

**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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Date: 18 November 2020

Dear Colleague

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO ALL DENTISTS, DENTAL THERAPISTS AND
DENTAL HYGIENISTS TO BECOME SESSIONAL VACCINATORS TO HELP
IMPLEMENT THE FORTHCOMING COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME**

ACTION REQUIRED

Sessional vaccinator role to be considered by all General Dental Practitioners, Dental Therapists and Dental Hygienists.

1. The purpose of this letter is to strongly encourage dentists, dental therapists and dental hygienists to consider responding to the Department of Health's Expression of Interest invitation to all Health Care Professionals to become sessional vaccinators. At this stage clinical dental staff are not being asked to prioritise a Covid-19 vaccinator role over working in dental practice, rather staff should only respond to the Expression of Interest if they feel able to take on the vaccinator role in addition to their practice commitments.
2. You will be aware that two of the COVID-19 vaccines due to be used in the forthcoming UK vaccination programme have been shown to be ≥90% effective with no safety concerns. While this is very welcome news it should be noted that the vaccines still have to be considered and approved by the MHRA. Another potential vaccine is also going

through the same process and its safety and efficacy data is expected to be submitted to MHRA within the next few weeks.

3. It is therefore very possible that a COVID-19 vaccine(s) will become available for use across the UK by early December. Plans have been drawn up to ensure a vaccination programme can be implemented quickly once sufficient supplies of the vaccine(s) have been received into Northern Ireland.
4. The vaccination programme will involve a mixture of delivery models and these will include: Mobile teams for care home residents and staff as well as support for district nursing for housebound patients; Enhanced Trust Occupational Health staff teams for the mass vaccination of staff; and a GP based programme which will see GPs operating in cluster formation vaccination sites with additional support.
5. In order to be able to implement these plans it is essential that we have adequate vaccinators who can be trained up and called upon when required as well as health care assistants and admin staff to support the programme. I would therefore strongly urge the above primary care clinical dental staff to seriously consider this request and, where it is possible for staff to take part without detriment to patient dental care, for practice owners to try to accommodate staff requests to participate in the programme.
6. Further details regarding the Expression of Interest can be found at: <https://www.hscworkforceappeal.co.uk/>

Yours sincerely



Michael Donaldson

Acting Chief Dental Officer