

South West Vaccination & Screening Team

ICARS Bulletin


South West Collaborative
Commissioning Hub



Issue 140: 15th September 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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UPDATE: SRO Update and FAQs

Please find attached a copy of the SRO clinical briefing update 7th September from the regional team, following last week's national cascades. This update aims to support some of the FAQs raised by systems to support the launch of the AW23/4 campaign. All information in the attached was correct as per the Green Book update [4th September] and information released on or before 8th September. Please continue to refer to the most updated guidance.

Please also find attached a copy of the A/W 23/24 FAQs, updated on 14th September.

NEW: Green Book Chapter 14a Update and PGD Update

The [Green Book](#) for COVID-19 (Chapter 14a) has been updated and published on 4 September 2023 to support delivery of the Autumn 2023 COVID-19 Campaign.

The Patient Group Directions (PGD) and National Protocol for adults is now available here: [National protocol for COVID-19 vaccine \(adults\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The PGD and National Protocol for 5-17 years olds will follow later, anticipated 22 September 2023.

NEW: Additional 6-Month Shelf-Life Update (18 Months to 24 Months) for Comirnaty® Original/Omicron BA.4-5 When Stored at Ultra-Low- Temperature Storage Conditions (-90°C to -60°C)

A new 24-month shelf-life for Comirnaty® BA.4-5 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 18months ultra-low-temperature (ULT) shelf-life which was issued in January 2023.

Full details are in the letter from Pfizer-BioNTech, which can be viewed [here](#).

All Comirnaty® BA.4-5 vaccine being sent out to sites for the Autumn/Winter 2023/24 campaign will have this extension applied, and as a result **the thawed expiry date on the post thaw carton label will be later than the expiry date printed on the vial of vaccine.**

Sites do not need to take any further action to update expiry dates upon receiving their delivery. The updated shelf-life will already have been applied by our Specialist Pharmaceutical Logistics (SPLs) partner prior to the product being thawed and delivered to your site. The 10 weeks post-thaw storage and transportation at 2 °C to 8 °C is unchanged.

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.
- The expiry date on the post thaw carton label will be later than the expiry date printed on the vial of vaccine.
- Sites will not receive a reminder communication with their deliveries of Comirnaty® BA.4-5 for a temporary period commencing 7 September.

In all circumstances 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. Please be assured that the vaccine is safe to use until the expiry date on the post thaw label on the carton.

Updated frozen expiry dates are shown below:

Approved Shelf life at packing	Printed Date		Updated Expiry Date
12 Months	August 2023	→	August 2024

12 Months	September 2023	→	September 2024
12 Months	October 2023	→	October 2024
12 Months	November 2023	→	November 2024
18 Months	June 2024	→	December 2024
18 Months	July 2024	→	January 2025
18 Months	August 2024	→	February 2025
18 Months	September 2024	→	March 2025
18 Months	October 2024	→	April 2025

N.B. All dates refer to the end of the calendar month. (See [Direct Healthcare Professional Letter](#) for a full table of all extension dates).

NEW: Update to the Requirement for Recording of Flu Vaccination Events by PCN Groupings

Following feedback from practices, the [2023/24 seasonal flu ES specification](#) is being updated to amend the recording requirements for synergistically delivered flu vaccinations by PCN groupings (i.e. flu only clinics run by a PCN Grouping). A PCN grouping's constituent practices will now be able to elect to record **flu only** vaccination events in either their GP IT clinical system or their PCN grouping's point of care system (PoC).

The system to be used must be agreed and adopted by all practices in the PCN Grouping to reduce the burden of post payment verification work to address any duplicate recordings and payments.

The position with regards to the following has not changed:

- PCN Groupings that co-administer flu and COVID-19 vaccinations must still record their flu (and COVID-19) vaccination events in a PoC system.
- Individual practices must continue to use their GP IT system for practice delivered flu vaccinations or collaborations under an Influenza Collaboration Agreement.

NEW: Maternity and Neonatal Programme Masterclass

As set out in the recent system letter, the Government has accepted JCVI advice that seasonal COVID-19 vaccinations should be offered this Autumn to all persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group – including pregnant women – because they are at higher risk of severe Covid-19 infection in the Winter. Pregnant women are also eligible to receive vaccination against flu, as part of the seasonal programme, and against pertussis as part of the year-round offer.

On 20 September, 15:30-16:30, the Maternity and Neonatal Programme will be hosting a masterclass for midwives and fellow NHS professionals, to give objective advice on vaccination, based on the best available evidence. National experts will give talks on the risks of COVID-19, flu and pertussis around pregnancy; the science behind vaccination; common questions and concerns; and what professionals can do to safeguard women, parents and

babies. There will also be an opportunity for attendees to raise questions and concerns in a Q&A.

Please register for this webinar by Monday 18 September, using [this link](#).

Further National Links and Resources

Communications resources:

We are adding new communications resources and useful links to a single folder on the FutureNHS workspace [here](#). As well as the core script and FAQs, over the next week this will be expanded to include social media designed resources posters and links to other external assets. An equivalent workspace for dedicated communications professionals is available [here](#) on FutureNHS CommsLink.

Operational notes:

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

Workforce support:

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 recent 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](#) has 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.