**Consolidated Questions**

**12-17-year-olds – vaccine rollout**

**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**

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| **QUESTION** | **ANSWER** |
| **Q.** Why is this happening now? | **A.** JCVI advice relating to children and young people was published on 19th July 2021. Having taken time to interpret this advice and make the necessary operational arrangements with NHS Boards across Scotland we are now able to announce the rollout of vaccination to 12-17-year-olds across Scotland. We are keen this happens as soon as possible to allow for maximum protection before schools return for the new academic year. |
| **Q.** When is this happening? What are the timescales involved here? | **A.** Families will begin to be contacted from Monday 2nd August. We expect it to take around 2 weeks for board to cross check their local records and ensure everyone eligible has been invited. We expect everyone eligible to have been offered a first dose by the end of August. |
| **Q.** As a parent/carer of a 12-15 year old with learning/intellectual disabilities, what do I need to do now? | **A.** Look out for contact from your health board around arranging a vaccination appointment. This will most likely be in the form of a letter, but it may also be a phone call. |
| **Q.** As a parent/carer, I am worried about the risks involved in giving my child the vaccine. What are the risks?? | **A.** Both the JCVI and the MHRA carefully evaluated the risks and benefits of the vaccine for young people with learning/intellectual disabilities and they concluded that although there are some reports of myocarditis and pericarditis the incidence is extremely low and most of these cases recover within two to three days without any specific treatment. Therefore, the risk benefit analysis is overwhelmingly in favour of vaccination, and this is even more so for people with learning/intellectual disabilities as they are at a higher risk if they develop COVID-19. |
| **Q.** What are the side effects? Has there been consideration of the specific side-effects that might impact children and young people learning/intellectual disabilities more acutely? | **A.** The [PHS vaccination leaflet](https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/media/8586/covid-19-leaflet-for-12-to-15-year-olds.pdf) provides information on the common side effects of vaccination, with a sore arm being the most likely effect. Understandably, parents will be most concerned around the media reports of myocarditis or pericarditis. Most of the data regarding pericarditis/Myocarditis comes from the USA, who have rolled out vaccination to all over 12s from the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC). Their [summary slides](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2021-06/03-COVID-Shimabukuro-508.pdf) highlight those cases are extremely rare – with a reported 12.6 cases per million. The data is so small it is not possible to do any analysis on people with specific health conditions. From the cases of pericaridits or myocarditis that occurred in anyone under 29 years old, 79% of these cases had gone on to make a full recovery by the time of reporting.This [guardian article](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/29/covid-poses-higher-risk-of-myocarditis-than-vaccine-in-male-teens-us-study) links back to the CDC data and turns these figures into percentages – it equates to 0.09% of males and 0.04% of females went on to display myocarditic/pericarditis symptoms.Data from the [Euopean Medicines Agency](https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/news/comirnaty-spikevax-possible-link-very-rare-cases-myocarditis-pericarditis) investigated 145 cases of myocarditis/pericarditis. This is out of 177 million doses that has been administered in the EU at that point in time.This data should be taken in the context of the [data from the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory](https://www.sldo.ac.uk/our-research/life-expectancy-and-mortality/covid-19/) which recorded 36 covid-19 deaths from 17,173 cases of covid in people with learning/intellectual disabilities in Scotland during the first wave of the pandemic.The risk of pericarditis/myocarditis is therefore so extremely low it is overwhelmingly clear that the data is in favour of vaccination. |
| **Q.** Why is it only the Pfizer vaccine? | **A.** The Pfizer vaccine is the only covid-19 vaccine authorised by the MHRA for use in under 16’s. |
| **Q.** Why is it only others living with young people who are immunosuppressed that are also being invited for the vaccine? Why are learning/intellectual disabilities and/or Down’s syndrome not included? | **A.** The JCVI advice is based on specific data about efficacy of the vaccine for those who are immunosuppressed which suggested a less strong immune response for immunosuppressed group.  The rationale is that since those people may not receive the same protection from the vaccine, vaccinating their household members aged 12+ adds to the protection they have.   |
| **Q.** Will I be able to get the vaccine in a nasal form or as a tablet? | **A.** The Pfizer covid-19 vaccine is only available as an injection. |
| **Q.** My daughter/son has a planned operation in the next six weeks. What should I do? Should they get the vaccine? | **A.** Given that the details around this will be highly personalised to everyone clinical circumstances we would recommend discussing this with your child’s GP/clinician. |
| **Q.** My daughter/son also has an underlying health condition as well as a learning/intellectual disability. What should I do? | **A.** Given the higher risk for people with learning/intellectual disabilities from covid-19 we strongly recommend that individuals eligible to receive vaccinations do so. |
| **Q.** What is the gap between the first dose and the second dose? | **A.** how vaccines are used are guided by the Joint committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) after reviewing all of the available evidence and concluded the dose schedule between 1st and 2nd doses for both the Pfizer and AstraZeneca should be up to 12 weeks given both demonstrated a high level of efficacy. NHS Scotland is currently inviting people for their second from around 8 weeks. |
| **Q.** Will schools be encouraged to support the vaccine rollout for children and young people with learning/intellectual disabilities (both mainstream provision and special needs Schools)? | **A.** Operational delivery of vaccines is for each individual health board however we have advised boards to use all available resources to support the vaccine delivery and educational establishments, including the school nurse cohort, are an asset for boards to consider. |
| **Q.** Will there be flexibility in where and how I receive the vaccine e.g. at home, at school, not just at a vaccination centre? | **A.** We understand how important it is for people to be allowed the right amount of time and an appropriate venue for vaccination to be delivered successfully. Everyone is entitled to reasonable adjustments in order to receive their vaccine. If your child or young person’s level of care needs or disability needs mean they cannot attend a clinic, phone the local number on their invitation letter. If you were contacted by your child's specialist, you should phone them to rearrange your appointment. |
| **Q.** What if I am not contacted and/or do not receive a letter inviting my daughter/son to come forward for a vaccine? What should I do? | **A.** Advice has only recently been published and we have worked closely with boards to ensure that everyone eligible for vaccination will be invited. However, in the unlikely event you haven’t been contacted by **16th August** then we recommend contacting your child’s GP or Clinician and asking for a referral for vaccination to be made to the health boards vaccination team. |
| **Q.** What support and help can I get? | **A.** The COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 0800 030 8013 is available to provide help and support for vaccination. Local Health Boards are obliged to assist with providing reasonable adjustments to help you and your child attend vaccination. |
| **Q.** As an individual that is identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, do I need to continue with some restrictions even after I’ve had the vaccine? | **A.** People on the highest risk list are advised to follow the same advice as the general population at Levels 0 and 1, so there is currently no additional advice being provided to those on the highest risk |
| **Q.** Is ‘shielding’ a thing anymore? Is there still a shielding list and how are those on the shielding list being supported? | **A.** We ended ‘shielding’ on 19 July when Scotland moved to level zero. We will however continue to maintain the list. People on the list are advised to follow the same advice as the general population at Levels 0 and 1, so there is currently no additional advice being provided to those on the highest risk |
| **Q.** Are there other precautions that we should be taking to keep our daughter/son safe and well? | **A.** We are now asking you follow the same advice as the rest of the population, and we hope that this will have a positive impact on your wellbeing. However, we know this may also feel daunting. As we all get used to life with fewer rules, everyone will have different things they’re comfortable or uncomfortable with. There are several things you may wish to do for example, you and any other adults you live with can take Covid lateral flow tests a couple of times a week. You can take these tests at home quickly and easily It might make you feel more confident to phone or visit the websites of places you’ll be visiting before you head out and plan.  |
| **Q.** As a 12-15 year old who has been identified as being at higher risk, will I be invited/prioritised for the influenza vaccine? What are the timescales for the flu vaccine rollout? | **A.** Flu vaccine eligibility has been extended this year to include all secondary school age. The CMO letter on [Scottish childhood and school flu immunisation programme 2021/22](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO%282021%2914.pdf) details this to health boards. We expect that the flu vaccine will start to be offered from early September. |
| **Q.** Should I contact my GP about this?  | **A.** Covid vaccination is run by NHS Boards and is separate from GP services, however you may need to contact your GP if you feel you have been missed. The COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 0800 030 8013 is available to provide help and support for vaccination and can advise on when it would be appropriate to contact your GP. |
| **Q.** Will we need a booster jab? | **A.** We’re still waiting for final advice from the JCVI regarding the booster vaccination programme, however we anticipate the rollout will begin in September.The final details of eligibility for any COVID-19 booster vaccination programme will be confirmed once the JCVI has provided their final advice. However, the interim advice advises that the potential booster programme should be offered in two stages:* Firstly, to those prioritised by the JCVI as part of the COVID-19 vaccination rollout, notably those who are immunosuppressed, in care homes, the clinically vulnerable, frontline health and social care workers and over 70s.
* Secondly, to those over 50, those who are 16-49 years old and clinically vulnerable to COVID/Flu, unpaid carers, other adult carers and those living in immunosuppressed households.

In the meantime, we have been working closely with NHS boards to plan for this potential booster campaign, in line with this interim advice.You don’t have to do anything yet - we will contact you.But, if for some reason you haven’t been vaccinated the first time round, it is not too late to do so please take advantage of the many opportunities across the country and get vaccinated as quickly as possible. |