

ICARS Newsletter

Immunisation Clinical Advice & Response Service



Issue 93: 23rd June 2022

PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTERS WITH ALL RELEVANT STAFF INVOLVED WITH THE VACCINATION PROGRAMME

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

Please note that this service operates 9am-5pm Monday to Friday

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NEW: Next steps for COVID-19 vaccination and Spring Booster Updates and Resources

1. UPDATE: UKHSA COVID-19 Spring vaccine update

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have published the COVID-19 Spring special vaccine update. The bulletin includes information on Autumn COVID-19 boosters, successes and challenges, maximising uptake throughout the programme and resources. Read the full June

issue [here](#).

2. NEW: Next steps for COVID-19 vaccination and aligning routine vaccination and immunisations in 2022/23

Following the publication of [interim advice](#) from the Joint Committee for Immunisation and Vaccination (JCVI) for autumn, on 22 June we issued a letter to systems outlining the next steps for the COVID-19 vaccination programme and routine vaccination and immunisation services – read here [Coronavirus » Next steps for COVID-19 vaccination \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

2a. NEW: Press notice calls on those still due a spring booster to come forward

To coincide with publication of the system letter, NHS England issued a press release, '[NHS top doctor rallies remaining people due a spring booster ahead of final COVID jab drive](#)', in which Professor Stephen Powis, National Medical Director, encouraged those still due a spring booster dose to make a booking or visit a walk-in site as soon as practically possible. This was supported by posts on [social media](#). We will support regions and systems to develop and promote similar local stories locally – please do echo this important reminder.

2b. NEW: Toolkit updated with new messages and social media resources to support spring-summer transition

Alongside this, we have updated our core toolkit for communicating the spring offer, to reflect the spring to summer transition. This toolkit is saved [here](#) and includes a new set of visual resources to share locally on social media or display units, as well as recent DHSC campaign material. We hope these are useful in speaking to the public, local stakeholders, and answering any questions.

3. NEW: Identifying and inviting or signposting people who are immunosuppressed for the COVID-19 spring booster

A [national system letter](#) was published on 13 June, setting out urgent steps for primary care networks and secondary care clinicians. The letter was sent to ensure that all remaining immunosuppressed people are identified and offered a booster during the Spring Campaign, as long as it has been at least three months since their previous dose.

The current immunosuppressed cohort list held in the COVID-19 GP Dashboard has been refreshed. Primary care clinicians are asked to utilise the PRIMIS search function held within GP IT systems to undertake local searches to identify and invite eligible immunosuppressed individuals for spring boosters by 27 June. Secondary care clinicians have been asked to contact any immunosuppressed individuals identified through locally held lists and those patients who they have regular contact with, to inform them of their eligibility.

Please note additional advice about how to conduct the PRIMIS search below.

4. NEW: PRIMIS search to identify immunosuppressed individuals for spring booster

PRIMIS has designed a new 'Spring Booster Immunosuppressed Patients' search for GPs. The new search simplifies the process for identifying eligible immunosuppressed individuals.

To access new search functionality:

- Complete a [form](#) to gain access to the [PRIMIS SharePoint site](#)
- Download the search file

Please note, it is currently only available for EMIS and TPP users. Vision users will need to use the existing search mechanism. See slide 7 of the [PRIMIS Search Guidance for GP's](#) document, accessible via NHS Futures.

For further support in completing PRIMIS searches, please contact your local GP IT System Provider.

As per the guidance, GPs and CCGs will be asked to provide assurance that their PCNs have completed these actions. There is a requirement to complete an assurance return to capture a national view on completeness of the above actions. This will be distributed via NVOC cascade during w/c 20 June.

NEW: COVID-19 Vaccine Updates

1. NEW: Post thaw expiry extensions - no longer applicable

Communication was cascaded earlier in the year about the potential to apply post thaw expiry extensions to certain batches of Spikevax or Cominarty 30 micrograms/dose Concentrate for Adults and Adolescents, subject to the vaccine having maintained appropriate storage conditions.

These site level post thaw expiry extensions are no longer applicable. **Sites should not apply any changes to the post thaw expiry date of the product** - all sites should refer instead to the post thaw expiry date that is detailed on the post thaw expiry label applied by the Specialist Pharmaceutical Logistics (SPL) partners.

Item 2 in the [clinical bulletin dated 8 June](#) provided more information on post thaw expiry labels and frozen shelf life updates. It included the following:

- All mRNA vaccines are currently supplied to sites in a thawed state by the Specialist Pharmaceutical Logistics (SPLs) partners. The SPLs will apply a post thaw expiry label to each carton of vaccines prior to delivery to sites. The label design currently varies between the vaccines and SPLs. The original manufacturer's expiry date (which is the shelf life of the product when stored in frozen conditions) will either be crossed out or labelled over on the carton by the SPLs. To maintain the integrity of the cartons, the vials inside the cartons will not have post thaw expiry labels added by the SPLs, therefore

these will state the original manufacturer's expiry date until the site is preparing the product for use.

- **It is always the thawed expiry date at 2°C to 8°C as displayed on the post thaw expiry label on the carton that must be adhered to whilst the products remain in appropriate cold storage.** If this date has passed, the product has expired and must be disposed of immediately in line with the site's usual expired vaccine disposal procedure.
- **Sites must not retain expired vaccine.** As described in the [clinical bulletin dated 1 April](#), there are no more nationally organised collections of expired vaccines and sites are therefore advised to dispose of expired vaccines immediately as per their usual process and complete the relevant actions via Site Stock Manager on Foundry as soon as possible. This best practice will ensure that the **risk of administering expired vaccine is minimised**, as well as maintaining accurate stock data.
- As a result of updates to the manufacturer's frozen shelf life (see Item 2 of the clinical bulletin dated 1 April for [Comirnaty 10 micrograms/dose Concentrate for Children 5-11 years](#), Item 2 of the clinical bulletin dated 20 April for [Spikevax](#), and item 3 of the clinical bulletin dated 8 June for [Comirnaty 30 micrograms/dose Concentrate for Adults and Adolescents](#)), the post thaw expiry date on the carton may be later than the original manufacturer's expiry date printed on the vials. If the vaccine has been stored correctly, the vaccine is safe to use until the expiry date on the post thaw expiry label detailed on the carton and should be disposed of once the site reaches the end of vaccination activity on this date.
- The post thaw expiry date for **unpunctured vials stored at 2°C to 8°C** does not need to be tracked to the hour, it can be rounded up to the end of that day.

2. NEW: Shelf-life update for Comirnaty® 30 micrograms / dose Concentrate for Adults and Adolescents

As detailed in this Operational Note, a new shelf-life at Ultra-Low Temperature storage conditions (-90 °C to -60 °C) has been approved for Comirnaty® 30 micrograms/dose Concentrate for Adults and Adolescents, changing from 9 months to 12 months.

Full details are in the letter from Pfizer-BioNTech here and further information can be viewed at this Specialist Pharmacy Service page.

The 3-month shelf-life update can also be applied retrospectively to batches which have been stored appropriately before thawing (see table below). Comirnaty® 30 micrograms/dose Concentrate for Adults and Adolescents is supplied thawed to all COVID-19 vaccination sites and therefore if the extension is applicable, it will be applied by the Specialist Pharmaceutical Logistics (SPLs) Partners prior to delivery to sites. **Sites do not need to take any further action.**

Table showing the impact of the update to the shelf-life expiry dates

Printed Frozen Expiry Date	Updated Frozen Expiry Date
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June 2022	September 2022
July 2022	October 2022
August 2022	November 2022
September 2022	December 2022
October 2022	January 2023
November 2022	February 2023
December 2022	March 2023

The first deliveries to sites with this extension applied will be made from 7th June 2022.

As a result of the frozen shelf-life extension, sites may find that the post thaw expiry date at 2°C to 8°C on the carton label is later than the expiry date printed on the vial of vaccine. For example: the thaw label on the carton could say Exp: 08.07.2022, but the vial inside the carton might say Exp: 06/2022. **The vaccine is safe to use until the expiry date on the post thaw expiry label on the carton.**

Please note: It is always the thawed expiry date at 2°C to 8°C as displayed on the post thaw label on the carton that must be adhered to.

Sites are not permitted to extend the shelf-life of any Comirnaty® 30 micrograms/dose Concentrate for Adults and Adolescents vaccine already held on-site. The existing expiry date on the thaw label on the carton must be followed.

The allowed 1-month storage and transportation at 2 °C to 8 °C remains unchanged and the product must be used within the 12-month extended frozen expiry date.

All vials and cartons labelled by Pfizer-BioNTech with a shelf-life date beyond March 2023 will already reflect the 12-month frozen shelf-life and no further action will need to be taken by the NHS or its partners.

3. NEW: Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) update: Comirnaty 10 micrograms/dose concentrate for children 5-11 years

The SPC for this product has been updated. There is in-use stability data that suggests the diluted product is stable for up to 12 hours at 2 °C to 30 °C which includes up to 6 hours of transportation time.

SPS will be updating the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to reflect this vaccine handling update. The SOPs can be found [here](#).

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.

NEW: Stem-cell transplant patients and revaccination

Patients who received COVID-19 vaccination before their stem cell transplant or CAR-T therapy should be re-vaccinated with a fresh primary course and booster. Typically this will be a three dose primary course followed by primary booster, as per [JCVI advice](#) and the [Green book \(pg34\)](#). They will also need to have their other immunisations repeated.

The assumption should be that they are not immunised, that any protection gained from previous vaccination will be lost. Such patients should not be turned away from sites and should be re-immunised with further doses vaccinated. Confirming the date of stem cell transplant to ensure sufficient time has lapsed. It is recommended (in line with other immunisations) that re-immunisation should occur at 3-6 months after transplantation.

The POC systems are not set up specifically to account for this, therefore sites are asked to record these doses by using the immunocompromised field and free text explanation in the relevant box. The doses should be recorded as first dose, second dose, booster, booster assuming a 3-dose primary course will be required due to immunosuppression. When revaccinating with Spikevax®, care should be taken to give full (100 microgram) doses for the primary course.

Occasionally, stem cell transplant patients will need a second stem cell transplant and consequently further revaccination following the pattern describe above may be necessary.

NEW: Re-engaging with local faith leaders about COVID-19 Spring Boosters

Templated letters have been shared via regional teams, thanking imams and other faith leaders for supporting the vaccination programme, and also asking for their help in encouraging eligible people to come forward for their Spring Boosters. These can also be downloaded from the [COVID-19 Vaccine Equalities Connect and Exchange Hub](#) and [CommsLink](#).

The letter for imams is co-signed by the Muslim Doctors Association, British Islamic Medical Association and the NHS Muslim Network. Teams should amend links to resources in appropriate community languages for their populations.

Latest resources on the [Vaccine Equalities Connect and Exchange Hub](#) include:

- [Spring Booster video recorded in Bangla](#)
- [New case studies](#)

UPDATE: Cohort Eligibility and Operational Status

[This resource](#) has been reviewed. There have been small clarifications in relation to the Spring Booster Campaign and additional information about 5-11-year olds who may require a third primary dose.

NEW: Notification of vaccination invites, prompts and reminders due this week

The below notifications are due to arrive in the current period. Sites are asked to load NBS and LBS appointment slots and walk-in capacity to accommodate potential increases in demand, ensuring adequate capacity outside of school hours for younger cohorts.

- 1st Dose reminders 5-11s at Risk Including Severely Immunosuppressed
201k SMS & Emails to arrive 21-23 June, letters 24th & 25th
- 2nd Dose Prompts 5-17 at Risk Including Severely Immunosuppressed
Circa 5k emails to arrive 22 June and letters to arrive on 24 June
- 2nd Dose Overdue 16+ reminders
Circa 69k SMS & emails to arrive 21 June and letters to arrive on 24 June
- 4th Dose Invite for 16+ Severely Immunosuppressed
1.2k emails to arrive on 22 June and letters 24 June
- Boosters 16+
78k SMS and emails to arrive on 20 June and letters to arrive 22 June
- Spring Booster 2nd Reminder
Circa 160k SMS and Email to arrive 24 June
- Spring Boosters
Circa 17k SMS and emails to arrive 21-23 June and letters to arrive on 24 June
- Boosters 1st and 2nd Reminders
Circa c135k SMS and email to arrive on 23 June

Look ahead *(may be subject to amendment)*:

- Spring Booster 2nd Reminder
Circa 20k SMS and Email to arrive 27 June
- Boosters 12-15 At Risk including severely immunosuppressed
Circa 3.7K emails to arrive on 27 June and letters 29 June

- Booster 1st & 2nd reminders (1st-14th May 2nd reminders, 15th-28th May 1st reminders)
Circa c15k letters to arrive 27 June
- Spring Booster Reminder
Circa 75k letters to arrive 02 July
- Spring Boosters
<20k SMS and email to arrive 27 June and letters 29 June
- Spring Booster 2nd Reminders
Circa 236k SMS and email to arrive 28-29 June, letters 1st July

NEW: Cold Chain and Fridge Fault Learning

1. NEW: 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.

2. NEW: 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.swcovid191-voc@nhs.net
- report the fridge to SVOC/RVOC so a replacement can be arranged
- report via the Foundry system/one care with batch numbers.

The relevant SOP is at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/stand-ard-operating-procedure-management-of-covid-19-vaccination-clinical-incidents-and-enquiries/>

NEW: Shared Learning, Case Studies and Webinars

1. NEW Rapid Insights Workshop – School Aged COVID-19 Immunisations

Thank you to all who attended the Rapid Insights School-Age Covid-19 Vaccination Programme workshop on the 8th June 2022.

For information please find attached the report from the event.



Rapid Insights SW
CV-19 School-Age V

2. NEW: Learning visits – insight and innovations

During the last few months, the national team have been targeting their learning visits to sites that have specific insights and innovations that we can share more widely within the programme to support others. The team have developed an increasing bank of resources from these visits, including examples from visits to sites vaccinating children:

A summary of [initial learning and top tips from the 5-11 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable launch](#)

Case studies including supporting children and families to access the vaccination in [Nottingham](#) and [London](#); supporting people with additional communication needs in [Hull](#), working together with schools in [Lincolnshire](#), hospital initiatives to [increase vaccine uptake in adults and children](#) and [how teamwork helped children who were clinically extremely vulnerable to be vaccinated](#)

A [webinar](#) sharing learning from the launch of the 5-11 at risk, including presentations on pre-vaccination triage, use of play specialists in design and delivery of vaccination services and safeguarding

Locally developed supporting resources such as [how to hold your child during a vaccination; needle phobia help sheet](#) and a [social story - vaccination process walkthrough](#)

Creative examples of [how sites have adapted their environment to support children](#) and how they are [displaying feedback](#) from both adults and children.

Over the next few months, the team would like to hear from, and visit sites that have learning or insights from the following:

- Supporting the immunosuppressed or other vulnerable group to access their COVID-19 vaccination (whether this was intentional or an un-intentional 'gain')

- Moving or opening sites that could help others with autumn planning
- The Omicron surge
- Making Every Contact Count
- Co-administration of other vaccines.

Thank you to the sites who have already volunteered to share their work. If your site would like to share insights on any of the above, please contact sarah.heneker1@nhs.net to discuss arranging a learning visit from the national team. Visits can be in person or virtually via Teams. Visits are very informal and last between one and two hours.

3. UPDATE: Case studies

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Improvement Hub publishes case studies to share learning and improvement work across the programme. A summary of all case studies available on the Improvement Hub is available [here](#).

New case studies recently published include [examples of hospital initiatives to increase vaccination uptake - COVID-19 Vaccination Programme](#) and [how teamwork helped support extremely complex and vulnerable children to be vaccinated](#).

If you have an improvement or shared learning case study you would like to share, please email c6.cag@nhs.net.

4. NEW: Webinars

Vaccination programme shared Learning Community Webinar

The next Learning Community Webinar will be held on Wednesday 29 June, 2pm-3pm 'Learning from COVID vaccination surge and planning for future surges.' Register for the event [here](#).

A recording of the Learning Community Webinar held on 1 June 'Better Together – Unlocking the Power of Communities' is available to [view](#), along with all previous Learning Community Webinars and supporting resources on the [Improvement Hub](#).

If you have a suggestion for a future webinar subject, please email c6.cag@nhs.net.

NEW: IT Updates

- 1. UPDATE: Point of Care System Update: Dormant PoC System Users are Automatically Deactivated (Pinnacle, NIVS and Sonar)**

Pinnacle

Every week, the Pinnacle PoC system automatically deactivates any user account that has not accessed the system AND has not been associated with any vaccine for **four months or longer**.

NIVS and Sonar

Every week NIVS and Sonar PoC systems automatically deactivates any user account that has not accessed the system AND has not been associated with any vaccine for **three months or longer**.

If your account has been deactivated and you need access to PoC again, you must contact your PoC system helpdesk, who will reactivate your account after performing security checks.

2. REMINDER: Pinnacle Site Admin queries

We would like to remind our colleagues and front-line staff that they should, in the first instance, contact their **site admins** when calling about the following Pinnacle queries or issues.

- User has not received Pinnacle log in details (post 48 hours Go Live) *If site is not within the 48 hours Go Live date.
- Unable to access account.
- Request for new account.
- Forgotten Password

Permissions within Account, i.e. User cannot access a certain area within Pinnacle that they should have access to, or their role is set incorrectly (unable to see service tab for instance).

- User is not a site admin and would like to run a report.
- Existing User requires password reset and has access to their emails.
- Existing User requires password reset and is not aware of what their security word is.
- Security word reset

Please encourage staff to visit this page for information required for users of the Outcomes4Health **Solution (Pinnacle) : Help - Outcomes4Health** [Home Page - Outcomes4Health](#)

There is further information available on the [Tech and Data Hub](#) on the FutureNHS [Covid-19 Vaccination Programme workspace](#).

3. REMINDER: FutureNHS page for raising Vaccination Tech & Data issues

The Vaccination Service Desk have a [page on FutureNHS](#) designed to support front-line staff and members, reporting tech and data issues for:

- Pinnacle
- Vaccination records
- National Immunisation Vaccination System (NIVS)
- Foundry
- National Booking System or Q-Flow
- MYS
- Other tech and data queries.

This page provides details on what information the Vaccination Service Desk needs to ensure that your issues or query are dealt with efficiently.

Please encourage staff to visit this page and select the nature of their query to view the information required by the Vaccination Service Desk team. Send this to us using the email address - vaccineservicedesk@england.nhs.uk.

4. NEW: EECL Helpdesk Closure Update

From 31 May, the EECL Helpdesk will no longer be actioning requests to order additional vaccine linked consumables, all orders must be placed via the Ordering Platform.

The process for ordering consumables on the Ordering Platform is the same as for ordering vaccine. A training video is available on the Ordering Platform if additional support is required. To access the training video, click the Training video button; which is located at the top of the Order Platform screen.

Your site can also deselect vaccine linked consumables, such as needles and syringes or Steret wipes, when placing a vaccine order on the Foundry Ordering Platform, if you have an oversupply of any of these items. Deselecting the vaccine consumables bundle is a very quick and simple process, please see the how-to guide which is available on NHS Futures [here](#).

Additionally, following the closure of the EECL helpdesk mailbox, we have continued to see a reduction in contacts to the EECL Helpdesk phonenumber.

Due to this drop in demand, from **1st July 2022** the EECL Helpdesk phonenumber will be closing. EECL queries will need to be raised to your System Vaccination Operations Centre (SVOC) with escalations to RVOCs and NVOC where required, as per the agreed escalation routes for all other queries.

Requests for ETAs and ordering of consumables can be managed on Foundry. If you do not have access to Foundry or require any further support in finding your ETA information, please raise this with your SVOC in the first instance.

REMINDER: Useful Links

Ops Notes:

You can find all the latest operational notes on FutureNHS:

[LVS Operational Notes](#)

[VC Operational Notes](#)

Communications Resources:

You can find [communications resources](#) on FutureNHS including our latest toolkits on [spring boosters \(UPDATED this week to reflect messages from the system letter](#) with accompanying [social media assets](#) in the same folder), [5-15 year olds](#), [people at greater clinical risk](#), [pregnant women](#) and [perinatal](#) health equalities.

Clinical Updates:

See the latest [clinical updates](#).

Other Resources:

[Coronavirus vaccinations](#): NHS Digital helps you access up-to-date information, training and onboarding guides related to the tech and data solutions that are supporting the COVID-19 and seasonal flu vaccination programmes.

[COVID-19 Vaccination Programme workspace](#) provides members with access to key documents, resources, webinar recordings, case studies and past copies of the LVS Updates. There is also a discussion forum for members. If you are not already a member, please email: P_C_N-manager@future.nhs.uk

[COVID-19 Vaccine Equalities Connect and Exchange Hub](#) is a community of practice on the FutureNHS platform, where NHS, local authority, public and voluntary sector staff share ideas, evidence, resources, case studies and blueprints to increase vaccine uptake in all communities.

Members also have access to peer-to-peer support and a programme of regular webinars and live discussion forums.

To join, please [register for an account](#) and once registered you can [join the Hub](#).

[Supply and Delivery Hub](#) helps you access key information in a timely way and help support you to deliver your local vaccination service. Here you will find the latest delivery information (vaccine and vaccine consumables as well as non-vaccine consumables, equipment and PPE), alongside the latest supply chain and customer service FAQs and other helpful information.

National Workforce Support Offer – more details:

[National Workforce Support Offer Toolkit](#) provides more detail about the National Workforce Support Offer and is a practical guide for local vaccination service leads.

Contact your [Lead Employer](#) to access the National Offer and additional staff and vaccinators, as well as support with your workforce needs.

For more details, please see our Futures NHS pages [LVS Workforce](#) and [case studies/FAQs](#) and recently guidance for [PCN groupings](#) and [community pharmacy](#)

Contact the national workforce team direct via PCNCP.workforceescalation@nhs.net

[COVID-19 Vaccination Improvement Hub](#)

NHS England and NHS Improvement South West

