



ICARS Newsletter

Issue 81: 25th March 2022

Immunisation Clinical Advice Response Service

About this bulletin:

For any COVID-19 vaccination related queries or to escalate an incident please contact: england.swicars@nhs.net

PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL RELEVANT STAFF INVOLVED WITH THE
VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Please note that ICARS operates from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday.

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1. NEW: Extension of the National Protocols and PGDs for 22/23

The current National Protocols and PGDs expire on 31st March 2022. It has been confirmed that the national protocol as part of the emergency legislation will apply in 2022/23. The current versions of the COVID vaccine National Protocols and PGDs are being revised by UKHSA to reflect a new expiry date of 1st April 2023. Sites are reminded that staff will need to sign the new documents as per previous updates.

2. NEW: Spring boosters

2a) NEW: Live Spring Boosters Programme

The Spring booster programme has now gone live; a spring booster should be given around 6 months after the last vaccine dose to:

- adults aged 75 years and over
- residents in a care home for older adults, and
- individuals aged 12 years and over who are immunosuppressed (defined as immunosuppressed in tables 3 or 4 of the Green Book).

Although vaccination should ideally be offered around six months from any previous dose operational flexibility may be used, therefore the following is in place:

- National communications will encourage people to book an appointment when contacted by the NHS
- National call and recall via text message and/or letter, will invite people to book an appointment at least 7 days before they reach 6 months from prior booster dose, starting 21 March. Sites using local booking systems should aim to follow the timeline set out for national call and recall
- To support the operational flexibility in the Green Book, the NBS will enable people to book from 91 days

- People should not be turned away if they arrive as either a walk-in or via a booked appointment providing they are eligible and have reached the 91 days from prior booster dose
- Individuals who have had a first and second dose (or third dose for those identified as severely immunosuppressed at the time of their previous doses) but have yet to have a prior booster dose should continue to be offered a vaccination at 91 days

2b) NEW: Spring boosters update

Spring booster vaccinations can commence for eligible individuals from 21 March 2022. The National Booking System will also be available for those eligible for a spring booster to book from 21 March. Sites should note the below and ensure their teams are aware as part of their preparations:

Vaccination dose intervals

Chapter 14a Green Book:

“The JCVI recommends a spring booster should be given around 6 months after the last vaccine dose to:

- *adults aged 75 years and over*
- *residents in a care home for older adults, and*
- *individuals aged 12 years and over who are immunosuppressed (defined as immunosuppressed in tables 3 or 4). Although vaccination should ideally be offered around six months from any previous dose operational flexibility may be used.”*

To operationalise this guidance, the following is in place:

- National communications will encourage people to book an appointment when contacted by the NHS
- National call and recall via text message and/or letter, will invite people to book an appointment at least 7 days before they reach 6 months from prior booster dose,
- starting 21 March. Sites using local booking systems should aim to follow the timeline set out for national call and recall
- To support the operational flexibility in the Green Book, the NBS will enable people to book from 91 days
- Eligible people should not be turned away if they arrive as either a walk-in or via a booked appointment providing they are eligible and have reached the 91 days from prior booster dose

- Individuals who have had a first and second dose but have yet to have a prior booster dose should continue offered a vaccination at 91 days

Accessing supply for spring vaccination

There is sufficient Covid-19 vaccine supply to meet expected demand during the spring campaign. To minimise waste during the first 4 weeks, weekly site-level allocations will be made based on expected demand profiles with an additional buffer. This equates to additional supply being made available to cover at least 130% of the expected demand in the first week, on top of existing stock already available in the network. Only sites that have completed a stock check within the last 7 days will be able to place orders against their allocation.

Currently, all sites have the opportunity to request additional allocation via their system on submission of supporting evidence. Additional requests will be rejected if there is a risk of over supplying against expected demand. These can be submitted on a weekly basis to meet changes in demand. Max caps are set in the system until w/c 4 April inclusive.

Recording booster vaccinations – warning message

Not all Point of Care systems will be updated by 21 March and therefore when entering a patient record, warning messages may appear to say the individual is not eligible. Upon verification of eligibility of your patient, please record the vaccination event on your Point of Care system – your Point of Care system provider will share when the change is due to take effect via usual communication channels.

2c) CLARIFICATION: C19 Vaccs: Spring Boosters Update

The previously published version of the [UKHSA guide](#) 'A guide to the spring booster for those aged 75 years and older residents in care homes' contained the following advice:

“If you missed your first booster or third dose (for those with a weakened immune system), you should have this spring booster as soon as possible.”

To ensure those that were severely immunosuppressed (as defined by JCVI) when they had their 1st or 2nd dose, receive a third primary dose **before** a booster dose, the statement has now been amended - details of the full updated section shown below:

“If you have not had all your vaccinations

If you have not yet had either of your first 2 doses of the vaccine or third dose (for those with a weakened immune system) you should have them as soon as possible.

If you missed your first booster you should have this spring booster as soon as possible.

You may need another booster as well as your usual flu injection in the autumn.”

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

Clinicians

Where individuals attend, either for booked appointments or as walk-ins, and are eligible for a spring booster dose due to immunosuppression, clinicians should confirm that individuals previously advised to receive a 3rd primary dose due to severe immunosuppression at the time of their 1st and/or 2nd dose have received this prior to offering them the spring booster dose.

Site

An updated version of the leaflet is available on the UKHSA website and hardcopies will be available in due course. Until then, the existing leaflets should be used, or copies printed locally of the updated online version. Once hard copies of the updated version are available, the old version should be destroyed.

REMINDER OF DOSES AND ELIGIBILITY

Spring boosters for immunosuppressed people aged 12 years and above:

this cohort is defined in the [Green Book Chapter 14a](#) Table 3 and 4. Spring boosters should be offered to eligible individuals who have completed their primary course. Details of vaccine dose and dose interval for primary courses are detailed in the Cohort Eligibility guide [here](#).

Third primary doses: should be offered at least 56 days after the second dose to individuals who were severely immunosuppressed (as defined in Box 1 or Box 2 of the [Green Book Chapter 14a](#)) at the time of their 1st and/or 2nd dose. For adults the 3rd primary dose should be a full dose of Spikevax® (100micrograms) or Comirnaty® 30micrograms. Those aged less than 18 years should be offered the recommended dose of Comirnaty® for their age group.

Booster doses: adults should be offered either Spikevax® 50micrograms or Comirnaty® 30micrograms. Those aged less than 18 years should be offered the recommended dose of Comirnaty® for their age group.

2d) NEW: Spring booster Visits – Older Adult Care Homes

This [note](#) sets out the operational actions systems must now take to deliver Spring boosters from 21 March 2022 to older adult care homes. Consenting should have now commenced so visits can take place from 21st March. As usual, visits should be an opportunity to offer vaccination to new residents and staff members who have not yet received a full primary course or are in need of a

booster. We are advising care home managers to speak to those staff that have not yet received a full primary course or are in need of a booster dose, and so please can you ensure that you are liaising with the care home manager when planning visits to vaccinate those staff who may come forward for a vaccination alongside those eligible residents receiving their 2nd booster.

3. NEW: Supporting the launch of the 5-11 universal offer

A summary of initial learning and top tips from the 5-11 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable launch is available [here](#) to improve services for this cohort and support the launch of the children aged 5-11 years old who are not in a clinical risk group.

Key learning points have been:

- Preparing for the visit: The importance of pre-screening calls to ensure the team are aware of any additional needs and can prepare ahead of the visit. Social stories sent out to parents in advance of the visit.
- Design of the service: Planning the vaccination journey “through the eyes of a young child”. The vaccination pathway should have adjustments to reduce moving parts and new faces, enable staff to move with the child, allow for longer time for vaccination if needed. Allow for appropriate queue management with sufficient staff to support.
- Techniques used on the day: Use of different distraction techniques and environmental changes. Examples include the use of fidget toys, rewards such as stickers and certificates, and themed pods.

A webinar to share learning from the launch of the 5-11 at risk is planned for Wednesday 23 March. The webinar, taking place 2-3pm, will focus on sharing local examples and tips from how sites who have launched vaccinations for the 5-11 at risk and how this can inform the launch of children aged 5-11 years old who are not in a clinical risk group.

Guest speakers include:

- Shekoo Mackay and John Omany, Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust: CEV 5-11-year-old vaccination programme “It’s only a pinch”
- Claire Bettison, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust: Benefits of Play Specialists in vaccinating children
- Kenny Gibson, Head of Safeguarding, NHS England: Safeguarding children

A recording will be available of the webinar along with previous Learning Community Webinars which can be accessed on the [Improvement Hub](#).

4. NEW: Simplifying evidence of eligibility of vaccinations for patients who are immunosuppressed including severely immunosuppressed

From 21 March, to coincide with the opening of spring booster vaccinations, the NHS will be making it easier for people who are immunosuppressed (including severely immunosuppressed) to show their eligibility. When they arrive for their appointment, they will now be able to present:

- a specific communication from the GP or specialist stating their eligibility; or
- other forms of evidence to confirm their condition or medication including a hospital letter that describes the condition or the immunosuppressive medication that's been prescribed, a copy of a prescription, or a medication box with a patient's name and a date on it

If they cannot show suitable evidence to confirm their condition at their appointment, a conversation with an appropriate clinician (such as a healthcare professional who is familiar with the medicines and treatments that cause immunosuppression and could understand a patient's medical history) may be sufficient to confirm that the individual is eligible.

If a clinical conversation is not possible, or it is not possible to confirm eligibility, please advise the individual to contact their GP or specialist to confirm whether they are eligible for additional boosters ([Template letter](#) – in the event unable to vaccinate).

As far as possible the approach should be to vaccinate in these circumstances, as the risk of an additional but unnecessary dose is low compared to that of leaving an immunosuppressed person under-vaccinated.

Full details are available in the [Operational Note](#) issued on 15 March 2022.

5. UPDATE: Green Book Chapter 14a Revision 28 February

A revised version of the [Green Book Chapter 14a](#) was recently published. Some of key changes are summarised below, however clinical teams are advised to read and familiarise themselves with all the amendments.

- New JCVI advice on vaccination for 5 to 11-year olds not in a risk group has been added, providing additional information about this one off programme:
 - The schedule is for two doses of Comirnaty 10micrograms/dose, 12 weeks apart
 - Children will continue to become eligible as they turn five until 31st August 2022.
- New JCVI advice relating to 12-year olds in Year 7 has been incorporated. Further operational guidance will be provided to support this

new recommendation. This change is not expected to be implemented until further notice and no action needs to be taken now.

- New JCVI advice about Spring Boosters has been included, providing additional information about this campaign:
 - This is an extra spring dose for those that are at higher risk of severe COVID-19:
 - adults aged 75 years and over
 - residents in a care home for older adults
 - Individuals aged 12 years and over who are immunosuppressed (defined as immunosuppressed in Tables 3 or 4 of [Chapter 14a](#)).
 - National communications will encourage people to book an appointment when contacted by the NHS
 - A spring booster should ideally be offered to eligible individuals around six months from any previous dose, with a minimum of at least three months from the previous dose
 - Someone in an eligible group who has received a full course of primary vaccination (two or three doses) but has not received their initial booster before 21st March 2022, may be given a Spring Booster at three months from the previous dose. **An additional dose is not then recommended before autumn.**
 - Eligible people should not be turned away if they arrive with as a walk-in or via a booked appointment, provided they have reached 91 days since their previous vaccination
 - **Note, any individual not in one of the above detailed higher risk groups can continue to receive any outstanding primary and/or initial booster dose as per their eligibility.**
- Some amendments have been made to the allergy section of the Chapter, including information about those individuals with a history of allergy but who have previously tolerated a dose of the same vaccine.
- A statement has been added about the Janssen and Novavax COVID-19 vaccines: “As there are relatively limited indications for these vaccines in the current programme, they are not currently being supplied...”.
- Further clinical data about effectiveness, duration of protection and safety have been incorporated as well as amendments to the ‘past history COVID-19 infection’ section.

6. UPDATE: Cohort eligibility and operational status

[This resource](#) has been reviewed, with revisions to reflect the changes on NBS for vaccination appointment bookings for 12-15-year olds in a risk group or severely immunosuppressed at the time of their first or second dose.

7. UPDATE: Temporary pension rules extended

The government has agreed to extend temporary pension rules from 24 March 2022 to 31 October 2022, which means retired and partially retired staff can return to work in the NHS or increase their working commitments without having their pension benefits suspended or reduced.

This is following a [consultation](#) on the issue which received nearly 1,000 responses.

Visit [BSA's website](#) for more information, or [email the NHS England and Improvement Recognition and Reward Team](#) with any queries.

8. NEW: Overseas update and webinars

Version 23 of the Overseas Vaccination Records Validation Service will be published today (18 March 2022) and will be available on [FutureNHS](#).

Key updates include:

- Expansion of the service for 5 to 15-year-olds – go Live date 17 March 2022.
- NHS Mailbox and National Booking Service Onboarding Process.
- Guidance on parents or guardians attending for 16 and 17-year-olds.
- Healthcare Workers overseas vaccine record validation hub and spoke operational process and user journey.
- Change in service access and age eligibility for 5 to 11-year-olds and 12 to 15-year-olds.
- Updated parent or guardian attendance for 12 to 15-year olds and 5 to 11-year-olds.

TO NOTE: The national planned go live date for NBS calendars to be open to the public to be able to book vaccinations for all 5-11-year-olds will be 2 April 2022. With first vaccinations taking place from 4 April 2022. The delivery mix of sites offering the vaccination service for this cohort is locally determined by regions. For further information on your local vaccination plans you should contact your RVOC Team.

The 'Overseas Service Onboarding – NHS Mailbox and NBS' webinar took place on 16 March 2022. This webinar and past sessions are available on [FutureNHS](#):

- 2 February 2022: Overseas VDRS
- 9 February 2022: Building overseas service capacity in your systems to meet demand
- 9 March 2022: Healthcare Worker overseas vaccination record validation journey records
- 16 March 2022: Overseas Service Onboarding – NHS Mailbox and NBS

9. REMINDER/NEW: Workforce Training and Support

9a) REMINDER: Training guidance and toolkits for 5-11 year olds

Workforce and training guidance to support the vaccination of children 5-11 can be found [here](#).

A series of case studies outlining best practice for the vaccination of this cohort can be found [here](#).

9b) NEW: Support for PCN Vaccination Services from St John

The infographic available [here](#) details how SJA can provide support to patient care, administration and vaccination of adults and children across all vaccination settings, including drawing-up and vaccinating of Covid-19 and Flu under National Protocol. We would encourage sites to link with SJA to deliver vaccination services this Spring.

9c) REMINDER: SJA care home offer for Primary care

SJA support to the vaccination of care home residents was established to support the Autumn delivery of 3rd jabs to vulnerable groups.

To further support the delivery of Spring Boosters, from 21st March, SJA is again prioritising its Care Home offer to increase programme capacity and speed of delivery to vulnerable groups.

SJA regional coordinators are ready to coordinate closely with Lead Employers to deploy vaccination volunteers, under an HCP-lead, to Care Home, to vaccinate and draw-up (under National Protocol), advocate to the vaccine hesitant and assist patient records administration. Subject to requests and availability, deployments may receive SJA vehicle support, including Mobile Treatment Centres that provide a mobile vaccination clinic capability.

Requests for SJA support should be made using this [link](#) to the online booking request form, which will be auto-forwarded to SJA Regional Coordinators for administration.

9d) NEW: Case study: SJA Detained estate pilot

Following a successful trial in SE Region, SJA can now support the administration of COVID and flu vaccinations in the Detained Estate (detainees and staff).

The standard support package includes the deployment of 2x non-registered vaccinators to support an NHS HCP lead, to vaccinate and assist drawing-up (under National Protocol), advocate to the vaccine hesitant and assist patient records administration.

To 'make every jab count', this service can be also extended on-site, to visitors to the Detained Estate. To assist service delivery, vehicle support can be deployed, including SJA Mobile Treatment Centres that have the capacity to provide on-site mobile vaccination clinics.

9e) REMINDER: Vaccination Operational Support Teams (VOST) are available to support vaccinations (COVID-19 and Flu) and 12–17-year-olds

See below for teams that are currently available for deployment, along with areas where teams can be deployed for the week commencing 21st March 2022.

Please contact your [lead employer](#) for the latest deployment details and availability within your area.

WC 21/03/2022	Not deployed and are available		Deployed VOST teams	
	Lead Employer	Location	Lead Employer	Location
South West			Somerset Devon	Gateway Barnstable

VOST teams are trained and ready to support COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, including 12-17 year olds and can often be deployed at pace. They are made up of an equal number of Registered Healthcare Professionals and Unregistered Vaccinators as outlined below:

Team of 6 -1 x Clinical Supervisor, 2 x Registered Healthcare Professionals & 3 x unregistered Vaccinators

10. REMINDER/NEW: Resources

10a) Share feedback on the experience of the technology and systems used at your vaccination site

The NHS Vaccinations Programme is looking for site staff to take part in a survey to help us learn more about the technology and systems that you use. We want to know about the challenges that you encounter, what works well and less well to help us find out how we can make improvements.

The survey takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, your help will help us to improve the service going forward.

Interested in taking part? Here is a link to the [survey](#).

10b) REMINDER: Workforce helpline 0800 015 7707

To support the workforce challenges facing vaccination sites, a COVID-19 vaccination workforce helpline was established in January 2022 to assist sites and enable the resolution of workforce challenges, which are stopping sites being able to deliver vaccination.

All sites should have contacted their lead employer in the first instance to support with workforce prior to contacting the supply helpline. Lead employer details can be found [here](#).

If your lead employer is not able to support and there is a workforce gap preventing you to deliver vaccine then please call or email any workforce challenges to national.wfdeployment@nhs.net where we will work with the lead employer and national suppliers to help resolve workforce challenges.

10c) Case studies

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Improvement Hub publishes case studies to share learning and improvement work across the programme. A new case study is available which captures changes implemented by Derbyshire Community Health Services to improve their SAIS programme. Please see the full case study [here](#).

Another new case study is available which captures the top tips for Hibernation of sites. This is designed as an aid and should be read alongside the operational delivery team assurance checklists. Please see the full case study [here](#).

A summary of initial learning and top tips from the 5-11 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable launch is available [here](#) to improve services for this cohort and support the launch of the 5-11 not at risk.

If you have an improvement or shared learning case study you would like to share, please email c6.cag@nhs.net.

The Vaccine Equalities Connect and Exchange Hub have published new case studies on different models/initiatives helping to improve confidence in vaccine and access to COVID-19 vaccination:

- [Leicester and Rutland Drive-Thru Vax](#): (for younger/working and at-risk populations)
- [Liverpool Roving Team](#): (supporting vulnerable and clinical at-risk groups)
- [Vaccination Street at Tipton Sports Academy](#): (5-11s)
- [James Paget pop-up drive through](#): (pop-up model for surge capacity)

10d) Useful Links

General queries email: england.pccovidvaccine@nhs.net

LVS and Roving SOP Publications:

Standard Operating Procedure for mobile and roving models (updated 7 October 2021) [here](#)

Standard Operating Procedure for Local Vaccination Services (updated 8 October 2021) [here](#)

Phase 3 FAQs:

[Phase 3 FAQs for GPs / PCN-led sites](#)

[FAQs Pharmacy-led Phase 3 LVS](#)

Press notice: [Press notice: JCVI issues advice on third vaccination for severely immunosuppressed](#)

JCVI full advice: [JCVI advice on third dose for severely immunosuppressed](#)

Clinical updates: you can find all clinical updates [here](#)

[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 practices on the Future NHS platform. NHS, local authority, public and voluntary sector staff working to increase vaccine uptake, share ideas, evidence, resources, case studies and blueprints to increase uptake of the COVID19 vaccine within all communities. Members also have access to peer-to-peer support and a programme of regular lunch and learn 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 help 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 Futures NHS 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](#)