

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

HSS(MD)55/2020

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*)

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Our Ref: HSS(MD)55/2020
Date: 6 August 2020

Dear Colleague

SHINGLES VACCINATION PROGRAMME – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR 2020/21

ACTION REQUIRED

Chief Executives must ensure that this information is drawn to the attention of all staff involved in elderly care and vaccination programmes, to enable them to respond accordingly.

The HSCB must ensure that this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners immediately.

Important Points to Note

- From autumn 2020 the vaccine should be given to all patients who are aged **70 and 78 years on 1 September 2020** (see Annex A for cohort ranges).
- While the shingles vaccine is normally given at the same time to eligible patients as they receive their seasonal flu vaccine, the programme runs from 1 September 2020 until 31 August 2021 and the shingles vaccine should continue to be offered to eligible patients throughout the year.
- Those individuals now aged between 71-77 or 79 years of age, who had been eligible during the first seven years of the programmes, remain eligible to receive the vaccine during 2020/21, if they have not yet received it.
- Those people now aged 80 years of age, who had been eligible during 2019/20, are **NO LONGER** eligible to receive the vaccine during the 2020/21 programme, i.e. from 1 September 2020. This is because the vaccine is less effective in people aged 80 years of age or more.

- The Shingles vaccine is expensive and GPs should note that some stock will have expiry dates of November and December 2020, therefore GPs should ensure they only order enough vaccine to meet their weekly needs.
- Healthcare professionals should familiarise themselves with the latest guidance in the Green Book before beginning the vaccination programme.

Introduction

1. The 2019/20 vaccination programme continues until 31 August 2020 and we would urge GPs, while being mindful of the ongoing pandemic, to continue to ensure patients who meet the eligibility criteria for the 2019/20 programme, irrespective of their age now are offered the vaccine.

This is **particularly important for anyone who was aged 79 on 1 September 2019**, as after the 1 September 2020 those people now aged 80 years of age, who had been eligible during 2019/20, will no longer be eligible to receive the vaccine during the 2020/21 programme.

Details of programme during 2020/21

2. During the 2020/21 programme the shingles vaccine should be offered to everyone who is **70 years of age** on the 1 September 2020 (routine cohort) and everyone who is **78 years of age** on the 1 September 2020 (catch-up cohort). See table 1 below for dates of birth.
3. **This is the last year that shingles vaccine will need to be offered to all 78 year olds (catch up cohort) because all individuals in their 70s when the programme began in 2013/14 will have been offered the vaccine. From 2021-22 shingles vaccine will only be offered to those 70 years of age (routine cohort).**

Table 1 – Cohorts for routine and catch-up shingles programme (1 Sept 2020 to 31 Aug 2021)

Year	Cohort	Cohort definition	Born from date	Born to date
2020/21	Routine	Age 70 on 1 September 2020	02/09/1949	01/09/1950
2020/21	Catch-up	Age 78 on 1 September 2020	02/09/1941	01/09/1942

3. Those individuals aged between 71-77 or 79 years of age, who had been eligible during the first seven years of the programme (i.e. were born between 02/09/1943 - 01/09/1949 or 02/09/40 - 01/09/41) and who have not already received the vaccine remain eligible to receive the vaccine during 2020.
4. Those people now aged 80 years of age, who had been eligible during 2019/20 (i.e. were born between 02/09/1939 - 01/09/1940) are NO LONGER eligible to receive the vaccine from 1 September 2020. This is because the vaccine is less effective in people aged 80 years of age or more.

5. As per the arrangements in previous years, while the shingles vaccine can routinely be given at the same time as the seasonal flu vaccine, GPs can begin inviting patients to receive their shingles vaccination from September onwards. **The shingles vaccine can and should also be given separately, if required, up to the end of August 2021.**
6. GPs should ensure that they will have the fridge capacity to store the vaccine required. Details of how to order Zostavax® vaccine online during 2020/21 will be issued with the seasonal flu HSS letter which is due to be issued shortly.
7. **GPs should only order sufficient vaccine to meet their weekly need.** Effective management of vaccines throughout the supply chain is essential to reduce vaccine wastage. Local protocols should be in place to reduce vaccine wastage to a minimum. Even small percentage reductions in vaccine wastage will have a major impact on the financing of vaccine supplies.

Funding and service arrangements

8. A payment of £7.64 will be made in respect of each registered patient of the contractor who has received the Shingles Vaccine during the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021, who on the 1 September 2020 attained the age of 70 years.
9. In regard to the catch-up service, a payment of £7.64 will be made in respect of each registered patient of the contractor who has received the shingles vaccine during the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021, who on the 1 September 2020 attained the age of 78 years.
10. In regard to those individuals who had been eligible during the first five years of the programme but remain unvaccinated, a payment of £7.64 will be made in respect of each registered patient of the contractor who has received the Shingles Vaccine during the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021, who on the 1 September 2020 attained the age of 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76 or 79 years of age.

Green Book

11. Healthcare professionals should familiarise themselves with the latest guidance before beginning the vaccination programme, particularly the guidance on shingles vaccine and immunosuppression.

Conclusion

12. Shingles is a significant cause of morbidity in older people. We appreciate the workload within GP Practices particularly with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, but we hope colleagues will recognise the significant benefits the vaccine will bring to their patients.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved in delivering the programme in 2019/20 and for their continuing hard work. Recent events have now shown with the Covid-19 pandemic that it is vital that we do all we can to prevent patients becoming ill.

Yours sincerely



Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



Professor Charlotte McArdle
Chief Nursing Officer



Mrs Cathy Harrison
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Enc

CIRCULATION LIST

Executive Medical Director/Director of Public Health, Public Health Agency (*for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff*)
Assistant Director Public Health (Health Protection), Public Health Agency
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health and Social Care Board, (*for onward distribution to all Community Pharmacies*)
Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts
Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB
Family Practitioner Service Leads, Health and Social Care Board (*for cascade to GP Out of Hours services*)
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all relevant staff*)
Directors of Nursing, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Community Nurses*)
RQIA (*for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals*)
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust
University Health Contacts

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>

SHINGLES VACCINATION

Cohorts for vaccination in 2020/21

Routine programme

Age 70 on 1 September 2020

Birth date range 02/09/1949 - 01/09/1950

Catch-up programme

Age 78 on 1 September 2020

Birth date range 02/09/1941– 01/09/1942

Anyone who was born between 02/09/1943 - 01/09/1949 or 02/09/40 - 01/09/41 and who has not already received the vaccine remains eligible to receive the vaccine