

**From the Chief Medical Officer  
Prof Sir Michael McBride**



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnistirie O Poustie

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

**HSS(MD) 12/2023**

**FOR ACTION**

Chief Executives HSC Trusts for onward cascade  
to Medical Directors  
Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/SPPG  
GP Medical Advisers, SPPG  
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (for onward  
distribution to practice staff)  
Head of Pharmacy at SPPG (for cascade to prescribing  
advisers and community pharmacies)

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Our Ref: HSS(MD) 12/2023

Date: 1 March 2023

Dear Colleague

**PREPARING FOR A SPRING COVID-19 VACCINATION BOOSTER  
PROGRAMME**

1. The purpose of this letter is to outline the planning assumptions for a targeted spring 2023 COVID-19 vaccination booster programme, subject to the publication of the final JCVI advice.
2. As you will recall in my letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 (HSS (MD)5/2023) <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-hss-md-5-23.pdf> JCVI outlined their planning assumptions for 2023 which for the spring included:

*in addition, for a smaller group of persons (such as persons of older age and those who are immunosuppressed) an extra booster vaccine dose may be offered in spring 2023*

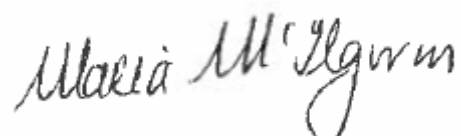
3. For planning purposes, while we await publication of updated JCVI advice, we are asking systems to plan to vaccinate the groups eligible last spring. This would include:
  - Adults aged 75 years and over
  - Residents in care homes
  - Individuals aged 5 years and over who are immunosuppressed, as defined in the Green Book (tables 3 and 4)

4. For planning purposes, the spring booster programme is likely to start by mid-April and the spring booster offer will officially come to an end on the 30 June 2023.
5. The programme is expected to include those who turn 75 years old by 30 June 2023 who will be eligible for a vaccination at any point during the spring campaign. Those who are admitted to an older adult care home or become immunosuppressed by 30 June 2023 should be considered eligible as well.
6. This advice may be updated upon receiving final JCVI advice. Following final JCVI advice, the Green Book will be updated.
7. Further guidance on the transition to a targeted primary course offer will be published in due course.
8. As with earlier stages of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, for the spring booster programme we expect all care homes to be paired with a community pharmacy who will attend the home and offer vaccination to all residents.
9. GPs will be asked to invite their eligible patients aged 75+ and those who are immunocompromised to attend for vaccination.
10. In addition to being invited by their own GP, those aged 75+ or immunocompromised individuals will also have the option to receive the vaccine via a participating community pharmacy.
11. Trusts are expected to play a much reduced role in the spring programme mainly vaccinating eligible housebound patients from lists supplied by GPs. Trusts will also vaccinate those immunocompromised individuals aged 5 to under 18 years of age, identified by their GP.
12. Since the previous COVID-19 vaccination programme a number of new COVID-19 vaccines have been authorised for use by the MHRA and EMA. We will confirm the vaccines to be used in due course following publication of the final JCVI advice as well as further information about training resources and PGDs as relevant, but there is expected to be sufficient supplies of COVID-19 vaccines to cover the eligible NI population of approximately 186,000 people.

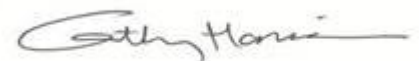
Yours sincerely



**Prof Sir Michael McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer



**Maria McIlgorm**  
Chief Nursing Officer



**Mrs Cathy Harrison**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

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