

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



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

HSS(MD) 05/2023

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)
Director of Pharmacy at SPPG (for cascade to prescribing
advisers and community pharmacies)

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Our Ref: HSS(MD) 05/2023

Date: 2 February 2023

Dear Colleague

JCVI ADVICE ON 2023 COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME

1. The purpose of this letter is to outline the recent advice issued by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) with regards to the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for 2023. The full JCVI advice can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-2023-jcvi-interim-advice-8-november-2022/jcvi-statement-on-the-covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-2023-8-november-2022>
2. The main points from JCVI to note are:
 - For planning purposes, for a small 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. **A final recommendation regarding this element is expected to be released by JCVI shortly**
 - JCVI also advise, for planning purposes, that in Autumn 2023, persons at higher risk of severe COVID-19 would be offered a booster vaccine dose in preparation for winter 2023/24
 - Surge vaccine responses may be required should a novel variant of concern emerge.
3. In addition to this JCVI advised that the 2021 first booster offer for persons aged 16 to 49 years who are not in a clinical risk group (third dose/1st booster

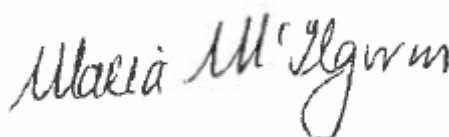
dose, first made available to this age cohort from around December 2021) should close in alignment with the close of the autumn 2022/23 booster vaccination campaign.

4. In Northern Ireland the offer of the first booster dose (or 3rd dose) for healthy individuals aged between 16-49 years of age **will cease at the end of the current Autumn/Winter Booster Programme, expected to be from 31 March 2023**. A similar position is being taken across the rest of the UK.
5. The majority of available vaccination clinics offering first boosters (3rd doses) until 31st March will be Trust led or at a participating community pharmacy. Some GPs may continue to offer this service on request only. Cessation of first boosters (3rd doses) for healthy individuals aged 16 to 49 years from 31st March will help begin the move of the COVID-19 vaccination programme onto a more business as usual footing, however this position may change subject to further JCVI advice in response to a variant of concern.
6. In addition, JCVI advised that the primary course offer of COVID-19 vaccination should move, over the course of 2023, towards a more targeted offer during vaccination campaigns to protect those persons at higher risk of severe COVID-19. Restricting the offer of vaccination to those at higher risk from COVID-19 will mean withdrawing the offer for healthy persons aged 5-49 years of age but it has not been agreed yet when this will occur in Northern Ireland and further advice will follow in due course.

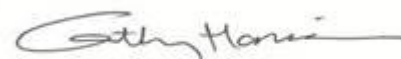
Yours sincerely



Prof Sir Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



Maria McIlgorm
Chief Nursing Officer



Mrs Cathy Harrison
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

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Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts

