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Preparing for a successful spring 2024 COVID-19 vaccination campaign

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To:

- Integrated care board (ICB) chief executives
- GP practices
- community pharmacies
- primary care networks
- NHS trust chief executives
- local government chief executives
- health and justice healthcare providers
- directors of public health

cc:

- regional directors

- regional directors of commissioning

Dear colleagues,

Preparing for a successful spring 2024 COVID-19 vaccination campaign

Thank you for your support and commitment to delivering the 2023 autumn COVID-19 and flu vaccination campaigns. We achieved 12 million COVID-19 and 18 million flu vaccinations alongside our routine immunisation programmes. Your efforts continue to save lives.

The NHS should now plan for a seasonal dose of COVID-19 vaccine in spring 2024, following the government's acceptance of advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's (JCVI) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-spring-2024-and-future-vaccination-programmes-jcvi-advice-4-december-2023/jcvi-statement-on-covid-19-vaccination-in-spring-2024-and-considerations-on-future-covid-19-vaccination-4-december-2023>).

NHS England's Shaping the future delivery of NHS vaccination and immunisation services (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/nhs-vaccination-strategy/>) (13 December 2023) sets out the NHS's vision for these services over the coming years.

In line with this strategy, regions and ICBs should consider how they integrate their COVID-19 vaccination programmes with other seasonal, life course and outbreak programmes, while keeping their focus on increasing uptake and reducing inequalities.

Eligible cohorts in spring 2024

- adults aged 75 years and over
- residents in care homes for older adults
- individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed (as defined in the Green Book, chapter 14a; tables 3 and 4 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a>))

This includes those who turn 75 years old by 30 June 2024. These people will be eligible for a vaccination at any point in the campaign. People who are admitted to an older adult care home or become immunosuppressed by 30 June are also eligible.

The Green Book has been updated to reflect the JCVI advice and training materials and legal mechanisms will be updated in line with the JCVI advice before vaccinations start.

Regions and ICBs should work with providers to develop plans to deliver a spring 2024 COVID-19 campaign. This letter sets out key principles for systems when finalising plans.

Campaign start and end dates

Visits to older adult care homes and eligible housebound patients should begin 15 April 2024. For all other eligible cohorts, vaccinations should start by 22 April 2024 and end on 30 June 2024.

Vaccinations in care homes and for eligible housebound people

Primary care network (PCN) groupings and other commissioned COVID-19 vaccination sites should plan to start vaccinating residents in older adult care homes and eligible housebound individuals from Monday 15 April.

Invitations and bookings

The NHS will plan to invite and vaccinate those eligible for a spring dose by 30 June, via a combination of local and national invitations. Systems should work on the basis that sites will have access to the National Booking Service on Tuesday 9 April. Sites must load appointments so that invitations can start, allowing the public to book appointments from Monday 15 April.

Addressing variation

Systems must work across their partnerships to ensure equity of access and reduce unwarranted variations in uptake and outcomes across communities. This will require good communication, targeted interventions, and evidence-based engagement with underserved communities and groups. Monitoring and evaluation of activities based on robust data will be crucial.

All systems have been allocated dedicated funding to support activities that help build vaccine confidence and trust in their communities throughout the year, not just at the time of a campaign. Outreach funding should be used to improve access for those eligible for year-round vaccination and to further enhance the wider immunisations offer.

A guide to using access and inequalities funding, mandatory data recording, reporting, monitoring and evaluation is being produced and will be published as soon as possible.

Contracts

The end date of the current COVID-19 vaccination contracts will be extended from 31 March 2024 to 31 August 2024. Providers must let their local commissioner know by 22 February 2024 if they are able to continue delivering the COVID-19 vaccination service beyond 31 March to 31 August 2024. The enhanced service specifications and NHS standard contract schedules have been updated to cover this period have been published:

- [General Practice Enhanced Service Specification \(https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/enhanced-service-es-specification-covid-19-vaccination-programme-1-september-2023-to-31-march-2024/\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/enhanced-service-es-specification-covid-19-vaccination-programme-1-september-2023-to-31-march-2024/) and [PCN Grouping Collaboration Agreement \(https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/covid-19-enhanced-service-vaccination-collaboration-agreement-2023-24/\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/covid-19-enhanced-service-vaccination-collaboration-agreement-2023-24/)
- [Community Pharmacy Enhanced Service Specification \(https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/community-pharmacy-national-enhanced-service-covid-19-vaccination-programme/\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/community-pharmacy-national-enhanced-service-covid-19-vaccination-programme/)

- [Standard Contract Schedules](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-vaccination-programme-standard-contract-schedules/)
(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-vaccination-programme-standard-contract-schedules/>)
- [Standard Contract Schedule 2A – Detained Estates](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-vaccination-programme-standard-contract-schedules/)
(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-vaccination-programme-standard-contract-schedules/>)

This includes updated payment arrangements from 1 April 2024. A process will be announced shortly for the award of COVID-19 vaccination contracts from 1 September 2024 onwards. We will share further information about this soon.

Supply and deliveries

We will be using XBB.1.5 vaccines throughout the spring 2024 campaign, as deployed in the Autumn 2023. non-mRNA vaccines will not be supplied in the NHS programme.

Supply for spring will be delivered using the Targeted Deployment Model (TDM) as it was throughout the autumn campaign. More detailed information on supply and delivery will be released in February or March, once plans have been finalised.

We are grateful for your ongoing commitment to delivering the vaccination programme, which will ensure we are in the strongest possible position as we head into spring 2024.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Russell, Chief Delivery Officer and National Director for COVID-19 and flu vaccinations programmes, NHS England.

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