

22 January 2021

Dear Colleagues

Re: Change to COVID vaccination dosage interval for those due to commence immunosuppressive therapy

Please can we draw your attention to a change to the delivery of the COVID vaccination to those about to commence immunosuppressive therapy and join the immunosuppressed clinical risk group.

The guidance states: **'The small number of patients who are about to receive planned immunosuppressive therapy should be considered for vaccination prior to commencing therapy (ideally at least two weeks before), when their immune system is better able to make a response. Where possible, it would also be preferable for the 2-dose schedule to be completed prior to commencing immunosuppression. This would entail offering the second dose at the recommended minimum for that vaccine (three or four weeks from the first dose) to provide maximum benefit that may not be received if the second dose was given during the period of immunosuppression. Any decision to defer immunosuppressive therapy or to delay possible benefit from vaccination until after therapy should not be taken without due consideration of the risks from COVID19 and from their underlying condition.'** (Reference: *The Green Book 'Immunisation against Infections Disease', Chapter 14a, page 14*).

This guidance was updated on the 21/01/2021, please see link for complete up-to-date information: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a

Please note, this guidance refers to the small number of patients **about to start planned immunosuppressive therapy** and not those whose course of treatment is already underway. For further information on those who are immunosuppressed see table 3, chapter 14a of the Green Book.

Both the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 Patient Group Directive and the COVID-19 AstraZeneca (ChAdOx1-S [recombinant]) Patient Group Directive allow



for a second dose to be given between 3 or 4 weeks – 12 weeks (see relevant PGD) in accordance with official guidance at the time.

Please can you ensure that all providers delivering COVID vaccinations to this cohort are aware of this change and the need to deliver the second vaccine at an interval of 3 or 4 weeks, ensuring there is a robust mechanism in place to facilitate this and that this is communicated to the individual and the specialist in charge of their care. Thank you for your assistance with this matter and for your dedication to delivering the COVID vaccination programme.

It is likely that guidance will be updated frequently. To receive regular updates we recommend that all those involved in the COVID vaccination process, sign up to updates via the following pages: <https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/health-protection-immunisation> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vaccine-update> .

Yours sincerely

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