

- To:
- ICB Chief Executives
 - All GP practices
 - All Community Pharmacies
 - Primary Care Networks
 - All Trust Chief Executives
 - All Local Government Chief Executives
 - All Health and Justice healthcare providers
 - All Directors of Public Health

NHS England
Wellington House
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18 August 2022

- cc.
- Regional Directors
 - Regional Directors of Commissioning

Dear Colleagues

Autumn COVID-19 booster and flu vaccine programme

Thank you for the preparations you have been making since February to deliver this programme, which is an important part of the NHS's winter plan. Successful delivery of the autumn campaign is fundamental to supporting NHS and adult social care resilience and protecting the public over the coming months.

The government have accepted final JCVI advice which states the following people should be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine this autumn:

- *residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults*
- *frontline health and social care workers*
- *all adults aged 50 years and over*
- *persons aged 5 to 49 years in a clinical risk group, as set out in the Green Book*
- *persons aged 5 to 49 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression*
- *persons aged 16 to 49 years who are carers, as set out in the Green Book.*

JCVI advise that deployment of a single type of vaccine throughout the autumn booster programme promotes simplicity and is therefore desirable. A full copy of the final JCVI advice for COVID-19 boosters can be found [here](#) and eligibility for the seasonal influenza immunisation [here](#).

Actions now required

This letter sets out the actions we are now asking you to take, as well as operational details systems should consider, when finalising plans. Systems should maximise opportunities to co-promote and co-administer vaccinations where possible and clinically advised (eg COVID-19, flu and pneumococcal), especially where this improves patient experience and uptake, **but this should not unduly delay administration of either jab.**

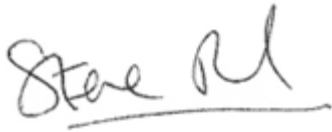
- **Campaign start and invites:** the flu programme will begin as usual from **1 September** with sites vaccinating when locally procured vaccine allows. Visits to care homes will begin from **w/c 5 September** with formal launch of the winter/autumn campaign on **12 September**.
- To support this, the National Booking Service (NBS) will open w/c 5 September to enable those aged 75 years and over and self-declaring health and social care workers to book their COVID-19 vaccination appointment from w/c 12 September. National invites via SMS, email and letter are scheduled – therefore sites should upload NBS calendars for the first four weeks of COVID-19 vaccinations from 19 August. Sites not using the NBS should work with local partners to ensure maximum capacity using local booking systems.
- The NBS will extend to people aged 65 and over and allow self-declaring pregnant women, carers, household contacts of immunosuppressed people and those at increased risk of COVID-19 (as per table 3 and 4 in [chapter 14a of the Green Book](#)) to book appointments with further announcements made in due course. Sites are advised that immunosuppressed people will be able to continue to self-declare or attend walk-ins for their vaccination in line with existing guidance. **We expect all sites to be vaccinating at full operational capacity from 19 September.**
- **Campaign completion:** in order to optimise protection for people, systems should offer vaccination by the **start of December**. The Secretary of State has also asked the NHS to put plans in place to accelerate the programme should it be necessary (especially to anticipate and mitigate broader pressures on the

NHS as a whole as we get closer to winter) and bring forward the end date if clinically advised and operationally viable.

- **Prioritising vaccination of care homes and housebound people:** from w/c 5 September, PCN groupings and other commissioned COVID-19 vaccination sites should start vaccinating residents and staff in older and non-older adult care homes and arrange visits to housebound patients. Opportunities to co-administer should not unduly delay administration of either jab. We will be engaging with professional bodies on options to support providers in prioritising the completion of vaccinations in care homes as early as possible.
- **Frontline health and social care workers:** to give our staff the maximum level of protection, we are asking all providers to support staff to take up the offer of a COVID-19 and flu vaccination. Providers have the flexibility to determine the timing of vaccination and health and social care workers will continue to be able to self-declare on the NBS.
- **Eligible 5 to 17 year olds:** Young people will receive their COVID-19 vaccine at assured GP-led vaccination sites, community pharmacies and other vaccination centres. The NBS will be available and consent will be obtained in line with previous rollouts. Further detail on eligibility and vaccine type will be available in the Green Book.
- **Supply and deliveries:** In line with the JCVI recommendation, the NHS will deploy a single type of vaccine (bivalent vaccines) – the mRNA bivalent Omicron BA.1/Original 'wild-type' vaccines for adult booster doses. By 19 August, we will confirm site-level allocation for the first four weeks of the autumn campaign. Sites will then be able to order from the 23 August in readiness for delivery w/c 5 September. Ordering deadlines continue to be in line with corresponding fixed delivery day routines.
- **Assurance and workforce:** COVID-19 vaccination sites should confirm vaccine assurance for the mRNA bivalent Omicron BA.1/Original 'wild-type' vaccine with their regional team by 29 August. The national protocol ensures the least pull on registered healthcare professionals, and system lead employers will continue to support the co-ordination of staffing across systems. UKHSA is updating the patient group directive (PGD) and the national protocol. We expect the PGD to be updated by 31 August and the national protocol to follow shortly after. Updated vaccine specific e-learning content will also be released shortly.

We are very grateful for your continued leadership and support to this programme, which together with the rest of our winter plan, will help ensure we are in the strongest possible position as we head into winter. We will provide further operational guidance to systems as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Russell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Steve Russell
National Director for Vaccinations
and Screening
NHS England

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr Nikita Kanani". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a circular scribble.

Dr Nikita Kanani MBE
Deputy Lead for the COVID-19
Vaccination Programme
NHS England