

**From the Acting Chief Dental Officer
Mr Michael Donaldson**



BY EMAIL

**To All NI GDPs and for onward
distribution to relevant practice staff**

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Dear Colleague

Vaccination of General Dental Practice Frontline Staff

Firstly, I want to thank you collectively for the huge efforts and sacrifices you made last year in providing care, often under extremely difficult circumstances, to many tens of thousands of patients. Your efforts are very much appreciated by the Department, the Board and by patients.

I want to make you aware of the early information I've received in relation to the Covid-19 vaccination programme and how it applies to staff working in General Dental Practices. There are two arms to the Northern Ireland vaccination programme, one that is delivered by the HSC Trusts and one that is delivered by General Medical Practices. In general terms, the Trust-based programme focuses on providing the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to care home residents and frontline healthcare staff while the GMS programme is aimed at providing the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine to eligible members of the general public.

A digital booking platform has been established for the Trust-based program with healthcare workers being given access to the platform in accordance with the order of prioritisation set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. Staff will be able to book an appointment at a time and location that is convenient to them – this can be at any Trust vaccination site.

The initial availability of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine was lower than expected and this has delayed access of primary health care staff to the booking system. However, supplies are now flowing more freely and it is anticipated that all frontline primary care dental staff should be able to book an appointment for the vaccination from the week commencing 18 January 2021 at the latest. The coordinators of the vaccination programme have told me that further information will be available shortly. As soon as I receive it I will share it with you.

I would also like to clarify that I do **not** anticipate that the proposed tightening of Covid prevention measures in Northern Ireland will affect how general dental practices operate. However, I will write you again should the position change.

Yours sincerely



Michael Donaldson

Acting Chief Dental Officer