

# ICARS Newsletter

Immunisation Clinical Advice & Response Service



*Issue 123: 13th January 2023*

**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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**UPDATE: New Ultra Low Temperature (ULT) Shelf Life for Comirnaty® 10 Concentrate**

## **Key Information:**

- Sites are not required to update any expiry dates on the carton or vials upon receipt of vaccine deliveries
- 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 by sites
- Sites may find that the expiry date on the post thaw carton label is later than the expiry date printed on the vial of vaccine.

An 18-month shelf-life for Comirnaty® 10 Concentrate when stored at ultra-low temperature conditions (-90 °C to -60 °C) has been authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, this is an update to the previous 12-months ULT shelf-life.

The updated shelf-life can also be applied retrospectively to batches held centrally by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), which have been stored appropriately at (-90 °C to -60 °C) before thawing (see table below).

**Sites do not need to act.** If this updated shelf-life is applicable to your delivery of Comirnaty® 10 Concentrate, it will already have been applied by our Specialist Pharmaceutical Logistics (SPLs) partners prior to the product being thawed and delivered to your site. Full details are in the letter from Pfizer-BioNTech which can be viewed [here](#). The first deliveries to sites with this extension applied will be 9 January 2023.

As a result of this latest ULT shelf-life update, the thawed expiry date on the post thaw carton label might be later than the expiry date printed on the vial of vaccine, if so, it is the post thaw carton label that must be adhered to. Please be assured that the vaccine is safe to use until the expiry date on the post thaw label on the carton.

**Example of how the post-thaw expiry date may differ from the vial:**

The post thaw label on the carton could say Exp:09/03/2023, but the vial label might say Exp:10/2022.

**It is always the thawed expiry date as displayed on the post thaw label on the carton that must be adhered to when using the vaccine.** If this date has passed, the product has expired and must be disposed of immediately in line with your site's expired vaccine disposal procedure.

**Sites are not permitted to update the shelf-life of any Comirnaty® 10 Concentrate vaccine already held on-site. The existing expiry date on the post thaw label on the carton must be followed.**

The 10 weeks storage and transportation at 2 °C to 8 °C is unchanged.

Updated expiry dates are shown below:

Approved Shelf-Life at Manufacturing	Printed Expiry Date		Updated Expiry Date
9 months	September 2022	→	June 2023
9 months	October 2022	→	July 2023
9 months	November 2022	→	August 2023

9 months	November 2022	→	September 2023 – batch GC6964 only
9 months	December 2022	→	September 2023
12 months	April 2023	→	October 2023

## UPDATE: Revised PGD and National Protocol for Comirnaty 10 Concentrate

Revised [Patient Group Direction](#) (PGD) and [National Protocol](#) for Comirnaty 10 Concentrate have been published. Vaccinating teams should read the new versions, familiarise themselves with the amendments [which are detailed in the ‘change history section’], complete the authorisation process, and adopt for their use. The main revisions relate to the vaccine now being licensed for booster doses for children aged 5 -11 years old (previously off-label) and a clarification regarding the vaccine type for 12 year olds in Year 7 requiring a booster dose.

## NEW: Letters or Texts Regarding Additional Vaccinations

Please see below national public-facing messaging being provided to patients who contact 119 having received letters/text about additional vaccinations:

*‘Thank you for contacting NHS England [119 service] about the recent COVID-19 vaccination invitation you received.*

*Invitations for a COVID-19 seasonal booster vaccination were recently sent to patients identified from the learning disability register. The learning disability register is a list of all the people with a learning disability that a GP surgery looks after. It helps the GPs and healthcare staff know what support a patient requires.*

*At the same time, invitations were sent to some patients eligible for a COVID-19 booster on other grounds. Unfortunately, due to a technical error, some of these patients received the letter intended for patients on the learning disability register.*

*NHS England is now running additional checks on any further batches of letters to ensure this does not happen again.*

*If you believe you should not have received this letter, then please ignore it. However, if you would like to confirm whether you are on the learning disability register, please contact your GP practice who will be able to advise accordingly.*

*You can find out which COVID-19 vaccination doses you may be eligible for at [www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination).*

*We sincerely apologise for any confusion this communication may have caused and thank you for bringing this to our attention.”*

## NEW: Vaccinating for Impact - Vaccinating Those at Risk

The number of vaccination events being delivered is currently low, however there remain individuals at risk who we would wish to receive their vaccine. For those vaccines not in

frequent use (for example Comirnaty 10, Nuvaxovid) this might involve using just a small part of a multi-dose vial.

While vaccine stock levels are high, we encourage vaccination at the point of presentation rather than combining individuals into vial-size clinic appointments and accept that reported waste may be higher than previously noted.

## **NEW: Autumn/Winter Booster for Individuals with an Incomplete Vaccination History**

Over the coming weeks, invitations for an autumn/winter booster vaccination will be sent to eligible individuals who have a record of a booster dose at least 91 days prior, but with an apparent incomplete history of a primary course. Individuals in this category who present to sites for vaccination should be reviewed and have their COVID-19 vaccination history confirmed, to ensure the most appropriate vaccine type is administered and dose recorded. Staff are reminded that an incomplete vaccination history should not prevent an individual from receiving the relevant COVID-19 vaccine dose during the autumn/winter programme. The advice on [previous incomplete vaccination](#) in the 'Green Book' should be followed, noting that in some circumstances a PSD may be required for administration.

## **NEW: Household Contacts of People with a Weakened Immune System**

A series of posters have been developed that promote vaccine eligibility for household contacts of people with a weakened immune system, to further support messaging to this cohort of people. We are encouraging vaccination sites to promote these posters, which can be found [here](#).

## **UPDATE: Care Homes Guidance – Infection Prevention Control (IPC)**

Please see updated guidance for infection prevention and control on adult social care settings: [Infection prevention and control in adult social care: COVID-19 supplement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Key changes include an announcement on masks (and the recommendation of a risk-based approach), and changes to outbreak management in care homes.

## **NEW: Managing Site Details for Accessibility and Transport**

As sites begin to pause, it is important to ensure that existing sites keep their accessibility and transport information up to date so patients know which sites best suit their individual needs. Site managers are responsible for making sure site details are listed correctly. They must enter the relevant site attributes so that people who are booking vaccination appointments can choose a site that meets their accessibility needs and transport requirements. This information will be made available through the National Booking Service (NBS). For further guidance see [here](#).

## UPDATE: Notification of Vaccination Invites, Prompts and Reminders

The notifications below are due to arrive between 10 January 2023 to 25 January 2023, all reminders / invites are going to all regions. 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.

Cohort	Volume (national)	Date
Autumn Winter Booster 3 <sup>rd</sup> reminders	Circa 10k	13/01/2023
Autumn Winter Booster 2 <sup>nd</sup> reminders	Circa 78K	13/01/2023
2 <sup>nd</sup> dose prompts 18+ and 5-17 not at risk	Circa 1.3k	11/01/2023 to 14/01/2023
2 <sup>nd</sup> dose prompts 5-17 at risk include severely immunosuppressed	Circa 1.3k	11/01/2023 to 14/01/2023
2 <sup>nd</sup> dose overdue reminder for 12+ and 5-11 at risk	Circa 26.1k	12/01/2023 to 16/01/2023
Boosters 16+ LD	Circa 109k	18/01/2023
3 <sup>rd</sup> dose prompts 5-11 severely immunosuppressed	Circa 28k	13/01/2023 to 18/01/2023
Evergreens 1 <sup>st</sup> dose	Circa 128k	10/01/2023

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

Cohort	Volume (national)	Date
Autumn Winter Booster	Small	18/01/2023 to 25/01/2023
Autumn Winter Booster 2 <sup>nd</sup> reminders	Circa 9k	20/01/2023
Evergreens 16+ LD	Circa 33	21/01/2023
5-15 at risk and 16+ Booster 1st and 2nd reminders	Less than 449	20/01/23 to 25/01/23
4th dose invite for 12+ severely immunosuppressed	Circa 71k	19/01/2023 to 23/01/2023

## UPDATE: Clinical Safety Dashboard

The Clinical Safety Dashboard includes 21 different metrics that identify potential variations from standard practice. The metrics are derived from routine data recorded in Foundry, so we cannot tell whether the exceptions are due to changes in clinical practice or recording errors. We need all site managers to review their own data on a regular basis. Clicking on the 'totals' for their site will generate a list of events, including the time and date of vaccination. The actual clinical record can then be examined and, when needed, further action taken.

The dashboard has recently been updated to reflect current best practice and the introduction of new vaccines. It's primarily a quality assurance tool that enables site managers to continually improve practice and reduce errors to the lowest level possible. It also provides an early warning system if there is a sudden change in practice (for example, a spike in recording errors after deployment of a new version of a POC system, or clinical errors after supply of new equipment or vaccines).

## NBS Updates

### 1. New Terms of Use for the NBS Applications:

Users of the NBS staff-facing applications [Q-Flow](#) and the [Check a vaccination](#) / [Check-In](#) app must read the new [Terms of Use](#) which outlines appropriate use of the two products. Further use of these two applications will require the acceptance of these new terms. A link to the [Terms of Use](#) is also available on the Q-Flow landing page and in the footer of the Check-In App. For any questions, please contact [vaccineservicedesk@england.nhs.uk](mailto:vaccineservicedesk@england.nhs.uk).

### 2. Upcoming User Research on Q-Flow Vaccine Calendars:

This January, the NBS team will be gathering user feedback about the future of COVID-19 appointment calendars in Q-Flow. A link to the survey is on the Q-Flow login page. Site manager feedback will be greatly appreciated and will help inform future decisions.

### 3. COVID-19 Vaccine Appointment Cancellation Management for Citizens:

From 18 January, people will be able to cancel their appointment on the day up to 1 hour before their scheduled time. Site managers do not need to action anything. We will be releasing new features in the NBS that will support them to manage their vaccination appointment more easily. These developments have already been made available this season for flu vaccine appointments and have received positive feedback. These changes are expected to give sites better visibility of cancellations and reduce "did not attend" rates, meaning that site managers will be able to use unwanted appointment slots for other tasks or accept walk-ins.

## Learning, Case Studies and Feedback

### 1. Hospital Trust Session for Improving Reporting for Healthcare Workers:

As part of the developments for next season, NHS Digital (NHSD) are leading a piece of work to develop the healthcare worker reporting for COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, to improve the report and ensure frontline healthcare workers are captured as a distinct cohort.

Emma Pail-Ebiai is arranging a session with Trusts to capture the issues they have faced this season, outline the proposed solution for next, and capture their thoughts on if / how this would work in practise.

Emma already has a list of some of the Trusts who have approached the National team directly but, please could you flag any others who you feel it would be helpful to attend this session and inform the solution development. Please could you provide their full contact details so they can be sent the information as the session is arranged.



Please provide contact details to [england.swcovid19-voc1@nhs.net](mailto:england.swcovid19-voc1@nhs.net) by 10:00 on Wednesday 18th January 2023.

## 2. Have Your Say and Help Improve Point of Care Systems:

NHS Digital would love to get your feedback and insights to help them improve Point of Care systems. This will enable them to understand the features that are important to you, any training and support required, system capabilities needed, and the information necessary for you to make a decision on what system to use in your organisation.

### Interested in taking part?

Please take the [POC Experience Survey](#) which should only take 10-15 minutes to complete. If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact: [england.lvspoconboarding@nhs.net](mailto:england.lvspoconboarding@nhs.net). **Survey closing date - 13 January 2023**

## 3. Case Studies:

Case studies are available on the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Shared Learning platform, to share learning and improvement across the programme. A summary of all case studies available is available [here](#), and the latest additions include:

- A description of the referral and triage process for a 'Specialist Nuvaxovid Service' in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire – [link](#).
- How a joint venture at Feltham and Bedfont PCN enabled them to vaccinate as part of a wider health promotion campaign at a local factory – [link](#).

## 4. Nuvaxovid Survey Results:

Thank you to everyone who completed the data return request about the use of Nuvaxovid in complex vaccination clinics. The data will be used to assess access to the service and to help inform the planning and management of the specialist vaccination service for COVID-19 going forward. Analysis of the data returns will be sent to those sites carrying out complex vaccination clinics, via an NVOC cascade next week.

## Useful Links

### Ops Notes:

You can find all the latest operational notes on FutureNHS: [Operational notes](#)

### Communications Resources:

The national Campaign Resource Centre includes designed campaign resources for the current [public-facing winter campaign](#) as well as for encouraging uptake [among frontline staff](#).

You can find further scripts and communications resources on FutureNHS including toolkits on [seasonal flu and COVID vaccines](#), [for pharmacies on flu](#) plus a [poster](#), [for people with a weakened immune system](#) and [a communications pack for primary care](#) with template letters to adapt locally.

## **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.

[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.

### [COVID-19 Vaccination Improvement Hub](#)

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 page on [case studies/FAQs](#) and recently guidance for [PCN groupings](#) and [community pharmacy](#)

All C19 vaccination queries for national teams should be escalated via the SVOC/RVOC/NVOC process.