

Dear Colleagues

## **SEASONAL FLU IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME 2021/22**

1. We are writing to provide you with further information about the adult and childhood seasonal flu immunisation programmes for 2021/22.
2. We would like to begin by thanking you for your exceptional work in delivering the COVID-19 vaccination programme. We understand the extreme challenges faced by colleagues in NHS Boards and social care across Scotland in developing plans to deliver the largest scale vaccination programme ever planned and delivered here.
3. You are already aware that Scottish Ministers have extended the eligibility of the seasonal flu immunisation programme this winter.
4. Given the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable in society, it is imperative that we continue to do all that we can to reduce the impact of flu and COVID-19 on those most at risk, through vaccination. With the enormous success of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, as we enter flu season, it is more important than ever that we build on the success from last year's vaccination programme. These efforts will help us to prevent ill health in the population and minimise further impact on the NHS and social care services.

### **Planning and Delivery**

5. We recognise that delivering the flu vaccination programme this year will be an immense challenge because of the impact of COVID-19 on our health and social care sector. We appreciate that you will draw on your experience with

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Interim Chief Nursing Officer  
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Dr Gregor Smith  
Professor Alex McMahon  
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#### **For action**

Chief Executives, NHS Boards  
Medical Directors, NHS Boards  
Nurse Directors, NHS Boards  
Primary Care Leads, NHS Boards  
Directors of Nursing & Midwifery,  
NHS Boards  
Chief Officers of Integration  
Authorities  
Chief Executives, Local Authorities  
Directors of Pharmacy  
Directors of Public Health  
General Practitioners  
Practice Nurses  
Immunisation Co-ordinators  
CPHMs  
Scottish Prison Service  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
Occupational Health Leads

#### **For information**

Chairs, NHS Boards  
Infectious Disease Consultants  
Consultant Physicians  
Public Health Scotland  
Chief Executive, Public Health  
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#### **Further Enquiries**

**Policy Issues**  
Vaccination Policy Team  
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#### **Medical Issues**

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COVID-19 and be mindful on how best to deliver a vaccination programme that is prioritised towards protecting the most vulnerable.

6. It is a key priority to encourage greater uptake amongst health and social care workers, including Independent Contractors (GP, dental and optometry practices, community pharmacy teams, laboratory staff (working on COVID-19 testing) including support staff, who are delivering patient facing services. An innovative timely approach is required and is critical to safeguard staff, whilst also protecting those in their care.
7. To further increase flu vaccine uptake across all eligible groups, we encourage NHS Boards and social care colleagues to utilise all marketing and learning materials to the greatest extent with particular focus on those who are aged 65 years and over; those aged under 65 years old in an at-risk group, as well as pregnant women (at all stages of pregnancy).
8. NHS Boards are encouraged to use their local and clinical judgement, in line with the Green Book, to vaccinate people experiencing homelessness in temporary accommodation, rough sleeping as well as people experiencing drug and alcohol addiction. It is likely that a significant proportion of these people will have underlying chronic medical conditions and are at high risk of flu related complications. NHS Boards have the support of the Scottish Government in doing so.
9. We continue to work closely with the Scottish Immunisation Programme Group to develop vaccination service delivery to ensure that all who will benefit most from the flu vaccine will have the opportunity to receive it in a timely manner, whilst maintaining Infection Prevention & Control practices and appropriate physical distancing. The provision of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to those involved in the delivery of the flu vaccination programme remains an important part of the programme planning. Please refer to the COVID-19 guidance available at: [HPS Website - Infection prevention and control \(IPC\) guidance in healthcare settings \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/hps/inf-prevention-control/guidance-in-healthcare-settings).
10. GPs will participate on an optional basis where NHS Boards have not fully transferred influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations as part of the Vaccination Transformation Programme. This should only be where NHS Boards cannot directly deliver vaccinations through NHS Board employed or engaged staff. GP practices are not the preferred delivery model for vaccinations. This will enable GPs to focus their time on expert medical generalism, whilst ensuring that patients' needs are met through services which will make the best use of the mix of skills in primary care. GP - GP contractual information / payments – link to the Temporary Enhanced Service (PCA(M)(2021)07 - Temporary Enhanced Service - seasonal influenza and pneu. disease - 2021-22) might be useful: [Influenza & pneumococcal temporary enhanced service \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/hps/inf-prevention-control/guidance-in-healthcare-settings).

## JCVI Advice on Co-Administration

11. The advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, on a COVID-19 vaccine booster programme this winter, alongside the vital annual seasonal flu vaccination programme was published on 14 September 2021. People who are eligible for both flu and COVID booster can be given both vaccines at the same appointment where at least 24 weeks has passed since they received their second COVID dose. The details can be found here: [JCVI issues updated advice on COVID-19 booster vaccination - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-issues-updated-advice-on-covid-19-booster-vaccination)
12. The latest information on co-administration of the COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines can be found in the Green Book, chapter 14a [Greenbook chapter 14a COVID-19 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101414/gb14a-covid-19).

## Other Vaccinations: Pneumococcal and Shingles Vaccination Programmes

13. The Pneumococcal vaccine (PPV23) can be given at any time in the year, whereas flu vaccine must be given within a short period during the winter months. We therefore suggest that maximum efforts should be directed in optimising flu uptake rates and providing timely immune protection of eligible individuals over the winter period.
14. The Shingles vaccination programme for the year 2021/22 commenced on 1 September 2021, as in previous years, and eligible individuals can be immunised from this time. Shingles vaccinations do not have to be delivered at a particular time, and participating practices can deliver these vaccinations at a time which protects their capacity. It is important to note that some of these patients may also be eligible for other vaccines, and staff should take the opportunity to offer these vaccines opportunistically, if appropriate. The Shingles CMO letter can be accessed here: [CMO\(2020\)21 - Details of the shingles \(herpes zoster\) vaccination programme \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/cmoletter/shingles). Further information about the programme will be issued shortly.

## Working Assumptions

15. Seasonal Flu Immunisation Programme 2021/22 uptake working assumptions are:

Cohort	Uptake Working Assumption
65 and over	90%
Children Aged 2-5	70%
Primary School Aged Children	80%
Secondary School Age Children less than 18 years	80%
Under 65 years old in an at-risk group	65%
Pregnant women(with & without risk factors)	70%
Health & Social Care Staff	80%
Unpaid and young carers	75%
Independent NHS Contractors, (GP, dental and optometry practices, community pharmacists, laboratory staff working on COVID-19 testing) including support staff	80%*
Teachers, support staff, Prison staff and support staff operating the detention estate.	60%*
Prison population (Fluctuates daily – approximate figure provided. Population may also be included in cohorts above.)	60%
50-54 not at risk	65%
55-59 not at risk	65%
60-64 not at risk	65%

\* Guidance on how NHS Boards are to record uptake figures for these cohorts, due to each of the Boards using different delivery settings, will be shared shortly.

## Key Assumptions

16. To ensure the protection of those most at risk from flu this winter, the flu vaccination programme remains a strategic and Ministerial priority. This is to ensure that the impact of potential co-circulation of flu and COVID-19 is kept to an absolute minimum again this season. The above working assumptions are not official flu vaccination targets, and have been put in place for internal Scottish Government purposes, and to ensure that sufficient vaccine stock is procured to protect those most at risk of flu.

17. For the 2021/22 adult flu vaccination programme an online registration and booking service went live on 21 September 2021 and is available for Health and

Social Care Workers. This service which, offers co-administration bookings where possible. The portal can be accessed here: [Vaccinations for health and social care workers | NHS inform](#). This is in response to last winter's low uptake in this group and an early offer of flu vaccination at the start of the programme may increase uptake.

18. Based on the final JCVI advice regarding COVID-19 boosters published on 14 September 2021, eligible cohorts will be offered co-administration of flu and COVID-19 boosters wherever possible and a CMO letter giving further details is available here: [CMO\(2021\)25.pdf \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

## **Vaccine supply**

19. We have procured additional vaccine to support higher uptake, however, ongoing and effective management at a local level is essential to the success of the programme. NHS Boards and social care services should fully consider the needs of their eligible cohorts and plan appropriately and timeously in order to successfully deliver the programme.
20. In our previous letter, vaccine ordering and delivery arrangements were included and these are set out in Annex A.

I would ask that NHS Boards and social care colleagues refer to this information for this flu season.

21. To allow us to be responsive to the changing context this winter, we will review the availability of vaccine after uptake levels become clear within existing and expanded cohorts. The Scottish Government will remain in regular dialogue with delivery partners through the Scottish Immunisation Programme Group and will update on any significant developments.

## **Health and Social Care Workers**

22. Timely immunisation of eligible health and social care workers in direct contact with patients/clients remains a critical component in our efforts to protect the most vulnerable in our society.
23. Influenza viruses are notoriously unpredictable, therefore, it is essential that we maintain focus on delivery to achieve higher vaccine uptake, especially in the health and social care worker cohort. This will help to protect individual staff members, but also reduce the risk of transmission of flu viruses within health and social care settings, contributing to the protection of individuals who may have a suboptimal response to their own immunisation. Furthermore, it will help to protect and maintain the workforce and minimise disruption to vital services that provide patient/client care, by aiming to reduce staff sickness absence.
24. Senior clinicians, NHS Managers, Directors of Public Health, Local Authorities and Integration Authorities should ensure this work aligns with the prioritisation already being given to our COVID-19 response to the care sector as a means to prevent transmission of the flu viruses in an already vulnerable group.

## Communication materials and Resources

25. Integration Authority Chief Officers and Local Authorities are asked to work closely to communicate and promote the flu vaccination programme and encourage uptake across all cohorts especially in the social care workers group who are providing direct personal care, and to ensure that they are fully supported to access the service.
26. The national media campaign (TV, radio, press, digital and social media) has been developed and further details will be circulated in due course. The childhood flu vaccination campaign commenced on 19 August.
27. Public Health Scotland has developed a toolkit to encourage the promotion of the flu vaccine that will support NHS and Social Care colleagues. [Flu immunisations - Immunisations - Our areas of work - Public Health Scotland.](#)
28. Public Health Scotland has developed and published a range of national accessible information materials to support informed consent for all eligible cohorts. [The flu vaccine \(nhsinform.scot\).](#)
29. The public should be signposted to [Flu vaccination - Immunisations in Scotland | NHS inform](#) for up to date information on the programme.
30. The COVID-19 Helpline 0800 030 8013 has been extended to include flu enquiries. The helpline will be available from 8am – 8pm (7 days a week).
31. The National Vaccination Scheduling System has been developed and will be used to schedule Flu and COVID-19 appointments. A Self-Registration Portal has been developed to allow greater access to vaccinations and will include the ability to book suitable appointments.
32. Vaccination events should continue to be recorded on the Vaccination Management Tool unless agreed by exception.

## Workforce Education

33. NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and Public Health Scotland have worked closely with stakeholders this year to develop and make available a range of workforce education resources/opportunities. These are available on the NHS Education for Scotland TURAS Learn website <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/14743/immunisation/seasonal-flu>.

## Resources

34. NHS Boards are asked to ensure that immunisation teams are properly resourced to develop and deliver the extended programme.
35. Any additional costs related to adapting immunisation programmes to meet COVID-19 requirements (e.g. physical distancing, PPE) should be recorded in

NHS Boards' Local Mobilisation Plans, now called Covid-19 finance returns. This is in the form of a single row figure in the return.

36. A template was issued by Scottish Government Finance on 11 June 2021 to NHS Board Finance leads and returns should be fed back to your Finance Teams. Please ensure that costs are not double counted for services already delivered. NHS Boards are asked to ensure that immunisation teams are appraised of this information.

37. We would like to recognise and express our gratitude for your professionalism and continuing support in planning and delivering this important vaccination programme. Thank you for all your hard work in these most challenging of circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

*Gregor Smith*

*Alex McMahon*

*Alison Strath*

Gregor Smith  
Chief Medical Officer

Alex McMahon  
Interim Chief Nursing Officer

Alison Strath  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer



## ORDERING INFORMATION

### Flu vaccines for 2021/22

#### Vaccine ordering and delivery arrangements

1. Information on ordering and delivery arrangements for the flu vaccine will be provided within further correspondence. Details of the supply arrangements for community pharmacies supporting this year's immunisation programme has been shared directly via relevant NHS Boards.
2. Orders for the flu vaccine should be placed on the Movianto online ordering system - Marketplace: <https://marketplace.movianto.com/>. Log-in details used in previous seasons remain valid and should continue to be used.
3. If you have any issues with log-in arrangements or if you have new staff who require access to the system please contact Movianto Customer Services on 01234 587 112 for assistance.
4. NHS Boards and GP practices participating in the programme should plan appropriately and place the minimum number of orders needed, taking into consideration available fridge capacity. NHS Boards are charged for each delivery made to practices participating in the programme.
5. NHS Boards and GP practices participating in the programme must ensure adequate vaccine supplies before organising vaccination clinics.
6. When placing orders for the vaccines in Marketplace, practices should search for the type of vaccine required. For example, if vaccines are required for patients aged 18 to 64 these can be found in Marketplace by entering the search term "QIVc" or on the 'Orders' screen. If vaccines are required for patients aged 65 or over, these can be found by searching for "aQIV".
7. To make it simpler for front line staff in the coming season, all NHS Boards will be allocated the same type of vaccine for each cohort e.g. QIVc for most cohorts. Only aQIV should be ordered for individuals aged 65 years and over. Only QIVc should be used for 50-64 year olds, not otherwise eligible due to underlying health condition or employment. Those who are egg-allergic should be offered the QIVc vaccine as detailed above.
8. Vaccines are available in packs of 10. On the ordering platform, please read the vaccine information carefully and order the number of packs required rather than the total volume of individual vaccines – for example, if the vaccine is available in packs of 10 and the practice wants to request a delivery of 500 vaccines, an order should be placed for 50 packs of 10.
9. Patient information leaflets for vaccines are supplied in packs of 10 will be provided separately to the vaccines. These will be automatically added to orders by Movianto.



10. A small volume of QIVe (Sanofi) has been procured for children aged 6 months to under 2 years and a small amount of QIVr for order for at-risk adults including pregnant women aged less than 65 years of age. QIVe will be supplied via Vaccine Holding Centres and ordering arrangements for QIVr will be shared in due course.

#### **Further information and support**

11. As with last year, NHS National Procurement will act as a link between participating GP practices and Movianto to ensure any potential allocation or delivery issues can be minimised and swiftly resolved. Contact details for the Procurement Officer are as follows: [nss.vaccineenquiries@nhs.scot](mailto:nss.vaccineenquiries@nhs.scot).

For queries linked to ordering and deliveries, please contact the Movianto Customer Service Team on 01234 587 112. If any delivery service issues cannot be resolved satisfactorily through dialogue, the issue should be escalated to NHS National Procurement (contact details as above) in the first instance and thereafter the Immunisation Co-ordinator within the NHS Board. If you require contact details for your NHS Board Immunisation Coordinator please email: [immunisationprogrammes@gov.scot](mailto:immunisationprogrammes@gov.scot).