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Dear Colleagues

COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME: JCVI ADVICE FOR VACCINATION OF 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS

This letter provides details of the JCVI statement, published 4 August 2021, on COVID-19 vaccination of 16 and 17 year olds.

KEY OBJECTIVES

1. To update the advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) for 16 and 17 year olds in the form of their updated statement on COVID-19 vaccination of children and young people aged 12–17.
2. To clarify operational guidance.

Following the latest review of data, the JCVI has recommended vaccination of young people 16 and 17 years of age. [JCVI Statement 4 Aug](#)

3. The JCVI has advised that 16 and 17 year olds should be offered a first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at this time.
4. This cohort **will not** have an automatic second dose at 8 weeks post first dose. The JCVI will review further data and evidence before making a decision about the second dose offer for this group and will provide a subsequent update of this advice before second doses are due at approximately 12 weeks after the first dose.
5. Pending further evidence on effectiveness and safety in this age group, a second vaccine dose is anticipated to be offered later to increase the level of protection and contribute to longer term protection.
6. The JCVI has carefully considered reports of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the membrane around the heart) following the second dose in this age group. Those affected are disproportionately male and there are very few reported cases after the first dose.

**From the Chief Medical Officer
Deputy Chief Nursing Officer
Interim Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**

Dr Gregor Smith
Anne Armstrong
Professor Alison Strath

6 August 2021

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Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Medical Directors, NHS Boards
Primary Care Leads, NHS Boards
Directors of Nursing & Midwifery, NHS Boards
Chief Officers of Integration Authorities
Chief Executives, Local Authorities
Directors of Pharmacy
Directors of Public Health
General Practitioners
Practice Nurses
Immunisation Co-ordinators
Operational Leads

For information

Chairs, NHS Boards
Infectious Disease Consultants
Consultant Physicians
Chief Executive,
Public Health Scotland
NHS 24

Further Enquiries

Policy Issues

COVID Vaccination Policy
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Medical Issues

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Pharmaceutical and Vaccine Supply Issues

NHS NSS National Procurement:
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7. Further data and the potential availability of alternative vaccine options will inform future details before second doses are due at approximately 12 weeks after the first dose. These details will be provided in an update of this advice when available.
8. The Scottish Government is guided by the clinical and scientific advice on vaccination provided by the JCVI. This new opinion is in addition to the existing advice on 19 July that supports vaccination and the 2 doses at the regular interval of 8th week:
 - 17 year olds within three months of their 18th birthday can be vaccinated with two doses (this was 1st of August to 31st of October date of birth for the Scottish offer – no further 3 month rolling offers will be made now that the generic 16/17 offer is open).
 - 16 and 17 year olds who are in “at risk” groups are already recommended to receive two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (as defined by [green book chapter 14a](#))
 - Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine should be offered to all 12-15 year olds who have underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19, as previously advised. There may be some recently turned 16 year olds in this group (that became 16 since March 2021 and were not offered as part of cohort 6 earlier in the programme).
 - Children and young people aged 12 years and over who are household contacts of immunosuppressed people (adults or children) should be offered two doses COVID-19 vaccination on the understanding that the main benefits from vaccination are related to the potential for indirect protection of their household contact who is immunosuppressed. Letters to these households will be arriving from 9th of August.
9. The JCVI continues to recommend against the routine vaccination of under 16 year olds without underlying health conditions but will keep the data and its position under review.
10. The JCVI has considered the clinical risks to 16 and 17 year olds of vaccinating them at this time, including noting the differential impacts on children and young people from more disadvantaged and/or deprived backgrounds.

Communications and Operational Plan

11. A range of targeted communications have been rolled out, including media and digital activity, to invite these young people to come forward for vaccination at drop-in clinics or to self-register on the existing online portal or via the national phone line. Activity with partner organisations such as Young Scot and National Union of Students will assist with reaching these young people, along with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), independent and local authority secondary schools using their own channels and networks.
12. We have learned from experience with the 18-29 year old cohort that self-registration and drop-in clinics are the optimal way to reach this group, as lettering with appointments yielded a high DNA rate in young people. We are, therefore, offering self-registration and flexible drop-in clinic offers as our lead delivery routes.

13. Any young person who is 16 and over by the 31st of August 2021 will be included in this cohort for file purposes. The communications encourage young people who are 16/17 to self-register on the portal which opens on Friday 6th of August. Their registration will generate an SMS or an email confirming their appointment details.
[COVID-19 registration service](#)
14. Drop-in vaccination clinics will accept those who are 16 or 17 years. As these drop in clinics and scheduled appointments will run over the course of weeks to approximately the 5th of September – people who turn 16 in August will be able to drop in once they have turned that age. Young people will be specifically directed to Pfizer drop-in clinics as this is the only vaccine approved for use in that age group.
15. Communications and news release will advise 16 and 17 year olds that they can self-register or attend drop in clinics. They will be advised by national communications that all Boards will be vaccinating by Tuesday 10th of August; but that some Boards will be able to start as early as Saturday 7th of August. Boards should locally advertise when they are starting.
16. Boards are able to start from Saturday 7th if their own clinical governance arrangements are content that their staff have the necessary information, training and tools to undertake the vaccinations and necessary informed consent conversations. Boards may opt to use electronic versions of the information leaflets to have the necessary discussions with young people.
17. A file de-duplication will be carried out on Monday 23rd August to check how many of this age group have not been vaccinated or have a pending appointment; those who have not registered or attended a drop-in will be lettered inviting them to a set clinic appointment.
18. This approach will allow us to offer 16/17 year olds an initial dose by mid-September.
19. Changes to the Pfizer-BioNTech PGD and Protocol are being made to accommodate the above adjustments. The PGD was shared with Boards on Thursday 5th of August and the protocol shared on Friday 6th of August.
20. Staffing educational resources have been updated and shared on Friday 6th August.
21. PHS has completed two bespoke leaflets and patient information for 16 and 17 year olds to support informed consent and discussion of key differences to the timing of a 2nd dose offer. They are available online at PHS and hard copies will be with Boards on Monday 9th of August.
22. NHS Inform will have this patient information on the section for young people, and will have sections around frequently asked questions.

Pfizer-BioNTech only

23. The Pfizer-BioNTech BNT162b2 COVID-19 vaccine is the only vaccine currently authorised for use in persons aged 12 to 17 years in the UK

Action

24. Health Boards should now accept 16 and 17 year olds at Pfizer drop-in clinics and at pre-arranged appointments.

25. All Boards will have commenced vaccination of this group no later than Tuesday 10th of August.

Thank you for your continued support in delivering the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Yours sincerely

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Anne Armstrong
**Deputy Chief Nursing
Officer**

Professor Alison Strath
**Interim Chief Pharmaceutical
Officer**