

POLIO BOOSTER PROGRAMME - FAQ FOR GENERAL PRACTICE TEAMS

Why are we talking about polio?

Following the discovery of poliovirus in sewage in north and east London, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that a targeted inactivated polio containing vaccine (IPV) booster dose should be offered to children between the ages of one and nine in all London boroughs.

Why is this campaign being run and what is the purpose?

There are signs the virus may be spreading in London and the number of children vaccinated in London is lower than it should be. Boosting immunity in children should help protect them and reduce the risk of the virus continuing to spread.

For some children this may be an extra dose of polio containing vaccine, on top of their routine vaccinations. In other children it may just bring them up to date. This will ensure a high level of protection from any risk of paralysis, though the risks to the general population are still assessed as low. However, the number of children vaccinated in London is lower than it should be. By vaccinating children, this will protect them in case of any future outbreaks. The booster programme is part of the incident response and is available to everyone in London, however routine polio vaccination is available to everyone in England.

What is the routine polio vaccination schedule?

The polio containing vaccine is free and given as part of combined jabs to babies, toddlers and teenagers. Children need all five doses of the vaccine to be fully protected against polio. The polio vaccine is given when a child is:

- 8, 12 and 16 weeks old as part of the 6-in-1 vaccine (DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB)
- 3 years and 4 months old as part of the 4-in-1 (DTaP/IPV) pre-school booster
- 14 years old as part of the 3-in-1 (Td/IPV) teenage booster

What is being offered to children aged 1 to 9 in London?

In London, all children aged 1-9 years are being offered a dose of polio containing vaccine - whether it's an extra dose if they are up to date with their routine vaccinations or to catch up. This is part of the incident response to ensure a high level of protection from paralysis and to help stop the virus spreading further. The booster dose will be offered to children in the areas where type 2 poliovirus has been detected in wastewater first and then offered to all London boroughs.

What information has gone out to parents?

A letter and text message were sent to parents of all children aged 1 to 9+364 days on 19 August 2022. The text message script is:

The NHS is inviting children aged 1 to 9 in your borough to receive a vaccine against polio. For some children this will be an additional booster dose if they are already up to date with their routine vaccinations, in others who are not up to date it will be a catch-up dose. Traces of poliovirus have been found in sewage in some London boroughs - the vaccine will boost your child's protection. Polio can be very serious and in unvaccinated people can on rare occasions cause paralysis. You will be contacted by the NHS to book a vaccination appointment for your child. More info can be found here:

And the letter is given at Appendix 1

Why are children that are up to date with their routine vaccinations being offered an additional dose in London? Are all 1 - 9 year olds being offered a polio booster?

Experts have advised that, as a precaution, all children aged one to nine years in London should be offered a dose of polio containing vaccine now to ensure that they are protected against polio and to stop any further spread of poliovirus in London. This is because children in this age range have not received the full programme of vaccination, so they are not yet fully protected against polio. By getting a dose now this will boost their protection against polio. In London, all children aged 1-9 years are being offered a dose of polio vaccine. This will either be a top up dose in children that are fully up to date with their routine vaccinations or a catch-up dose.

Is this an extra jab? Will children that need to catch up with their missed routine vaccination/s then get an additional dose on top of that?

We need to protect children against polio now. Bringing a child up to date now will achieve the same effect as the offer of an additional booster.

For children that are fully up to date with their routine vaccinations, this will be an additional polio vaccine to enhance their protection against polio whilst it is being detected in wastewater samples. If your child is not up to date with their routine vaccinations, they will be given a catch-up dose so it will not be an additional dose.

What is the risk of not having the polio booster vaccine?

Since February 2022, we have found a type 2 polio virus in sewage samples taken from north London. This suggests that the virus is now spreading between people. This has probably happened because vaccine uptake for the infant and toddler vaccinations in London is lower than it should be. Polio is an infection caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system – it can cause permanent paralysis of muscles. Before the polio vaccine was introduced, there were as many as 8,000 cases of polio in the UK in epidemic years. Because of the success of the polio vaccination programme, there have been no cases of natural polio infection in the UK for over 30 years (the last case was in 1984) and polio was eradicated from the whole of Europe in 2003.

The polio virus found in London should not pose any risk to those who are fully vaccinated. However, whilst it is spreading, there is a small chance that those who have not been fully vaccinated, or those who cannot respond well to vaccines, could be at risk of catching polio. The good news is that we have picked this virus up early and we want to act now to protect as many children as we can.

Boosting immunity in children aged 1 to 9 years now by offering them an extra dose of polio vaccine should help ensure they have very high levels of protection from paralysis and reduce the risk of them spreading the virus to others. It's important all children aged 1 to 9 – even if up to date with their vaccinations – take up this vaccine when offered to further strengthen their protection against the poliovirus.

Is there anyone who does not need to get a polio dose now?

The only small group of children in London who don't need a dose now are those who had a pre-school booster (at 3yrs 4m) in the last 12 months, but if they get an extra booster in error it won't cause any harm.

Some of our patients do not live in London but are registered with us, are they eligible?

Yes, all children aged 1 to 9+364 days who are London residents or registered with a London GP practice are eligible to receive a polio containing vaccination.

What about older children and young people and adults – are they eligible for a vaccination?

The best way to prevent polio is to make sure everyone is up to date with vaccinations so anyone of any age may call to make an appointment and receive a polio containing vaccination on the NHS.

Can patients get other vaccinations at the same time?

Yes – it is good practice to check the patient's immunisation history and check the Redbook. You should speak with your Practice Immunisation Lead to develop a system that flags which other immunisations a patient is due and administer them at the same time.

We run a very busy practice and our appointment slots are allocated very quickly. What should we do if all appointment slots are taken?

Your practice may be part of a collaboration agreement where you can refer to other practices. Check with your GP, Practice Manager or Practice Immunisation Lead. You should allocate the earliest available appointment to anyone requesting one.

Can I refer the patient to our extended access hub?

Yes

Can I refer the patient to a Vaccination Centre?

Yes

Where can I get details of other providers who are offering polio vaccinations near my practice?

The details and locations of other providers who are offering Polio vaccinations are provided in the link below:

[Extra polio vaccine dose for children \(London only\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Are the school aged vaccination services offering polio vaccinations and do they send us information?

SAIS Providers are contributing to the programme with staff capacity and clinics. All information of children vaccinated at non-GP sites will go through CarePlus/CHIS. The data and tech team are working through a solution to send data from CHIS to GP practices to update the patient record.

What do I do if a patient comes in for another reason and their record shows they've not had a polio vaccination or completed the schedule?

You should ask the practice nurse or GP to speak to the patient's parent and offer a polio containing vaccination.

Where do I get stock from?

Your practice will have an Immform account and the polio containing vaccinations are available to order free of charge.

Is there a limit to what I can order and can I order more?

There are ordering limits in place on vaccine supplied by UKHSA to encourage regular ordering of smaller volumes and reduce wastage due to fridge or delivery failure. If your practice has the capacity to store and administer more than the weekly limit, then they are advised to contact the ImmForm helpdesk with requests for additional allocation.

Requests for polio containing vaccine are dealt with as quickly as possible and you are encouraged to request additional allocation well in advance of order closing deadline where possible and to only order what is needed for booked clinics for the next 2 weeks.

What is our practice expected to do to support this campaign?

You should work with your practice Immunisation Lead and Local Immunisation Coordinator to develop a system where you:

- Invite children for a booster or catch up polio vaccination
- Use your existing practice call and recall system
- Use the correct SNOMED code (see Appendix 2)
- Escalate any declines to your practice nurse, GP or Immunisation Lead
- Record reason for decline

What do I do if a person attends the practice for a polio vaccination but is not registered with the practice?

Where possible the practice should register the person and arrange an appointment with the relevant clinician so they can be brought up to date with any outstanding vaccinations.

Do the polio containing vaccines contain porcine gelatine?

the IPV vaccines deployed in the routine programme and being used for the IPV booster campaign **do not contain any porcine gelatine.**

Appendix 1 – Parent Letter



20220815 Polio
Invite Letter v01.03.dc

London Polio Campaign – SNOMED code recommendations. Vaccination Drug Codes



Child aged 1 year to less than 3 years 4 months receiving hexavalent dose for primary course or additional dose	
Child aged over 3 years 4 months to less than 10 years receiving a hexavalent dose to complete a primary course doses	
34765811000001105	Infanrix Hexa vaccine powder and suspension for suspension for injection 0.5ml pre-filled syringes (GlaxoSmithKline UK Ltd)
OR 39367111000001105	Vaxelis vaccine suspension for injection 0.5ml pre-filled syringes (Sanofi)
Child aged over 3 years 4 months to less than 10 years receiving their first quadrivalent Pre-School Booster (PSB) dose	
Child aged over 3 year 4 months to less than 6 years receiving an additional quadrivalent IPV dose	
26267211000001100	Boostrix-IPV suspension for injection 0.5ml pre-filled syringes (GlaxoSmithKline UK Ltd)
Child aged over 6 years to less than 10 years receiving an additional trivalent IPV dose	
11122111000001101	Revaxis vaccine suspension for injection 0.5ml pre-filled syringes (Waymade Ltd)
OR 7374311000001101	Revaxis vaccine suspension for injection 0.5ml pre-filled syringes (Aventis Pasteur MSD Ltd)

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London Polio Campaign – SNOMED code recommendations. Vaccination Procedure Codes



Child aged 1 year to less than 10 years receiving hexavalent dose as part of a primary course		Regular
1 st 1082441000000108	First diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis, inactivated polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b and hepatitis B vaccination	
2 nd 1082451000000106	Second diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis, inactivated polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b and hepatitis B vaccination	
3 rd 1082461000000109	Third diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis, inactivated polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b and hepatitis B vaccination	
Child aged 1 year to less than 3 years 4 months receiving an additional hexavalent dose		Additional
1082431000000104	Diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis, inactivated polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b and hepatitis B vaccination	
Child aged over 3 years 4 months to less than 10 years receiving their first quadrivalent Pre-School Booster (PSB) dose		Regular
247821000000102	Booster diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis and inactivated polio vaccination	
Child aged over 3 year 4 months to less than 6 years receiving an additional quadrivalent IPV dose		Additional
247821000000102	Booster diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis and inactivated polio vaccination	
Child aged over 6 years to less than 10 years receiving an additional trivalent IPV dose		Additional
414619005	Administration of vaccine product containing only Clostridium tetani and low dose Corynebacterium diphtheriae and inactivated Human poliovirus antigens	

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