

# ICARS Newsletter

Immunisation Clinical Advice & Response Service



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**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](mailto:england.swicars@nhs.net).*

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

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- NEW: Using COVID-19 vaccines during hot weather
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## **NEW: Imvanex (MVA-BN) Vaccine Stock Expiry**

All Imvanex stock has a 2-year expiry at -20°C (so the current batch available has an expiry data of 09/2022).

Whereas the expiry date on the box may say a much later date as the assumption is that within the box it is being stored at -50 or -80 degrees.

This is an ask that all sites holding Imvanex stock to check the vial label for the expiry date when stored at -20°C.

In summary, Imvanex® vaccine has an 8-week shelf life at 2 - 8°C and sites should record the thawed expiry to the vaccination administration records.

## NEW: Using COVID-19 vaccines during hot weather

To support staff and members of the public attending for their vaccinations in the heat please consider appropriate measures for maintaining temperature control for vaccine preparation and administration areas.

### Tips for keeping working areas cool:

- Close window fittings, particularly if windows are sun facing
- Open windows when the outside temperature is cooler than indoors
- Switch electrical equipment to standby or off completely if not required. Turn off non-essential equipment at night (DO NOT switch off any vaccine storage units)
- Check that the site heating is not still running (still happens due to central facilities & estates controls)
- Ensure thermometers are placed in all vaccine storage areas
- Please be mindful that cooling fans to support staff/patient comfort circulate warm air and do not lower the environment temperature to support storage of vaccines.

Vaccines must be stored and used within temperatures specified by the manufacturer and MHRA-authorized conditions of use, to ensure their safety, quality and efficacy. During the summer, there is an increased risk of temperatures in ambient areas rising above 25°C. The maximum permissible storage temperatures for all the COVID-19 vaccines are as below:

- 1- Pfizer / Comirnaty : < 30°C.
- 2- Moderna / Spikevax : < 25°C
- 3- Astra Zeneca/Vaxzevria: < 25°C

Please follow the steps in the Specialist Pharmacy Service information on using COVID-19 vaccines during hot weather (available through [this link](#)) to assess, monitor and manage any risk of temperature excursions in vaccine preparation and administration areas.

Any temperature excursions and clinical incidents need to be reported to ICARS (see the Standard operating procedure: Management of COVID-19 vaccination clinical incidents and enquires [link attached](#)). Contact the ICARS team via email: [england.swicars@nhs.net](mailto:england.swicars@nhs.net)

Please see this link for further details of the heat wave:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/heat-health-advice-issued-for-all-regions-of-england>

# NEW: Guidance Notes on the Provision, Storage and Collection of Equipment for COVID-19 Vaccination Sites - Summer and Autumn 2022

## Contents:

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- ii. Equipment provision in the event of a surge
- iii. Storage and Collection of Equipment from Pausing Sites
- iv. Collection and Storage of Equipment from Closing Sites
- v. Regional Overstock / Shortage of Equipment

### ***i. Provision of Supplied Inventory List Equipment for Covid-19 Vaccine Sites***

There will be no provision of Supplied Inventory List (SIL) equipment to any new or existing vaccination sites from July 2022 onwards. This decision reflects the fact that existing sites are already equipped and there is already a high volume of equipment in circulation that has been provided by the Vaccine Deployment Programme (VDP) that can be repurposed for new sites.

A list of suggested equipment that sites may need will be provided by the national EECL team to each region ahead of the commencement of the Autumn Booster Programme, this list will be linked to anticipated throughput of the new site.

Regional EECL Leads should be able to advise systems of any surplus supply of equipment and help arrange its delivery to the new site. Delivery and associated costs will need to be agreed locally by the regional team and the site. These costs cannot be recharged to the national Programme.

Should existing equipment not be available, all new sites will need to procure their equipment and consumables via their usual ordering routes as is the case with consumables. The Programme will not be reimbursing any costs associated with the purchase of new equipment.

### ***ii. Equipment provision in the event of a surge***

Should a national surge situation occur then the national EECL programme team will assist in procuring sufficient equipment to meet demand for those sites that require it. If the surge is regional, then regional warehousing supplies will need to be utilised to support those sites that require additional equipment, should there be a shortfall, support will be provided by the national team as appropriate.

### ***iii. Storage and Collection of Equipment from Pausing Sites***

Sites that are pausing are required to retain their equipment where possible, to enable them to begin vaccinations quickly in the event of a surge or if they re-engage in the Programme. Please note: Sites located in commercial premises should be closed and not paused.

If it not possible for sites to retain equipment due storage restrictions, then regions should seek to store items on their behalf. If this is not possible, then a collection request can be made to the national EECL team for the following items:

- Freezers
- Fridges
- Cool boxes & Gel packs
- AED
- Medical Screens
- Ultra-Low Temperature equipment (Gloves & Aprons)
- Lockable Medicine Cabinets
- Clinical Trolleys with drawers

Any equipment collected by the National Programme is on a collection and disposal basis and will not be available should the site/s re-engage in the Programme. In this scenario, sites would need to re-procure their equipment through their usual routes and the Programme will not reimburse any costs associated with this.

#### ***iv. Collection and Storage of Equipment from Closing Sites***

Regions should retain all equipment at a regional or system level when a site closes down and look for opportunities to re-issue it to new or existing sites as required.

Where a warehouse solution is not feasible, regions should explore if there are vacant NHS sites which could potentially be used as storage facility. This option should be investigated locally by the regional Estates team and the Void & Vacant Space teams within Trusts, NHS Property Services Ltd and Community Health partnerships. **Any such facility should be held short term only and equipment and stocks cleared at the end of the Autumn programme.**

All costs relating to regional storage, collections and delivery will fall to the responsible region and cannot be reclaimed from the national Programme.

Regions will be required to provide a monthly stock take of equipment held in regional storage to the national EECL team. This is to ensure a complete national database of stored equipment is available in the event of a surge.

Regions will also need to create a register to track medical items such as AEDs and ensure that a process is in place to monitor expiry dates and the maintenance of this equipment. NHS Trusts are likely to provide the easiest solution for this.

In exceptional circumstances, where a region is unable to find a suitable storage solution for a closing site's equipment, then the national EECL team will make a collection of high value items only. However, this will be limited to situations where the collection contractor can collect a full load. Please note: post 31 July, any national collection will need to be paid for by the region.

National collections will only be for the following items only:

- Freezers
- Fridges
- Cool boxes & Gel packs
- AED
- Medical Screens
- Ultra-Low Temperature equipment (Gloves & Aprons)
- Lockable Medicine Cabinets
- Clinical Trolleys with drawers

Any returned equipment will then be disposed of via donation to NHS Trusts or bulk sold.

All other items must be donated to an appropriate NHS site or service, regions are responsible for ensuring sites are emptied and items are suitably stored or disposed of at site closure. All medical supplies such as combined needles and syringes, used sharps bins and medicines must be appropriately and securely removed.

**v. *Regional Overstock / Shortage of Equipment***

In the event that a region has an overstock of certain items, then a collection and disposal request can also be arranged by contacting the national EECL team. The national EECL team will undertake to notify to all other regions to see if they have an understock of any items and facilitate stock movement between regions where possible. This will take the form of facilitating a conversation between regional leads to agree movement between regions.

Similarly, if a region identifies a shortage of equipment, the monthly stock take will allow the national EECL team to see where other regional overstocks are and facilitate a discussion between the relevant regional leads.

In both circumstances, the movement of equipment will need to be arranged by the relevant regions and any costs cannot be recharged to the national programme.