

ICARS Newsletter

Immunisation Clinical Advice & Response Service

NHS
England
South West



Issue 99: 5th August 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: Decommissioning of the Vaxzevria® Vaccine ahead of the Autumn COVID-19 Booster Programme 2022

All existing Vaxzevria® supplies held both centrally and within systems expires on 31st August 2022, and with no further batches due for delivery into the UK, we will be decommissioning this vaccine from the Programme from 31st August. The last deliveries by the NHS England COVID-19 programme to sites will be made on Wednesday 17th August, to ensure the product has 14 days shelf-life remaining.

The following update provides the clinical guidance necessary to manage the decommissioning of Vaxzevria® when current supplies reach their expiration date, along with actions to be taken where regionally and locally assessed to be required.

- The change in Vaxzevria® availability carries implications for a very limited number of individuals who have either recently received a dose of the vaccine as part of their primary vaccination course or are scheduled to receive a dose in the weeks leading up to 31st August 2022.
- The majority of individuals can receive the mRNA vaccines. Use of Vaxzevria® has therefore primarily been reserved for the exceptionally small number of individuals with clinical contraindication to mRNA vaccines, such as known allergy to polyethylene glycol (PEG) - [see Green Book Chapter 14a](#).

Staff should note the following:

- Individuals who received a first dose of Vaxzevria® to commence a primary course **prior** to 6th July 2022 should be able to complete this course using the same vaccine in keeping with the JCVI-recommended interval of eight weeks, provided no additional delays to second dose appointments occur.
- Individuals due to commence immunosuppressive treatment who receive a first dose of Vaxzevria® to begin their primary course up until 3rd August 2022 should be able to complete this course using the same vaccine, if a clinical decision is made to observe the licensed minimum interval of 4 weeks and this can be done by 31st August.
- Scheduled second (or booster) doses due to be administered on or before 31st August 2022 remain unaffected and can continue as planned.
- Individuals (other than those who plan to start immunosuppressive treatment – see above) who received a first dose of Vaxzevria® **after** the 6th July 2022 will now be unable to receive a second dose of this vaccine in line with the JCVI-recommended interval of eight weeks between first and second doses.

Therefore you will need to take the following actions: Affected individuals should be contacted and offered a clinical discussion about the alternative options available to them, which include:

- Bringing forward the date of their second dose where applicable by the 31st August, ensuring the licensed interval of 4 weeks is observed as a minimum.
- Completion of primary course using a heterologous vaccine, following appropriate clinical assessment.
- Waiting until Autumn for any potential programme recommendations on mRNA vaccine alternatives. Individuals should however be made aware that there are currently no guarantees that a non mRNA-based vaccine will be available.

- It should be noted that **any** individual administered a first dose of Vaxzevria® **after 3rd August 2022** will not be able to complete their primary course with this vaccine.
- Therefore, as a general principle, any new individuals who present at vaccination sites to initiate a primary course schedule should be clinically assessed and considered for a mRNA vaccine. Where an individual is determined to be clinically unsuitable for a mRNA vaccine dose following thorough assessment, administration of Vaxzevria® may be considered (up until 31st August 2022) provided appropriate counselling is given highlighting the possibility of non-completion of the primary course, including associated risks.
- Any individuals affected should be counselled appropriately about the risks and benefits of each option outlined above. A record of the discussion and decision should be made in the individual's vaccination record.
- Sites **must** ensure they have ordered sufficient volumes of Vaxzevria® to accommodate those individuals who will require a primary or booster dose as per the above guidance by **8am on 15th August**. Orders placed on the 15th August will be delivered on Wednesday 17th August and will have 14 days shelf-life remaining.
- Once expired, any unused Vaxzevria® must be disposed of immediately in line with your site's expired vaccine disposal procedure. Please ensure wastage and stock take records are updated following this action on the Foundry Site Stock Manager system.

NEW: COVID-19 Enhanced Service Vaccination Collaboration Agreement: Phase 5

We have published an update to the existing Enhanced Service Vaccination Collaboration Agreement for PCN Groupings, for use by GP practices participating in Phase 5 of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme from September 2022 onwards. The document is available [here](#).

The update reflects a recent change in the MHRA rules on the movement of COVID-19 vaccines to allow further flexibilities where this will improve access for patients and / or reduce health inequalities.

In exceptional circumstances, subject to agreement with the commissioners, GPs will be able to administer "more than a minority of the vaccinations from a location other than the Designated site for a proposed duration". This may include the administration of COVID-19 vaccinations from a member practice's premises, care homes or "pop-up" clinics.

Exceptional circumstances may include but are not limited to the following:

- to increase the possibility of opportunistic administration of the COVID-19 vaccinations alongside other primary medical services to increase take up of the vaccine;
- where eligible patients are unable to travel to the Designated Site;
- where the population being accessed would otherwise be defined as hard to reach; or
- to reduce health inequalities.

Schedule 3 (pp. 20 onwards) is the key part which has been changed to reflect these additional flexibilities.

Please note, we will publish the Enhanced Service Specification for flu for the period 2022/23 in due course which is referenced at several instances in this Collaboration Agreement.

GP practices participating in Phase 5 will need to sign a Collaboration Agreement in order to work in PCN Groupings and confirm this as part of the assurance process. Practices may use this template ([Collaboration Agreement](#)).

NEW: Impact of August Bank Holiday (29 August) on vaccine ordering and deliveries

There will be no Covid-19 vaccine or linked consumable deliveries made on the upcoming August bank holiday (**Monday 29 August**). This approach aligns with recent bank holiday deliveries and ensures that sites, which plan to be closed or operate with a reduced workforce do not have to manage deliveries as well.

Please note there is also an impact on ordering times for deliveries on Tuesday 30 August, full details are below.

Thank you for your support in adjusting your ordering to accommodate these temporary changes.

Impact on Monday 29 August deliveries:

As there will be **no deliveries on Monday 29 August**, sites with a Monday delivery day will need to ensure they order sufficient vaccine for delivery on **Monday 22 August** to cover two weeks of their planned/expected vaccination events.

To support this, the National Supply team will ensure additional vaccine allocations are made available to all regions in the weeks commencing 22 August. This will enable the regional and systems allocation teams to allocate additional supplies to Monday sites impacted by the Bank Holiday closure in line with expected demand.

Delivery day impacted by Bank Holiday	Replacement delivery day	Order cut-off
Monday 29 August	Monday 22 August	Friday 19 August (8am)

Impact on ordering:

Due to the closure of the warehouse over the bank holiday, all Tuesday fixed delivery sites which require a delivery on **Tuesday 30 August** will need to place their vaccine orders by **8am on Thursday 25 August**.

Delivery day	Replacement order cut-off day ahead of August Bank Holiday
Tuesday 30 August	Thursday 25 August (8am)

NEW: Translation Materials

1. Braille translation materials

All sites must ensure that they have **up-to-date** Braille versions of all the key patient-facing leaflets. These can be ordered free [here](#).

2. British Sign Language (BSL) translation

All sites must ensure that all their staff are familiar with and offer the use of BSL translation support tools to those who may benefit. The BSL translation app is available free to service users via NHS 119, through InterpreterNow. Guidance for sites is on [FutureNHS here](#)

For those sites already providing on-site BSL support, the additional provision of the remote BSL support is optional

For sites without access to on-site BSL support, the provision of access to the remote BSL interpretation provided by NHS 119 is mandatory

To support awareness among BSL users about the availability of BSL interpretation support (either on-site or remotely), sites using local booking systems should consider adding this information in their invitation to patients, and displaying it on the local booking system, where possible.

Sites using the National Booking Service (NBS) should update their NBS/Q-flow profile about the availability of the remote or on-site BSL interpretation service.

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 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.

- 2nd Dose Prompts 5-15 Non At risk
12k letters to arrive 03 August

- Batch 307 [rescheduled to this date]
43k letters to arrive 03 August
- 2nd Dose Prompts 5-17 at Risk including Severely Immunosuppressed
Circa 1.7k e-mails to arrive 03 August and letters 05 August
- Boosters 16+ Learning Disabled
6k Letters to arrive 05 August
- 2nd Dose Prompts 16+ Learning Disabled
1.4k letters to arrive 05 August
- 12-15 (At Risk) & 16+ Booster 1st and 2nd reminders (12th June - 25th June 2nd reminders, 26th June - 9th July 1st reminders)
Circa 143k SMS and e-mails to arrive 04 and 05 August and letters 08 August

Look ahead (may be subject to amendment):

- Boosters 16+ and 12-15 At Risk and 5-11 At Risk
Circa 45k SMS & e-mails to arrive 09 August and letters 10 August
- Shingles
Circa 6k letters to arrive 10 August
- Evergreens 5+ excluding those with large print preference
Circa 62k letters to arrive 11 August
- 2nd Dose Prompts 18+ and 16/17 Not at risk
Circa 8k SMS to arrive 10 August and letters 12 August
- Overdue 2nd Dose reminder for 12-15 (At Risk & Non-At Risk) + potentially 5-11 At Risk
Circa 16k letters to arrive 12 August
- 3rd Dose Prompts 5-11 Severely Immunosuppressed
Circa 200 letters to arrive 13 August
- 4th Dose invite for 12+ Severely Immunosuppressed
Circa 300 (+ proportion of batch 309 volume) e-mails to arrive 11 August and letters 15 August

NEW: Healthcare Worker Reporting FAQs

There have been a number of queries from Trusts asking for clarification on the reporting requirements for the coming season, along with what reports will be available to them, and what information these use. To help address these queries have been prepared, please see attached.



Please could you share these with your Trust colleagues.

For any further question please contact [@DEPHOSPITAL, C19vaccination \(NHS ENGLAND - X24\)](#).

NEW: Royal Voluntary Service – Use of volunteers to improve patient flow for Community Pharmacies

Volunteers are a key component of the vaccination workforce model and have played a pivotal role in enabling smooth patient flow in vaccination sites. NHS Volunteer Responders (NHSVR) provided through Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) have helped the programme to deliver over 100 million vaccinations across all delivery models through the use of volunteer stewards. As we have had over 40,000 new people join as volunteers since the announcement of the Omicron variant in England, we are reaching out to remind you of the referral process for utilising volunteers, including the timeframes to book and to cancel. These volunteers are offered free of charge to your pharmacy through the national contract. You just need to use the [GoodSAM website](#) to advertise and manage the volunteer requests.

Steward Volunteers form an important part of the COVID-19 vaccination workforce and are available to help sites with managing queues; greeting and directing people; and monitoring numbers. Their maximum shift length is 4 hours. All NHSVR Steward Volunteers are ID checked and provided appropriate guidance for the role. RVS are currently recruiting additional volunteers via national and social media channels.

The benefits of using NHSVR Steward Volunteers

- Rapid availability: a significant number are on standby covering all English regions.
- Cost saving: all expenses are paid by Royal Voluntary Service.
- Ready to deploy: ID-checked and provided with NHS-branded high-vis clothing.
- Fully insured: they are covered by RVS indemnity insurance when booked through the GoodSAM app. They are covered by Clinical Negligence Scheme for General Practice/Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts in the following [letter](#).
- Easy to book online: can be directly booked by Vaccination Centres, PCNs, GP practices, designated Community Pharmacies and Lead Employers.
- Supported by RVS: they have access to telephone support and a safeguarding team.

The full details of how the volunteers can support you is within the attached guidance or by referring to the [Referrers guide | NHS Volunteer Responders](#) or [FutureNHS – Vaccination Volunteers section](#)

As they are volunteering in their own time, **it is important to plan ahead and request the staff well in advance (over 10 days before they are required) and provide adequate notice of cancellation (over 2 days) where a volunteer has already been booked but is no longer required**

Should you require further support, please do not hesitate to contact your **RVS Relationship Manager** whose contact details are provided below and are copied in.

- **Jen Williams** (jen.williams@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) - North West and North East & Yorkshire
- **Charlie Rossi** (charlotte.rossi@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) - East of England and the Midlands
- **Angela Sims** (angela.sims@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) - London and South East (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire, Frimley and Surrey)
- **Alison Waters** (alison.waters@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) - South West and South East (Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Sussex, Kent & Medway)

If there are any issues that make it difficult to adopt this guidance or if you wish to discuss the volunteer offer and experience more generally, please contact the national Workforce and Training Team for Primary Care via pcncp.workforceescalation@nhs.net.

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, [seasonal boosters](#), [5-15 year olds](#), [people with a weakened immune system](#) and [pregnant women](#).

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 helps 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 FutureNHS 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](#)