



Skipton House
80 London Road
London
SE1 6LH

england.covidvaccs@nhs.net

To: **50 hospital hubs ONLY**

- Chief Executives of all NHS trusts and foundation trusts of first tranche of Covid vaccine hospital hubs
- Chief People Officers
- Chief Nursing Officers

Copy to **for information only:**

- Chief Executives and Chairs of NHS trusts and foundation trusts
- CCG Accountable Officers
- Chief Executives of independent sector providers
- NHS Regional Directors
- Chairs of ICSs and STPs
- CEOs of Local Authorities

4 December 2020

Dear Colleague,

IMMEDIATE – URGENT: Week One: Implementing the Covid Vaccination Programme

Now that MHRA have confirmed the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine is safe and effective, we are delighted that your trust will be one of the first of our hospital hubs to begin vaccinating from next Tuesday (8 December). As recommended by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and in the order set by Government, vaccination will start with those individuals who are most at risk.

Further to the continued discussions taking place with you and your teams, this letter confirms the latest information on what you need to do in the lead up to Tuesday, and next week.

Prioritisation confirmation

The Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published its final advice on 2 December which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020>. The Government has confirmed that the vast majority of vaccinations administered by hospital hubs in this initial phase will be prioritised for those **80 years of age and over, and care home workers**. In parallel, the distribution mechanisms for care

home residents are being authorised, and GP-led local vaccination services will come online shortly.

As a hospital hub, you are therefore now identifying eligible individuals aged 80 years of age and over from existing outpatients lists who are already planning to attend hospital next week, and contacting them in advance to offer a vaccination. Vaccinations should also be offered to clinically appropriate inpatients aged 80 and over who are being discharged home. We recognise some hospital hubs will also have other connections with those 80 years of age and over, and we encourage you to maximise these opportunities to ensure as many within this cohort are vaccinated.

To ensure care home workers are prioritised and offered a vaccine, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is writing to care home employers requesting they identify care home workers who can attend for an appointment at a local hospital hub. Care home employers will need to ensure their staff are registered with a GP and have completed all necessary pre-qualification checks. The DHSC will shortly provide you with the details of local care home employers. This means you will need to identify vaccination slots that can be used by the care home workers, and work with your local partners to ensure they are filled. In the meantime, we encourage you to make direct contact with your local care homes to begin care home worker vaccination in your hospital hub.

It is essential we vaccinate in line with JCVI guidance and ensure minimal wastage. Hospital hubs should therefore ensure any unfilled appointments are used to vaccinate healthcare workers, from across their local healthcare system, who have been identified at highest risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Healthcare providers have been undertaking staff risk assessments throughout the pandemic to identify such individuals.

What you need to do and when

It is expected that as a minimum each hospital hub will use one box of vaccine (975 doses) during the first week. However, this is not a rate limiting factor, because additional vaccine will be available to be ordered to enable you to vaccinate at-risk recipients.

To ensure readiness to begin vaccinating, hospital hubs must:

- Identify eligible recipients as set out above (those aged 80 years and over, and care home staff) and offer them an appointment for the vaccine, including ensuring they booked in for the second dose at the same location within the recommended recall period:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/940565/Information_for_Healthcare_Professionals_on_Pfizer_BioNTech_COVID-19_vaccine.pdf
- Order vaccine supply by 11:55am tomorrow (Saturday 5 December). The process for receiving and safely managing the vaccine on arrival [are set out by the MHRA](#). The specific details about how to place an order will be issued today. For additional supply, orders will need to be submitted 36 hours in advance of when further vaccine will be needed.
- Ensure your Lead Responsible Chief Pharmacist has confirmed appropriate governance systems are in place to administer the vaccines, whether or not pharmacy professionals will be involved in the final dilution of the products. Further information for Chief Pharmacists is set out in a letter from Keith Ridge,

Chief Pharmacist, to NHS hospital chief pharmacists dated 4 December. A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

- Offers of the vaccine should note the contraindications identified by MHRA for pregnant women, those intending to get pregnant within two months of the second dose of the vaccine and those breast feeding:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/940565/Information_for_Healthcare_Professionals_on_Pfizer_BioNTech_COVID-19_vaccine.pdf.
- Ensure timely and accurate data submissions are provided as requested.

Next phase

In parallel, local systems are continuing to stand up local vaccination services to ensure that those most at risk are able to access the vaccine in the most appropriate setting for them. We will keep you updated on developments and timings for these arrangements to become operational.

The NHS will be the first healthcare system in the world to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to those most at risk. We recognise the scale and complexity in delivering this vaccination programme makes it one of the greatest challenges the NHS has ever faced, but also one of the most important and we are hugely grateful for your continued efforts.

Yours sincerely



Emily Lawson
Chief Commercial Officer
NHS England and NHS Improvement



Amanda Pritchard
Chief Operating Officer
NHS England and NHS Improvement