

ICARS Newsletter

Immunisation Clinical Advice & Response Service



Issue 135: 23rd June 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.

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

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REMINDER FOR VARIOUS VACCINES: Help to Improve Point of Care Systems Used to Capture and Report on Various Vaccination Data

NOTE: This relates to Flu and other vaccinations as well as Covid-19

Your help is requested to improve systems used to capture and report on various vaccination data (COVID-19, flu and other vaccinations), by sharing what you think of some early prototypes for a new system, based on discovery work done last year.

These systems are being designed for all users but those users from Community Pharmacies and from Maternity practice are particularly sought.

A series of 30 minute research sessions will be run over Microsoft Teams soon, if you'd like to take part, please complete the short form [here](#).

REMINDER: Storing and Using Vaccines in Hot Weather

Vaccines must be stored and used within temperatures specified by the manufacturer and MHRA-authorised 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 the maximum permissible storage temperature [25°C for AZ (Vaxzevria) and Moderna (Spikevax), and 30°C for Comirnaty]. This is particularly likely in venues that are susceptible to significant fluctuations in temperature such as vehicles, marquees, tents and some local community facilities.

To minimise the risk:

- Undertake an assessment
- Increase the frequency of your monitoring
- Control the ambient temperature

For further advice, please click [here](#).

NEW: COVID-19 Vaccination Programme: Inter-Seasonal Period Eligibility and Actions (July-September 2023)

Thank you for your continued commitment to the COVID-19 vaccination programme and for your efforts in ensuring that those who will most benefit from vaccination continue to be invited to attend for vaccination in a location that is most convenient to them. The Spring 2023 campaign will close on 30 June. The National Booking Service and the National Helpline (119) will also be disabled during the inter-seasonal period (the period between 30 June and the commencement of the Autumn campaign).

All primary course offers will also cease on 30 June, except for those who are 6 months to 4 years old in a clinical risk group following [JCVI advice](#) who will be offered Comirnaty® 3 (THREE) Concentrate vaccine.

The government has accepted JCVI advice ([here](#)) which confirms that those who become **newly** severely immunosuppressed between seasonal campaigns should be considered for COVID-19 vaccination in the inter-seasonal period.

Identification of eligible people:

The Green Book states that individuals who develop severe immunosuppression (as defined in the Green Book Chapter 14a, boxes 1 and 2 [link](#)) may be at high risk of severe COVID-19 and less able to sustain any protection from previous vaccination or exposure. These individuals should be considered for catch-up primary vaccination or additional dose(s) of vaccination before the next seasonal campaign, based on clinical judgement.

At the beginning of the inter-seasonal period, there will not be a known cohort of patients who will require vaccination. However, there will be individuals who develop severe immunosuppression including those who have completed a STEM cell transplant, those with new health conditions or starting specified treatments.

Specialist clinicians managing the care of patients commencing immunosuppressive treatment will therefore be best placed to:

- Identify them as **newly** severely immunosuppressed
- Carry out an individual clinical assessment on whether they should be recommended to receive catch-up primary vaccination or additional dose(s) of vaccination before the next seasonal campaign
- Advise on the best timing for vaccination, as any additional doses should be administered with special attention given to current or planned immunosuppressive therapies
- Direct them to a local vaccination offer, a template referral form is available for systems to adopt if necessary. ([here](#))

There will not be a national invitation system for these individuals.

In the inter-seasonal period, only Comirnaty BA. 4-5 (for those aged 12 years and over) and Comirnaty 10 Concentrate (for those aged 5 to 11 years) will be available for those who are **newly** severely immunosuppressed.

Actions for systems to consider:

- Working with ICBs, Regional teams should ensure there are appropriate referral and signposting mechanisms in place to support patients who have been recommended an inter-seasonal vaccine to access a local appointment.
- Clinicians who prescribe and supervise the administration of treatments that will result in people becoming **newly** severely immunosuppressed can be made aware of the requirement to consider Covid-19 vaccination for these patients and must refer each suitable patient to a local offer (in or near the hospital) or back to their local referrer for signposting.
- Systems should work with all providers (including providers who are not offering COVID-19 vaccinations) to identify a pathway to signpost the individuals to the nearest available offer, even if they are not participating themselves.

Operational Considerations:

- Vaccine supply will continue to be made available by request to active sites through the Foundry Supply Planner and Ordering Platform.
- Administration of the vaccine to eligible people will be via a local patient-specific direction (PSD)
- Regions may identify additional sites that need to remain active specifically to vaccinate those who become **newly** severely immunosuppressed.
- We ask that sites that are not identified as vaccinating either 6-month to 4-year-olds in a clinical risk group or those who become **newly** severely immunosuppressed formally paused or closed through the established change control process on the Foundry platform. This is to provide the programme with visibility of the active network and allow us to rationalise the delivery schedule.
- Paused sites can be reactivated within 24 hours should they be required to stand back up to support vaccinations in these cohorts. This can be actioned through the change control process.
- It is recognised that this is an extremely vulnerable group of people therefore we encourage vaccination of eligible individuals following appropriate clinical assessment and accept that this might involve using just a small part of a multi-dose vial resulting in higher than usual reported wastage.

We are grateful for your ongoing leadership and commitment to the COVID-19 vaccination programme, which helps support the most vulnerable in our society.

UPDATE: End of Spring 2023 COVID-19 Vaccination Booster Campaign: Guidance for Dealing with the Housebound Patient Cohort

As of 15 June, we have vaccinated 259,085 housebound individuals in the spring 2023 campaign, or over 72% of the eligible population.

The campaign ends on 30 June 2023, which means that no housebound vaccinations will be offered after that date.

The new updated guidance for 119 call handlers and NHS England's Customer Contact Centre takes this date into consideration. Referrals will still be taken from callers up to and including 29 June to ensure patients who are housebound have an equal opportunity to have their spring vaccination. However, anyone calling after 17 June will be advised that a vaccination cannot be guaranteed by the 30 June deadline.

Regional systems and teams work to different timescales using their own local delivery methods and manage their own referrals as they come in.

Actions for Regions:

- Work with their systems to ensure housebound requests for visits are actioned promptly after a referral is received, to ensure as many visits as possible are made by 30 June deadline.
- Ensure that systems have a feedback mechanism in place for referrals. All housebound patients should be advised by local teams if:
 - They will receive a visit before 30 June and when

OR

- They will not be able to accommodate a visit on this occasion.
- Let systems and providers know that there is a hard stop for this campaign on 30 June.

NEW: Revised Current Cohort Eligibility Tool

The [Current Cohort Eligibility Tool](#) has been updated to include Comirnaty 3 (Three) Concentrate, which is being supplied to designated sites to support vaccinations for individuals aged 6 months to 4 years who are in a clinical risk group (as detailed in Table 4 of the [Green Book, Chapter 14a](#)). Vaccination for this group commenced on 12 June 2023.

UPDATE: Messaging for COVID Cohorts Including Immunosuppressed

Following on from RV303 sent out on 28th April 2023 – please see below and attached for further information.

The full national invitation template can be seen attached. See ‘People aged under 75’ section, in particular.

NBS booking confirmation messaging and reminder notification messaging was updated in April (see attached) to include a link to the increased risk web page, which sets out eligibility criteria in more detail, and to manage expectations regarding a health care professional checking eligibility on site.

There are other resources that have also since been added to Future NHS: [Spring resources for immunosuppressed people - CommsLink - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)

NEW: Action Required by Sites to Replace Patient Electrodes on any Philips HS1/OnSite/Home AED Following Field Safety Notice

Wessex Medical have advised that any COVID-19 vaccination site holding a Philips HS1 AED, regardless of age, should contact them as soon as possible to arrange a new replacement set of patient electrodes free of charge, following a Field Safety Notice. For details of the Field Safety Notice please see the attached.

To receive these free pads, sites need to complete the attached FSN reply form and return to Wessex Medical Ltd (sales@wessexmedical.uk) as soon as possible. They will then arrange delivery of the replacement pads.

The product details are below:

- Philips - AED pads for use with HS1/OnSite/Home AEDs
- Product Code: M5071A (adult) and M5072A (infant/child)
- Lot Numbers: All Lots of Adult and Infant/Child Pads Cartridges

REMINDER: NBS Appointment Blocking After 30 June

The Spring 2023 COVID-19 vaccination Campaign will end on 30 June 2023 as set out in the [Health and Social Care Secretary statement on spring booster programme and evergreen offer](#). The offer of a first or second dose of COVID vaccine will also end at this time.

Some sites have begun to load NBS calendar capacity beyond 30 June 2023. NBS bookings beyond 30 June 2023 will be centrally blocked by the national team meaning service users will be unable to book vaccination appointments after 30 June 2023. However, sites are requested to bring NBS appointments beyond 30 June forward or remove these appointments from calendars.

REMINDER: Inviting 'At-Risk' Under 5s to Receive the Comirnaty 3 (Three) Vaccine

Could the [GP COVID-19 vaccine dashboard – NHS Digital](#) support your PCN/Practice to invite all eligible for the "Under 5's At Risk" campaign?

Why use the dashboard to identify patients?

The dashboard identifies patients that have been flagged as "At Risk" through [Cohorting as a Service \(CaaS\) - NHS Digital](#). The CaaS data draws on broader data sources than GP Practice data, such as hospital data (HES), enabling PCNs and GP Practices to identify additional patients who are considered to be 'at risk' as per the [Green Book chapter 14a guidance](#).

The NHS Cohorting Service is able to search for relevant clinical codes in patient records. This is no substitute for individual clinical judgement. All records and data flows take time to update and flow through to national systems. Whilst the dashboard is an assured product displaying patients who are **highly** likely to be eligible given the entries made to their clinical records, assessment of individual patient eligibility for any vaccine is the responsibility of the clinician at the point of care.

How to use the dashboard:

Access to the dashboard requires you to have the activity code B0360 added to your NHS smartcard. Any queries on NHS smartcard access should be directed to your local registration authority. For more information, go to [this link](#).

Use the tab "Under 5's At Risk" to quickly identify patients eligible to receive the Comirnaty 3 vaccine. The "Uptake - 1st Dose" and "Uptake - 2nd Dose" tabs have also been amended to allow filtering on this cohort.

User guides for the dashboard can be found at [here](#).

REMINDER: Changes to the NBS and Q-Flow Support Sessions

Due to a decline in the need for Q-Flow support sessions, they will be reduced to once week only, on **Wednesdays at 1.30pm to 2pm**.

After June the current sessions will be coming to an end with new support arrangements in place for the Autumn Winter season.

More information on Q-Flow help, guidance and issue escalation can be found at FutureNHS Collaboration Platform [here](#).

NEW: COVID-19 Cross Programme Bulletin Fortnightly Update

From the week commencing 26 June 2023 the COVID-19 Cross Programme Bulletin will be published on a fortnightly basis.

To access links in this bulletin please join the [Covid-19 Vaccination FutureNHS Workspace](#). Please find previous editions of the bulletin [here](#).

Thank you for all your continued support for the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Further National Links and Resources

Operational Notes:

You can find all the latest operational notes on FutureNHS [here](#).

Communications Resources:

You can find communications resources on FutureNHS including a [core script and FAQs](#) for the Spring campaign, [a long list of public FAQs](#), and a pack of [posters](#) to use in sites.

Clinical Updates:

Previous editions of the clinical updates, before they were merged with this Bulletin, can be found [here](#).

Workforce and Training Bulletin:

Previous editions of this Bulletin, before it was merged with this Bulletin, can be found [here](#).

Workforce Support:

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

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

Other Resources:

[Coronavirus vaccinations](#): Our Digital team 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.

[Equalities Community of Practice](#) [here](#), with bespoke tools, resources and content for engagement and practice in supporting and learning from people and partners within underserved communities and equalities groups.

[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 alongside the latest supply chain and customer service FAQs and other helpful information.

All COVID-19 vaccination queries for national teams should be escalated via the SVOC/RVOC/NVOC process.