Chief Medical Officer for Scotland

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The Scottish Government

Dear Colleagues

Pneumococcal Vaccination Programme - a change of vaccine for:

- **the routine adult pneumococcal vaccination programme;**
- **for those aged 2 years and above in clinical risk groups for pneumococcal disease; and**
- **for children aged less than 2 years of age with asplenia, splenic dysfunction, complement disorder and severe immunosuppression**

We are writing to provide information on changes in the vaccine offered for the pneumococcal programme in Scotland.

Background to the changes

Currently, PPV23 (Pneumovax23), is used in the pneumococcal vaccination programmes for those aged 65 years and over, and from 2 years of age for those with underlying medical conditions. PCV13 (Prevenar 13) is used in the routine national childhood immunisation programme. Additional doses of PCV13 are currently given to children aged less than 2 years of age with asplenia, splenic dysfunction, complement disorder and severe immunosuppression and individuals aged 2 and over with severe immunocompromise.

In June 2023, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that either PCV20 (Prevenar 20), or PPV23 could be used for the adult pneumococcal programme, and for individuals over 2 years in a clinical risk group. This advice was accepted by all UK Ministers and led to a competitive tender for vaccine supply. The outcome was a contract for PCV20.

In June 2025, the Green Book was updated to reflect the clinical advice to use PCV20 in children under 2 years of age with asplenia, splenic dysfunction, complement disorder or severe immunocompromise.

Main points about the vaccine change

Routine adult pneumococcal vaccination programme and those aged 2 years and above in clinical risk groups

In early 2026, PPV23 central supply will be run down and PCV20 will become available to order for the programme. PCV20 will replace PPV23 for those aged 65 and over and those aged 2 years and above in clinical risk groups when PPV23 is no longer available to order or in stock in local fridges. Until that time PPV23 should continue to be used.

From Chief Medical Officer for Scotland
Chief Nursing Officer
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
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Addresses

For action
NHS Board Immunisation Coordinators
NHS Board Medical Directors
Nurse Directors, NHS Boards
Directors of Public Health
Infectious Disease Consultants
CPHMs
Consultant Physicians

For information
NHS Board Chief Executives
Directors of Pharmacy
Public Health Scotland
NHS 24
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Further Enquiries to:

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PCV 20 replacing PCV13 for individuals over age 2 years of age with severe immunocompromise

Individuals over age 2 years of age with severe immunocompromise should be offered PCV20 (replacing PCV13) as soon as this is available. They will require a second dose of pneumococcal vaccine at least 4 weeks later of either PPV23 whilst still available or PCV20. These individuals should be identified by their treating specialist clinician and referred to the local immunisation team via local referral pathways.

Children under 2 years of age with asplenia, splenic dysfunction, complement disorder and severe immunosuppression to be offered PCV20

PCV20 is now available to order from national stock for this cohort. **Children under 2 years of age** with asplenia, splenic dysfunction, complement disorder and/or severe immunosuppression should be offered PCV20 in accordance with table 25.3 of the pneumococcal Green Book chapter as soon as practicable replacing PCV13. These children should be identified by their treating specialist clinician and referred to the local immunisation team via local referral pathways.

Otherwise, the routine pneumococcal vaccination programme for all children less than 2 years of age remains unchanged. PCV13 should continue to be offered to all children who do not have asplenia, splenic dysfunction, complement disorder and severe immunosuppression at 16 weeks and one year of age.

The Green Book Chapter

Please see the Green Book Chapter for the latest information on the programme: Pneumococcal: the green book, chapter 25 - GOV.UK.

Vaccine Supply

PCV20 is supplied as a pack of 10 x pre-filled syringes without needles.

Stock Management

Implementation of PCV20 is scheduled for early 2026, with remaining PPV23 stock expected to be issued by January/early February 2026. To minimise vaccine wastage, PCV20 ordering will commence only once PPV23 central supply has been depleted except for the groups that should be offered immediately. Any locally held stock of PPV23 should continue to be used up before making the switch to PCV20.

Uptake

NHS Boards should ensure they have robust plans in place to identify and address health inequalities for all underserved groups, and it is expected that progress will be made on reducing unwarranted variation and improving uptake.

Resources to support the Programme

All the available leaflets and resources for members of the public and training materials for health practitioners have been updated to support this change. These will be available on NHS Inform and Turas.

Patient Group Directions (PGDs)

Updated national specimen Patient Group Directions (PGD) templates will be produced and issued to NHS boards in advance of the changes coming into effect. These will be made available on the PHS website at: Publications - Public Health Scotland.

Reporting suspected adverse reactions

PCV20 is a black triangle product and is subject to additional monitoring by the MHRA.

Health professionals and those vaccinated, and/or their carers are asked to report suspected adverse reactions through the online Yellow Card scheme (www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard) by downloading the Yellow Card app or by calling the Yellow Card scheme on 0800 731 6789 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday. Additionally, Vaccine safety and adverse events following immunisation: the green book, chapter 8 - GOV.UK provides detailed advice on managing adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs).

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

Yours sincerely,

Gregor Smith	*Aisha Holloway*	*Alison Strath*
Professor Sir Gregor Smith **Chief Medical Officer**	Professor Aisha Holloway **Chief Nursing Officer**	Professor Alison Strath **Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**