



ICARS Newsletter

Issue 66: 3rd December 2021

Immunisation Clinical Advice Response Service

About this bulletin:

For any COVID-19 vaccination related queries or to escalate an incident please contact: england.swicars@nhs.net

PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL RELEVANT STAFF INVOLVED WITH THE VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Please note that ICARS operates from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday.

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1. New: Update letter on COVID-19 Variant B.1.1.529 (Omicron)

On 28 November, the UK Health Security Agency's Chief Medical Adviser, the National Medical Director of NHS England and the Chief Nursing Officer for England sent a letter regarding the new COVID-19 variant B.1.1.529 (Omicron); to view click [here](#) and a letter to systems setting out next steps will be sent and published shortly.

2. New: JCVI issues advice on COVID-19 booster vaccines for those aged 18 to 39 years and a 2nd dose for 12-15-year-olds

Following the emergence of the Omicron variant, including confirmed cases in the UK, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has urgently reviewed vaccine response measures.

JCVI now advises:

- All adults aged 18 to 39 years should be offered a booster dose, in order of descending age groups, to increase their levels of protection.
- Booster doses should be given no sooner than three months after the primary course.

- All severely immunosuppressed individuals should be offered their booster dose no sooner than three months after completing their primary course of 3 doses.
- Young people aged 12 to 15 years should receive a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose.

JCVI previously advised that those aged over 40 years and those at higher risk from COVID-19 should be offered a booster. This new JCVI advice means those aged 18-39 will also be eligible for a booster when the NHS calls them forward.

The booster will be offered in order of descending age groups, with priority given to the vaccination of older adults and those in a COVID-19 at-risk group. In response to the changing risk posed by the Omicron variant, the booster will now be given no sooner than 3 months after the primary course.

In addition, a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (30 microgram) for young people aged 12 to 15 years is advised no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose.

The overall intention of the measures advised above is to accelerate the deployment of COVID-19 vaccines and raise levels of protection across the population.

Professor Wei Shen Lim, Chair, COVID-19 immunisation, JCVI said: “Having a booster dose of the vaccine will help to increase our level of protection against the Omicron variant. This is an important way for us to reduce the impact of this variant on our lives, especially in the coming months.

“If you are eligible for a booster, please take up the offer and keep yourself protected as we head into winter.”

Both the Moderna (50 microgram) and Pfizer-BioNTech (30 microgram) vaccines have been shown to substantially increase antibody levels when offered as a booster dose and should be used with equal preference in the COVID-19 booster programme.

Continued efforts will be made to offer COVID-19 vaccination (first, second and booster doses) to adults who have yet to receive any COVID-19 vaccinations.

JCVI will continue to review the programme and consider further evidence to ensure that health benefits are maximised alongside the rapidly evolving data on the Omicron variant.

The JCVI statement is also available at 3. [JCVI advice on the UK vaccine response to the Omicron variant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-advice-on-the-uk-vaccine-response-to-the-omicron-variant)

3. New: Immunosuppressed patients third dose operational note

On 29 November, a further Operational Note was issued to advise that the National Booking Service has been updated to enable severely immunosuppressed patients eligible for a 3rd Primary COVID-19 Vaccination to book for an appointment (click [here](#) to view).

Please note the key actions. We also included a link to a suite of information that contains helpful tools, e.g. patient pathway flow chart, letter templates, patient facing posters. These are to support you in reaching people who are severely immunosuppressed and can be accessed [here](#)

4. New: Guidance on myocarditis and pericarditis after COVID-19 vaccination for healthcare

Link: [Myocarditis and pericarditis after COVID-19 vaccination](#)

Change made: First published.

Time updated: 12:30pm, 29 November 2021

5. Updated: Guidance relating to blood clotting, myocarditis and Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) after COVID-19 vaccination.

Link: [COVID-19 vaccination and rare side effects](#)

Change made: Added myocarditis and pericarditis after COVID-19 vaccination guidance.

Time updated: 12:55pm, 29 November 2021

6. Updated: Practical toolkit for Local Vaccination Services (LVS) settings on workforce and training now available.

All LVS sites can access this updated toolkit on [Futures](#) which will provide the following information and more:

- workforce and training requirements for delivery of vaccination for the adult and child population;
- defines the legal mechanisms of delivery available and proposed operating models;
- guidance on accessing the national workforce support offer and draw down mechanism;

- innovative approaches to optimise the workforce and streamline the vaccination pathway;
- outline of workforce solutions enabling maximum flexibility to respond to all vaccination needs.

7. Update: C19 Vaccination Record Cards

The COVID-19 vaccination record cards previously supplied with the vaccine will no longer be offered from ImmForm. All vaccine providers will need to order stock of the record cards directly from the Health Publications website.

The first designs remain suitable for first and second doses and are in stock and will be withdrawn when stocks are exhausted. Please use your current stock in the interim. There is no need to return stock.

- **Original design, product code: [COV2020311 1 = Pack of 50 COVID-19 Vaccination record card - 2 doses](#)**
- Hope design record card Product code: [COV2020311V3 COVID-19 vaccination record card \(pack of 50\)](#)
- The NEW third dose/booster record card is designed so that providers can record the number of the dose on the left hand side of the card. This makes it suitable for a third dose or booster as appropriate. It can be ordered now be ordered from the [Health Publications website](#) using the product code: **COV2021311**
- If you have already registered on Health Publications, you can immediately place your orders for delivery next week. If you have not registered it only takes a few minutes to register here: <https://www.healthpublications.gov.uk/Home.html>
- Please do not register as an individual as this restricts you to 5 copies/units. Register as a vaccine provider, NHS, etc. Please search on the website using the enter the product code in the search window as the fastest way to find what you need.
- If you require more than 500 units (so that would be 500 x pack of 50 Total 25,000) you will need to call 0300 123 1002 to place your order.

8. Learning: Key Learning re cold chain incidents

With the vaccination programme operating at such a high level all settings should remain familiar with best practise and the processes for maintaining the cold chain.

Key points to consider include:

- ensure daily monitoring occurs on all days vaccine is held in the fridge
- check that your data logger has an SD card, or equivalent functionality, and be prepared to download data when you report a cold chain incident
- ensure named individuals are identified each day to be responsible for stock monitoring and cold chain management
- keep clear records and have visible aide memoires as needed to ensure expiry times are not exceeded.
- If you experience a cold chain or any other clinical incident report it promptly to ICARS england.swicars@nhs.net and they will support your investigation and any mutual aid required for vaccine supply.

9. Contact details: Fridge faults affecting vaccine supply for all models of delivery

Where a fridge fault affects vaccine supply site should follow these steps.

- report to ICARS team england.swicars@nhs.net copying in england.swcovid19-voc@nhs.net
- report the fridge to Unipart so a replacement can be ordered Unipart Customer Service Desk - CS@nhsvaccinesupport.com 0800 678 1650 | 0700-1900 Mon- Sun
- report via the Foundry system/one care with batch numbers.

The relevant SOP is

at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/standard-operating-procedure-management-of-covid-19-vaccination-clinical-incidents-and-enquiries/>

10. Contact details: Fridge manuals and advice

- For fridges supplied by the national team, PDF manuals can be provided by contacting Unipart Customer Service Desk - CS@nhsvaccinesupport.com 0800 678 1650 | 0700-1900 Mon- Sun
- Unipart Helpdesk can also provide fridge technical support phone numbers if sites request.
- For fridges/freezers arriving damaged on delivery please follow the advice on this link [Latest Info - COVID-19 Vaccination Programme - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)

11. Contact details: Combined needles and syringes for the COVID19 vaccine administration

If a site experiences an issue with any combined needles and syringes associated with the COVID19 vaccine programme they should be reported as follows;

- Notify COVID19PHEsupplies@phe.gov.uk so an investigation can be opened with manufacturer
- Raise a Yellow card to MHRA
- If appropriate notify NVOC via the SVOC/RVOC route.

LVS sites requiring a collection of the El Dawlia ico Med: Please see attached RVOC 6280 Cascade for action required by LVS sites requiring a collection of the El Dawlia ico Med - Sterile Hypodermic Syringe. 2ml syringe with 21G x 1.5" Safety Needle following medical recall.

12. Reminder: How RVS Volunteer Steward can support all vaccination sites

Volunteer Stewards can support vaccination centres, primary care networks and community pharmacy sites and can be requested to help make your site run safely and smoothly.

RVS Volunteer Stewards can:

- Meet and greet people, helping to make patients feel welcome, and to help all have a positive on site experience.
- Ensure that all people arriving for vaccinations are moving around the site correctly: maintaining social distancing, following the one-way site plan, and requesting people wear PPE.
- Help people get to the right part of the site for their vaccine.
- Where applicable, ensure the site car park is operating safely.

They are NOT permitted to do:

- Clinical activity – they cannot vaccinate people, assist patients taking lateral flow tests or provide any treatment, including post vaccination observation.
- Clinical administration – they cannot do data entry or deal with any confidential patient data.

RVS have produced an incredibly helpful, short webinar ([RVS Webinar](#)), which is full of useful information on how to request RVS Steward Volunteers and ensure they have a good experience with you. This Webinar can be found on the [NHS](#)

[FUTURES Workforce Volunteers page](#), which is part of the [Workforce and Training page](#).

13. Reminder: Vaccination Operational Support Teams (VOST) availability for w/c 29th November to support vaccinations (COVID-19 and Flu) and 12–17-year-olds

See below for teams that are currently available for deployment, along with areas where teams can be deployed. Please contact your [lead employer](#) for the latest deployment details and availability within your area.

WC 29/11/2021	Not deployed and are available	Deployed VOST teams
North West		East Lancs
North East & Yorkshire	South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw	Newcastle Upon Tyne (3 Teams)
East of England		Cambridgeshire
South East		Sussex Kent
South West		North Bristol Somerset (2 Teams)
London		North West London East London
Midlands	Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent	Coventry and Warwickshire

VOST teams are trained and ready to support COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, including 12-17 year olds and can often be deployed at pace. They are made up of an equal number of Registered Healthcare Professionals and Unregistered Vaccinators as outlined below:

Team of 6 -1 x Clinical Supervisor, 2 x Registered Healthcare Professionals & 3 x Vaccinators

Team of 4 -2 x Registered Healthcare Professionals & 2 x Vaccinators

Team of 2 -1 x Registered Healthcare Professionals & 1 x Vaccinator.

The process for requesting these teams has been reviewed and alongside the current process of requesting via your Lead Employer, NHSP will also now be engaging with sites directly to understand potential new requirements. Where new requirements are identified, NHSP will work with the Lead Employer and the

site to ensure the appropriate documentation, recruitment and deployment is in place over a c.4-week period. Where teams are already available these can be deployed at pace.