

CLMC Bulletin 450 – 10/02/21

Vaccination of JCVI cohorts 1-4

NHSE/I wrote a [letter to LVS sites](#), to remind them that everyone in JCVI cohorts 1-4 should be offered the opportunity to be vaccinated by *Monday 15 February*, and to try to minimise any inequalities in vaccine uptake between different patient groups in those cohort wherever possible. NHSE/I asked each PCN site to confirm that they have made an offer to all patients in cohorts 1-4 by the 15th.

If a vaccination site does not believe they have sufficient vaccine to complete this, they should contact NHSE/I through their local system as soon as possible so that additional supplies can be provided.

The letter also included details about a welcome additional supplement of £10 per visit to a housebound patient to administer the COVID-19 vaccinations. This supplement is on top of the £12.58 Item of Service fee. The supplement applies retrospectively to any first dose vaccinations since 14 December 2020, and second doses within the arrangement.

National call/recall letters to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people

As of 3 February, people aged 18 and over in the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) cohort (as identified through the [Shielded Patient List](#)) will receive letters from the national call/recall service informing them that they are now eligible to receive their COVID-19 vaccine. The letters make it clear that people have a choice of where to get vaccinated and can choose to wait for their GP services to contact them directly, if they haven't already, or book into a vaccination centre or community pharmacy. A [copy of the letter and a PCN letter template](#) are available in the letter pack on the [FutureNHS platform](#) (sign in required).

It is concerning that these letters are not directly linked to a patient's local GP vaccination service, nor the stage at which the local area has reached in terms of vaccination coverage and GPC are continuing to discuss how to improve this with NHSE/I.

Movement of AstraZeneca vaccines

Moving the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine between locations across a single PCN grouping is both encouraged and legal if it will help minimise inequalities, maximise access and ensure timely vaccine usage. GPC believe the delivery of vaccination from local practices will enable more patients to access and receive the vaccine and would expect local systems to support this. The [Standard Operating Procedures](#), outlines the cold chain arrangements which need to be adhered to do this. See more information in the NHSE/I letter of [7 January 2021](#).

NHSE/I has also published a [position statement for the vaccination of care home residents using COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca \(AZ\)](#), recommending that when planning a vaccination session for local care homes, a risk assessment should be undertaken to identify the risk factors associated with the transfer of the vaccine for administration to remaining care home patients.

Annex B of the recent NHSE/I document [Mutual aid and the transfer of COVID-19 vaccines between Hospital Hubs, Vaccination Centres and Local Vaccination Services](#) sets out that as long as the relevant guidance is followed, local commissioners should be offering a supportive role in facilitating the movement of the AZ vaccine within a PCN grouping and do not need to seek formal approval for moving the vaccine in line with the arrangements set out in the letter. It also advises that once moved, the vaccine should either be administered or immediately put in a refrigerator at a practice site within the PCN grouping, and ideally administered within 24 hours or over the following days.

IPC Bulletin for General Practice on 'Donning and doffing stations for PPE'

The latest Bulletin from the NHS Community Infection Prevention and Control Team for General Practice focuses on 'Donning and Doffing Stations for personal protective equipment' and can be viewed [here](#).

Second doses

[Chapter 14a \(on COVID-19\) of the 'The Green Book'](#) has been updated for patients due to start immunosuppressive treatment, so that for example, if prior to cancer the patient has had therapy or a solid organ transplant they could be offered a vaccine prior to starting treatment, if clinically recommended. This includes potentially having the second dose at 3 or 4 weeks after the first.

GPC raised with NHSE/I the need for practice sites to be able to start planning giving second doses by booking appointments. On Friday, LVS (Local Vaccination Service) sites were sent a message about the scheduling about preparing for the second dose vaccination clinics for cohorts 1-2 which should go live as of week commencing 1 March 2021. The allocated quantity of vaccines will be based on quantity of first dose delivered by site (full pack unless a pack-down option was provided). The second dose clinics will take place 11 weeks post first dose clinics so the 12 week lead time between doses is achieved. Practice sites should have been provided with scheduled delivery day of second dose volumes by the end of last week, and are asked to schedule clinics up to the end of March once delivery schedule by day has been communicated.

GPC also believe it would be reasonable for GP sites to now give all those patients who have received the AstraZeneca vaccine an appointment for a second dose, and to do this for these patients when the first dose is given to reduce the workload involved in contacting patients at a separate time.

New vaccination information helpline and alternative point of care systems

A new COVID-19 vaccination information web resource and helpdesk has been set up for practice managers to help you find out answers to questions about records of vaccinations.

New assured point of care systems for recording COVID-19 vaccinations will also be available soon for practices which can be used as an alternative to Pinnacle. This provides greater choice and reduces reliance on any one supplier. As currently happens (or should!), all the data will flow into the GP record within 48 hours. These developments are in direct response to requests from the GPC on behalf of general practice.

Find out more information about your COVID-19 vaccination queries, how the vaccinations are recorded, common errors or difficulties and how to get help in these [FAQs by NHS Digital](#). Apologies as I am aware this may frustrate many who have tried to address multiple issues with MYS and the recording/reporting of vaccinations. All your issues have been escalated and we will continue to push for a resolution of these.

Read the GPC [guidance on the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) which includes information about what is expected of practices and the support available to enable practices to prioritise vaccine delivery.

Vaccine doses data

Last week, we celebrated the milestone of over 10 million COVID-19 vaccination doses having been [given in the UK](#), and the latest [data report](#), show that as of 3 February a total of 9,126,930 doses have been given in England. This is an enormous achievement, in particular when practices have also provided millions of flu and childhood immunisations this year. Thank you to all those who have made this possible so quickly.

The most recent [BMA vaccine survey](#), which aims to track the roll out of first and second vaccine doses among members UK wide, shows that as of 29 [January](#):

- 93% have received one or both doses
- 13% have received both doses
- 5% have are still to receive a single dose
- Almost half (46%) of those who have received their first dose have a date for a second dose - the majority expect this to be in 10-12 weeks' time.

The survey also showed that with regards to ethnicity and being at higher clinical risk, there is no difference in one or both vaccine dose rate by ethnicity (BAME doctors 94%, white doctors 93%) or by being at a higher clinical risk (higher risk 94%, not at higher risk 94%).

Contract agreement webinar for 2021/22

Following the recent [contract agreement for 2021/22](#), GPC will be holding two contract virtual roadshows/webinars on the following dates:

- 24th February – 19.30-20.30
- 25th February – 12.30-13.30

Look out for the registration details next week.

Government backs BMA proposal to fix unlawful age discrimination of the NHS Pension scheme

The Government has backed the main proposal from the BMA to fix the unlawful age discrimination that resulted when transitional protection was offered to older but not younger members when the 2015 NHS pension scheme was introduced. However, BMA pensions committee chair Vish Sharma warns the overall changes do not go far enough. Read more [here](#)

The BMA's pensions committee will be holding webinars at 7pm on 17 and 23 February discussing in detail the changes and what they mean to members. More details will be sent next week.

Flu vaccine reimbursement 2021/22

NHSE/I has issued [guidelines on vaccines for use during the 2021/22 flu programme](#), following the publication of [JCVI advice](#). The vaccines recommended for use are:

- Those aged 65 years and over: aQIV or QIVc (where aQIV is not available)
- At-risk adults, including pregnant women, aged 18 to less than 65 years: QIVc or QIVe (where QIVc is not available).

Practices should read the guidelines and submit vaccine orders as soon as practical.

Staff with long COVID

Tees Valley CCG have fully allocated their share of the £150m funding to practices maintain capacity in general practice. National guidance is that this funding can be used when staff are off sick with Long COVID, both for paying extended sick leave for staff that are off with Long COVID and to fill any shortfall to maintain a service when staff are off sick.

Freedom of Information requests for practices' Gift and Hospitality register

Some practices were sent an email by St Andrew's University, asking for copies of their Gifts and Hospitality register and Declaration of Interests Register for 2019/20, following a [recommendation by NHS Employers](#) to request and annually publish declarations of interests in the NHS.

This caused significant concern when practices are so busy focusing on the pandemic and the COVID vaccination programme, and after GPC raised this issue urgently with the University they apologised for the concern caused and immediately agreed to withdraw their request.

SSP for levothyroxine 12.5 mcg tablets

The Department of Health and Social Care have informed GPC that a Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for levothyroxine 12.5 microgram (mcg) tablets has been issued, commencing 3 February 2021 with an expiry date of 5 March 2021.

The SSP will enable community pharmacists in England, Scotland and Wales to supply patients with 1 x levothyroxine 25 microgram tablet to be taken on alternate days. The SSP form has now been placed, along with endorsement guidance and supporting QA on the NHS Business Services Authority's [dedicated SSP website](#).

If you have any questions regarding the SSPs please contact the NHS Prescription Service (Email: nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk; Tel: 0300 330 1349; Textphone: 18001 0300 330 1349")

BAME Forum launch

The BMA launched its first national [BAME \(black, Asian and minority ethnic\) member forum](#) last week. The forum aims to unify and empower the voices of our BAME members and influence positive change in the pursuit of race equality, in our association and across the NHS. The event was chaired by BMA council chair Chaand Nagpaul, with talks from Baroness Doreen Lawrence, Doyin Atewologun and Roger Kline. A recording of the launch event can be found [here](#).

A recent [BMA survey](#) also showed that, a year on, Black, Asian and other minority ethnicity doctors still don't feel protected from Coronavirus in the workplace.

GP Retention Scheme Webinar

A [webinar on the GP Retention Scheme](#) will be taking place on Thursday 25 February from 7pm – 8.15pm. This webinar will be looking at how the GP Retention Scheme works for both employees and employers, tackling some of the common misconceptions about the scheme and hearing from GPs who are currently on the scheme. There will be a Q&A session at the end and you can submit any questions in advance to cscott@bma.org.uk. A full list of speakers will be confirmed shortly. Click [here](#) to sign up

GPC UK regional elections

Nominations for the Durham/Cleveland seat for GPC UK are open and successful nominees will take their seat for a three-session term from 2021-24, commencing after the ARM 2021. Nominations are also open for a *Prison GP representative* on GPC UK – this seat is for a three-year term from 2021-24.

To submit your nomination please visit <https://elections.bma.org.uk/>. The deadline for all nominations is 12pm Friday 12 February: Voting will take place from 12pm 19 February to 12 March for the by-election and 19 March for all other seats.

For any questions relating to the role or GPC please contact info.gpc@bma.org.uk. If you have any queries regarding the election process, please contact elections@bma.org.uk.

Read more, including link to the BMA committee profile, on the [BMA website](#)

Mental health and wellbeing – looking after you and your practice team

Leadership Support Circles (National Autumn Offer 2020-2021)

Leadership Support Circles are part of the National Health and Wellbeing response to Covid19 to support the wellbeing of #OurNHSPeople. They provide evidence-based guidance and tools in a series of short, themed and interactive online sessions based on 10 principles for leading compassionately. Leadership Support Circles are a reflective space for managers at all levels to come together in a multi-disciplinary setting to share their experiences and be heard. Further information and how to register click the link [here](#)

GP appraisal leads and GP tutors offer of telephone support conversations remain for any GP who feels they would like to talk through any aspect of their professional/personal life that has been affected by Covid. To organise a telephone support conversation, either with the appraisal lead or with a GP tutor, please contact the appraisal team, or email di.jelley@nhs.net

Crisis Coaching & Mentoring: [Coaching and mentoring sessions are available now](#) for all NHS and Health and Social Care leaders. Delivered by The Centre for Army Leadership and Meyler Campbell Coaching, these sessions are designed to support with the huge pressure on the ability of the NHS to deliver safe, high-quality care, sharpen focus on meeting the core needs of staff, ensuring wellbeing and sustained motivation to deal with this rapidly changing situation. The intervention will give leaders an understanding of crisis leadership that goes beyond what is necessary, and focused on engagement and motivation through Covid19. Further information and how to register [see link here](#)

CLMC continue to [offer wellbeing services via Validium](#) for **ALL working in general practice** within Tees (including locums). We understand that a number of staff have accessed this confidential service and it has been well received.

The BMA's report on the [mental health and wellbeing of the medical workforce](#) which sets out ten recommendations to be addressed to protect staff during the pandemic and in the future. The BMA continues to offer [wellbeing services](#) and **confidential 24/7 counselling and peer support** for all doctors and medical students, as well as their partners and dependents, on 0330 123 1245. For hard copies of the Wellbeing poster, please email wellbeingsupport@bma.org.uk

There is also a wealth of NHSE provided [support available](#) to you and your team including a **wellbeing support helpline, a 24/7 text alternative, [peer to peer, team and personal resilience support](#), free mindfulness apps and the [#LookingAfterYouToo coaching offer](#).**

BMA COVID-19 guidance

The BMA [COVID-19 toolkit for GPs and practices](#) includes updates in the COVID-19 vaccination programme section and protecting clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) patients section. There is also guidance on the following topics:

- [Model terms of engagement for a GP providing temporary COVID-19 services](#)
- [Terms and conditions for sessional GPs](#)
- [Risk assessments](#)

GPC GP Bulletin

Read the latest GP bulletin [here](#)