible, and equitable vaccination for these children.

Formal engagement with existing SAIS providers should start as quickly as possible. Systems should support SAIS providers to bolster and supplement capacity, either through accessing additional support via the lead employer or by sub-contracting with partners, including primary care networks (PCNs) and community pharmacy, where required. In situations where a SAIS provider is unable to provide the service, regions should put in place an alternative provider as soon as possible to ensure provision for all 12- to 15-year-old children.

To ensure a high-quality service is delivered at pace to children with minimal disruption to their education, we encourage systems and providers to work collaboratively with schools, Directors of public health and local authorities who have invaluable experience and expertise.

Out-of-school offer

Systems are required to ensure that there is also a comprehensive out-of-school offer. This offer will enable children and young people to receive their vaccination at their convenience, ensuring that vaccinations are available when children become eligible and those children who prefer to access a COVID-19 vaccination outside of a school setting or outside of school hours can do so. Systems are asked to continually review and extend their local capacity, considering how vaccination centres, community pharmacies and PCNs can support this second phase.

The second dose for this age group should not be constrained by where a first dose was given.

Workforce

[The workforce considerations for vaccinating children aged 12 to 17 years old were shared on 23 July 2021](#) and include training standards and required competencies. Lead employers are available to systems and SAIS providers to provide additional workforce, as well as to support the training and deployment of staff. A full list of lead employers can be found [here](#).

The UK chief medical officers have noted the importance of influenza vaccination and other immunisations of children and young people. Therefore, systems may find it beneficial to co-administer COVID-19 with other immunisations including influenza, HPV, MenACWY and Td-IPV. Further guidance on co-administration can be found in [chapter 14a of the Green Book \(p.27\)](#).

Finally, a webinar will be held on Thursday 16 December at 2-3pm for system partners to discuss these next steps and share further details. This will also be an opportunity to ensure every site and every system has what they need to deliver against these

challenging and life-saving goals. Please [register](#) by 11am on Thursday 16 December 2021 to receive further details.

Thank you in advance for everything you are doing to continue to deliver the vaccination programme.

Yours sincerely,



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