

By email

To: GPs

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Operational update on COVID-19 Booster for 16- & 17-year olds in clinical at-risk groups 2024/25

Dear colleague,

We are writing with an important update on the autumn COVID-19 vaccination programme 24/25, following the CMO letter HSS(MD)34/2024 (issued 20th September) and our recent operational planning letter (issued 23rd September).

The original advice contained in both communications wrongly stated that GP providers should offer the COVID-19 booster to 16- & 17-year olds in clinical at-risk groups. However, GPs are being provided with the Spikevax JN.1 (Moderna) vaccine which has not been recommended for use in those under the age of 18 years.

Therefore, the updated advice is, for 16- & 17-year olds in clinical at-risk groups, GPs should identify and inform this cohort regarding their eligibility and advise that they should receive the recommended, Comirnaty JN.1 (Pfizer) vaccine from their local HSC Trust vaccination team.

Please see appendix 1 for updated delivery model.

Many thanks for your support,

PHA Immunisation Team

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Appendix 1: Delivery Model - Flu and Covid-19 Vaccines

| Group / cohort | Vaccinated by: | Flu | Covid-19 |
|--|--|--|--|
| 65yrs + | GP / Community Pharmacy / Trust Vaccine Teams | GP issues invite to pt. Self-identify to Community Pharmacy. Book appt. with Trust vaccine team. | GP issues invite to pt. Self-identify to Community Pharmacy. Book appt. with Trust vaccine team. |
| Clinical risk groups (18 – 64yrs) | GP / Community Pharmacy / Trust Vaccine Teams | GP issues invite to pt. Self-identify to Community Pharmacy. Book appt. with Trust vaccine team. | GP issues invite to pt. Self-identify to Community Pharmacy. Book appt. with Trust vaccine team. |
| Pregnant women | GP / Trust Vaccine Teams / Community Pharmacy | GP issues invite to pt. if pregnancy known. Trust antenatal staff to also offer vaccination at clinic. Self-identify to Community Pharmacy | GP issues invite to pt. if pregnancy known. Trust antenatal staff to also offer vaccination at clinic. Self-identify to Community Pharmacy |
| All pre-school children 2-4yrs | GP | GP issues invite to parent | n/a |
| Clinical at-risk groups (6mths – < 2yrs) | GP / Trust | GP issues invite to parent | Trust identifies and vaccinates pt. |
| Clinical at-risk groups (2 – 17yrs) | GP / School Nursing Teams / Trust Vaccine Teams | If school age, vaccine offered in school. Severely at risk who would benefit from earlier vaccination should be offered by GP | Trust identifies and vaccinates pts. up to 4yrs. GP identifies and refers pts. 5-17yrs to Trust |
| Front line HSC workers | Trust Vaccine Teams / Community Pharmacy | Trusts will promote to staff. Self-identify to Community Pharmacy | Trusts will promote to staff. Self-identify to Community Pharmacy |
| Housebound patients | Trust Vaccine Teams | GP identifies & refers pt. to Trust | GP identifies & refers pt. to Trust |
| Inpatients (eligible cohorts) | Trust Vaccine Teams | Trusts identify eligible inpatients | Trusts identify eligible inpatients |
| Care home residents | Community Pharmacy | Care Homes | Care Homes |
| Care home staff | Community Pharmacy / Trust Vaccine Teams | Care Homes identify. Book appt. with Trust vaccine team. | Care Homes identify. Book appt. with Trust vaccine team. |
| All primary school children | School Nursing Teams | Schools | n/a |
| Secondary school children (yrs. 8-12) | School Nursing Teams | Schools | n/a |
| Carers | GPs / Community Pharmacy / Trust Vaccine Teams | Self-identify | n/a |
| Close contacts immunosuppressed | GPs / Trust Vaccine Teams | Self-identify | n/a |