

*From the Chief Medical Officer*  
Dr Michael McBride

**HSS(MD)16/2019**



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

For Action:

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and  
Social Care Board/HSC Trusts/NIAS  
GP Medical Advisers, Health and Social Care Board  
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (*for onward  
distribution to practice staff*)

Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

Tel: 028 9052 0563

Fax: 028 9052 0573

Email: [michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)16/2019

Date: 4 July 2019

Dear Colleague

## **EXTENSION OF HPV VACCINATION PROGRAMME TO BOYS AGED 12/13 YEARS OF AGE**

### **ACTION REQUIRED**

Chief Executives must ensure that this information is drawn to the attention of all staff involved in the school health service.

The HSCB must ensure that this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners and Practice Managers for onward distribution to all primary care staff.

### **Introduction**

1. The purpose of this letter is to provide information about the extension of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme to include boys aged 12/13 years of age from September 2019.
2. The decision follows new scientific evidence and advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert committee, that advises the four UK Health Departments. JCVI have recommended that the existing HPV vaccination programme for adolescent girls should be extended to include adolescent boys as well.
3. Key points about the programme:

- The same vaccine that is currently used for the girls' programme (Gardasil®, (which protects against HPV types 6,11,16 & 18)) will be used for the universal programme.
- Gardasil® should be offered routinely to all individuals in school year 9 (age 12 and 13 years) born from 2 July 2006 to 1 July 2007, through the school based programme.
- For practical reasons, any individual in school year 9<sup>1</sup>, (regardless of their date of birth), should be offered HPV immunisation.
- A second dose should be offered within the same school year (separated by a minimum of 6 months).
- Individuals who were not vaccinated while in school year 9 will be offered the vaccine again while they are in school year 10. This already applies to girls but will only start to apply to boys from September 2020.
- A catch-up programme for older boys will not be offered (i.e. anyone in year 10 and above in September 2019).
- Those eligible for vaccination will remain eligible until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

4. Additional information will be available in the form of:

- A revised information leaflet is available on the PHA Immunisation webpage.
- A revised factsheet for health professionals: *Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Immunisation Programme: Factsheet for healthcare practitioners*<sup>7</sup> is available on the PHA Immunisation webpage.
- Further detailed clinical guidance for healthcare professionals is attached at **Annex A**.
- The HPV chapter of the Green Book (*Immunisation against infectious disease*) is due to be updated in July and will be available here: [Human papillomavirus chapter of the Green Book](#)  
Health Professionals should familiarize themselves with the latest version of the Green Book prior to beginning to vaccinate.
- The JCVI statement about HPV vaccination and expansion to boys is available at: [JCVI statement: extending the HPV vaccination programme – conclusions](#)
- An updated patient group direction template from the PHA/HSCB will be available in due course through the normal distribution mechanism.

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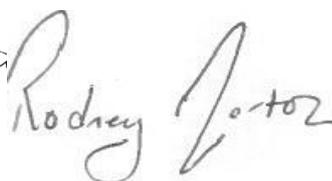
<sup>1</sup> This includes any individual who is eligible to be in, or is in school year 9.

5. The vaccination programme is expected to help prevent additional cases of HPV-attributable anal, penile and oropharyngeal cancers in men. It is also expected to prevent additional cases of HPV-attributable cervical and non-cervical cancer in women, particularly in unvaccinated girls, and additional cases of anogenital warts.
6. Once the universal programme begins from September 2019, it has now been agreed that those eligible to receive the vaccine will remain eligible until they turn 25 years of age. Therefore should an eligible individual not receive the vaccine via the school health service for whatever reason, they can approach their GP to seek the vaccine. For boys this will initially only be those born from 2 July 2006 to 1 July 2007, with the lower age range increasing as each subsequent school year becomes eligible. GPs can claim the normal Item of Service fee for any eligible individual who seeks the HPV vaccine in this way.
7. Supplies of the HPV vaccine (Gardasil) can be ordered in the normal way.
8. It is important to note that the national cervical screening programme for women remains essential to the prevention of cervical cancer and will remain unchanged following the extension of the HPV vaccination programme to boys. It is vital to ensure that cervical screening rates remain high. Immunisation will not protect against all the HPV types that cause cervical cancer.
9. We do not underestimate the additional work the introduction of the universal HPV programme will bring, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved for their continuing hard work in delivering immunisation programmes to school-aged young people. The extended programme builds on the success of Northern Ireland's HPV vaccination programme for girls and also the HPV programme for men who have sex with men (MSM) introduced in 2016 and delivered through Trust Genitourinary Medicine services. We can now look forward to a future where we can be even more confident that we will reduce cervical cancer and other HPV related cancers that affect both men and women.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Michael McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer



**PP Rodney Morton**  
Deputy Chief Nursing Officer  
Professor Charlotte McArdle  
Chief Nursing Officer



**PP Chris Garland**  
Senior Principal  
Pharmaceutical Officer  
Cathy Harrison  
Acting Chief Pharmaceutical  
Officer

