

Dear Colleague

CHANGE TO THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPLY OF PNEUMOCOCCAL POLYSACCHARIDE VACCINE (PNEUMOVAX®23), FOR THE NATIONAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME FROM JUNE 2021

1. We are writing to advise of a change to the arrangements for ordering supplies of Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV23) for use in the NHS pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccination programme from 1 June 2021.
2. The PPV23 vaccine is recommended for anyone aged 65 years and over. GPs are in addition, advised to provide immunisation to anyone aged under 65 (aged 2-64) with certain at risk conditions, as defined in pneumococcal chapter of Green Book.
3. Currently GP practices in Scotland who need to provide PPV23 to patients, place an order at a community pharmacy (using either an NHS prescription or NHS GP stock order form).
4. The PPV23 vaccine has been subject to intermittent supply issues over the past two to three years due, in part, to manufacturing issues, and increasing global demand. In light of this, Scottish Ministers agreed last year to move towards central procurement for this vaccine.
5. From 1 June 2021 PPV23 vaccine should be ordered through NHS vaccine holding centres and not from community pharmacy contractors.
6. The move towards central procurement of this vaccine will help secure stock for the NHS and aims to stabilise the UK market and with regular substantial orders, will increase the prioritisation of the UK for this vaccine with the manufacturer. This new arrangement will provide greater assurances around vaccine availability to colleagues in their planning of vaccination clinics.
7. NHS Boards are requested to action this guidance and ensure that their vaccination teams and pharmacy contractors are aware of it.

**From the Chief Medical Officer
Chief Nursing Officer
Interim Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**
Dr Gregor Smith
Professor Amanda Croft
Professor Alison Strath

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For action

General Practitioners
Practice Nurses
Primary Care Leads, NHS Boards
NHS Board Immunisation Coordinators
NHS Board Medical Directors
Nurse Directors, NHS Boards
Directors of Public Health
Infectious Disease Consultants
CPHMs

For information

NHS Board Chief Executives
Directors of Pharmacy
Consultant Physicians
Public Health Scotland
Chief Executive, NHS Health Scotland
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Further Enquiries

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8. We are very grateful for your continued support and hard work in delivering the Scottish Immunisation Programme to the people of Scotland.

9. Further information is included in Annex A set out below.

Yours sincerely,

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Alison Strath

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Chief Medical Officer

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**Interim Chief Pharmaceutical
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2021/22 Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV23) (Pneumovax® 23)

Immunisation against Infectious Disease (The Green Book)

1. Detailed clinical guidance on pneumococcal immunisation is contained in chapter 25 of Immunisation Against Infectious Disease ([the Green Book](#)).

Eligibility

2. Once the change occurs in June 2021, vaccination teams are asked to prioritise previously un-vaccinated individuals and booster doses in the same order of priority that has been recommended since late 2017 as detailed below.
3. Unvaccinated individuals in the high-risk priority groups, such as those with asplenia, dysfunction of the spleen, immunosuppression, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks and cochlear implants should be offered PPV23 first.
4. Following vaccination of high-risk groups, providers may then offer PPV23 to previously unvaccinated individuals in moderate risk groups such as those with diabetes and chronic heart, lung, liver and kidney disease.
5. Once high and moderate-risk groups have been offered PPV23, individuals in lower risk groups, such as those requiring boosters and healthy over 65 year olds, can then be offered PPV23.
6. National stocks of PCV13 (Prevenar13), or separately procured PCV10 (Synflorix), should not be used in place of PPV23 as protection from the childhood PCV13 programme has reduced pneumococcal disease due to these serotypes across all ages. PPV23 helps provide additional protection against serotypes that are not covered by PCV13 or PCV10.

Vaccine Supply

7. Due to increased global demand, supplies of Pneumovax®23 (pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine, PPV23) have been constrained since 2017.
8. From 1 June 2021 PPV23 vaccine should be ordered through NHS vaccine holding centres. GP practices and vaccine holding centres must liaise closely to ensure sufficient vaccine is available prior to the scheduling of vaccination appointments. Vaccination teams should ensure that stock with the shortest expiry date is used first to preserve vaccine supplies.

Vaccine Storage

9. PPV23 vaccines should be stored in the original packaging at +2°C to +8°C and protected from light. All vaccines may be sensitive to some extent to heat and cold. Heat speeds up the decline in potency of most vaccines, thus reducing their shelf life. Do not freeze. Freezing may cause increased reactogenicity and loss of

potency for some vaccines. It can also cause hairline cracks in the container, leading to contamination of the contents.

Contractual Arrangements

10. NHS Board Immunisation Coordinators (ICs) are aware of the background and existing PPV23 arrangements through the Scottish Immunisation Programme Group (SIPG), and have been advised of the move to centralised procurement arrangements of the vaccine.

11. NHS Boards will still be responsible for paying for the vaccine and the aim of the central procurement will be to stabilise supplies and secure a more competitive price for NHS Boards than at present.