

## CLMC Bulletin 459 – 20/04/21

### **Flu vaccination programme 21/22**

GPC have now received confirmation from NHSEI that there will not be central procurement of flu vaccine for the coming year's scheme, but the at-risk group will be extended as it was this year. Practices should therefore, where this is possible due to the late notice, take this into account when placing orders. The annual flu reimbursement letter was updated on 1 April. A copy of the latest version can be found [here](#). The letter confirmed that those aged 50-64 year old will be included in the 21/22 flu programme and also confirmed the inclusion of a QIVr vaccine (Supemtek).

### **COVID-19 vaccination programme**

*Read more about the latest changes, including the arrangements for the second phase of the vaccination programme and what practices need to do, in the updated GPC [guidance page about the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#).*

As lockdown restrictions are beginning to ease in varying ways across the UK, those aged 45 and over in England are now eligible to book an appointment via the [NHS national booking service](#) to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Practice groups can now invite these patients for their first vaccination if they have sufficient supplies alongside continuing with second vaccinations to those patients who are due to receive it.

This follows a statement published by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on [phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#), which recommends that the most effective way to minimise hospitalisations and deaths is to continue to prioritise people by age.

GPC England and NHSE/I have agreed an extension to the existing enhanced service specification for practice sites to administer vaccinations to patients between the age of 18 and 50. The service specification arrangements for this second phase of the programme will mirror the arrangements for the first phase, and sites will still get the £12.58 item of service fee for each vaccine administered. Read more about the next phase of the vaccination programme [here](#).

JCVI have also advised that individuals aged 18 to 49 years, in particular males in certain black, Asian or ethnic minority (BAME) communities, those with a BMI of 30 or more (obese/morbidly obese), and those experiencing socio-economic deprivation, should take up the offer of vaccination, as data has indicated that there is an increased risk of hospitalisation for this group.

In addition, the [Moderna vaccine](#) has begun to be delivered across more than 20 vaccination sites in England, following use in Scotland and Wales, for those aged 18-29 who are eligible, providing another alternative to the AstraZeneca vaccine in line with updated [MHRA guidance](#).

NHSE/I and our ICS (NENC ICS) have issued this [letter of thanks](#) in recognition for all the work that has been undertaken in eth regional to ensure the vaccination programme has been a success.

### **Vaccinating during Ramadan**

NHSE/I has published guidance on supporting [COVID-19 vaccine uptake during the Islamic month of Ramadan](#) which began on Monday 12 April 2021. The guidance aims to help vaccination sites build confidence, reduce barriers to access and support the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine amongst Muslim communities during the month of Ramadan.

### **Vaccine dose data**

Nearly [41 million COVID-19 vaccinations have now been delivered in the UK](#), and the latest [data report](#) shows that as of 15 April over 34 million doses have been given in England.

## **PRINCIPLE trial on COVID treatment**

Following the publication of findings from the Oxford-led [PRINCIPLE trial](#) on inhaled budesonide as a potential COVID treatment, NHSE/I has issued the following [advice](#) which states:

Inhaled budesonide is not currently being recommended as standard of care but can be considered (off-label) on a case-by-case basis for symptomatic COVID-19 positive patients, aged 65 and over OR those aged 50 or over with co-morbidities, in line with the published [Interim Position Statement](#). This Interim Position Statement clarifies that this includes co-morbidities that are 'consistent with a long-term health condition from the flu list'.

### **What is the background to this new Therapeutic Alert?**

The PRINCIPLE trial [reported](#) a 3-day median benefit in self-reported recovery for patients with COVID-19 in the community setting who received inhaled budesonide. The impact on hospitalisation rates or mortality has not been established, but the evaluation is ongoing, so recommendations may change as more data become available. The current Therapeutic Alert is based on a decision by the Chief Medical Officer after consideration of the evidence.

### **What does this mean in practical terms?**

*There is no expectation that inhaled budesonide will be routinely prescribed* for patients in the eligible cohorts with COVID-19. Advice to patients on the management of COVID-19 has not changed. However, as stated in the Therapeutic alert, prescribers may *consider* prescribing it to reduce symptoms in eligible cohorts who are being managed in the community. This would be on a case-by-case basis using a shared decision making approach.

Where a decision is made to prescribe, prescribers are asked to ensure that the patient understands how to use the inhaler properly. As patients will be self-isolating, this may be via video link (see below).

Patients will need to ask a friend or relative to collect the inhaler. If this is not possible, they can access the [NHS Volunteer Responders](#) service. They will also be eligible for free delivery if other routes are not possible.

### **For pharmacists and dispensing doctors**

Additional supplies of the Pulmicort 400 Turbohaler (AstraZeneca UK Ltd) are now available to be ordered as needed through business as usual routes from wholesalers.

### **For patients**

Information for patients can be found [here](#), including a link to videos explaining correct inhaler technique from Asthma UK.

## **GP Career Support Hub**

A new [GP Career Support Hub](#) has been launched on the [Future NHS platform](#), containing all of the information GPs need to support them throughout their career.

The GP Career Support Hub is a central information point with resources to support GPs at all stages of their career - from newly qualified doctors to those approaching the end of their career. It provides information, guidance and support on career development, learning, mentoring, appraisals, career options/flexibility, wellbeing, pay and pensions to enable GPs to realise fulfilling, rewarding and exciting careers in general practice.

## **Call for swift action to remove GMC's power to appeal tribunal decisions**

Thirteen leading healthcare organisations, including the BMA and five royal colleges, are [calling on the UK government to act to remove the General Medical Council's power to appeal against decisions by medical practitioners' tribunals](#). The government agreed in 2018 that the power, which duplicates similar powers held by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), should be scrapped. Its abolition is included in draft legislation to reform the way healthcare professionals are regulated, on which the government is consulting. The healthcare bodies have told Matt Hancock, health and social care secretary for England, that the move is urgent and should be made now, by including it in the forthcoming health and social care bill.

## **Weekly COVID-19 data update**

The BMA's Health Policy weekly summary of key data on various aspects of the pandemic is [here](#). The data is from external published sources (with links to the relevant data/study) and can be shared.

### **National e-Referral Service (e-RS) advice and guidance webinar, Tuesday 20th April 2021, 4 -5.30pm**

To support mobilisation of [advice and guidance \(A&G\) services](#) as per the [2021/22 operational planning guidance](#), the NHSE/I is hosting a webinar for clinicians and system leaders about the National e-Referral Service on *Tuesday 20th April 2021, 4.00pm-5.30pm*.

The session will include an overview from NHS Digital on recent improvements that have been made to the NHS e-Referral Service A&G function, and will also share experience and learnings from clinicians working in primary and secondary care who have successfully implemented an A&G service, focusing on Cardiology, Gastroenterology and Urology.

If you would like to attend, please register [here](#).

If you have any feedback with regard to the e-RS, generally speaking or regarding the A&G function specifically, please let the BMA Workforce and Innovation Team know via [info.wi@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.wi@bma.org.uk).

Elected BMA representatives from both primary and secondary sit on the monthly e-RS Optimisation & Improvement Clinical Council and can feed examples of both good and bad practice into this group to seek resolutions to both local and national issues and concerns.

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

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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**.

NHSEI have recently developed a new [communications toolkit](#) and resources to help promote their offers to the workforce. The toolkit has an overview of each offer, including bulletin, email and social media copy, and links to some case studies and posters. You can also follow this link [Primary Care Coaching – Link to Assets](#) to a range of resources, including social media assets, a video, PDF case studies and posters, website and email banners.

### **GPC GP Bulletin**

Read the latest GP bulletin [here](#).

### **GPC Sessional GP Bulletin**

Read the latest Sessional GPs newsletter [here](#).