



**Issue 93/Wednesday 4 August 2021**

This is the latest round-up of information for GP practices, produced by South East London CCG. Should you have any questions or need advice, contact your local borough primary care team in the first instance; they will escalate anything they can't resolve to south east London's Coronavirus co-ordination centre.

Please check for any borough-specific information, which will be attached to this bulletin by your borough primary care commissioning team.

## COVID-19

### JCVI Guidance on second dosing intervals

The national position, based on JCVI guidance in the [Green Book](#), remains the same. Second doses **must be given at least eight weeks apart** and should not be offered sooner unless there is a clinical reason to do so.

NHSE has provided a script and poster to help site staff manage conversations with people requesting second doses earlier than eight weeks. The key messages include:

- There is now real-world data from the millions of vaccinations given worldwide that show a longer dosing interval between first and second doses offers individuals greater protection. This is especially important in the context of rising case rates and the delta variant.
- Having a second dose at least eight weeks after the first gives you the best possible protection from the delta variant.
- It is still really important for you to have a second dose so that you can get the best possible protection. You can book an appointment in advance through the National Booking System, or go to a walk-in session after eight weeks if preferable.

Please share the [script](#) and [poster](#) with your site staff for use. Updates can be found on FutureNHS.

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### GP indemnity for 12- to 17-year-old vaccinations - update

The NHSE/I's clinical update on 22 July 2021 has advised that PCN groupings will require indemnity to vaccinate patients aged 12-17 years. A contractual agreement will be put in place nationally which will follow shortly pending appropriate engagement with professional bodies. Further detail can be found [here](#). NHSE's Deputy Director for General Practice Strategy and Contracts has advised that there is not a contract in place

yet for practices/PCN Groupings to vaccinate the 12-15 year old eligible children. However, it is being worked on and when available will be circulated.

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## COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy

NHSE/I has issued a [letter](#) which describes how we need to 'make every contact count' in providing evidence-based advice to women on the benefits of vaccination in pregnancy for them and their babies. Maternity and primary care services in particular are asked to take immediate actions, including:

- Supporting all GPs, practice nurses, midwives and obstetricians to advise women on vaccination in pregnancy at every antenatal contact.
  - Ensuring information and materials are available for women in all antenatal and primary care settings.
  - Encouraging all maternity staff to be double vaccinated themselves.
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## Phase 3 Covid vaccination programme FAQs for general practice and community pharmacy

NHSE/I has advised, further to the Phase 3 webinar held on 15 July for general practice and community pharmacy, they have published a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for [general practice](#) and [community pharmacy](#) to support those considering taking part in the potential COVID-19 booster programme from the autumn.

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## Workforce considerations for phase 3 adult vaccination programme

The delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination programme is reliant on our workforce being identified and trained. This [pack has been created to support the delivery of the COVID-19 adult booster vaccination programme](#) and has been developed based on current assumptions, as set out in the letter on 1 July. It includes:

- Clinical red lines for adult booster vaccination, based on the latest guidance from JCVI.
- Training requirements for flu and COVID-19 vaccinations to support adult booster vaccinations.

If you have any comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your [lead employer](#).

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## GP COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard now live

NHS Digital has developed the GP COVID Vaccination dashboard to enable general practices and PCN-led local vaccination services to view the uptake of the COVID vaccination amongst their registered patients. This dashboard is now live and can be accessed via NHS Futures: [GP COVID Vaccine dashboard information page](#).

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## Advice for using COVID-19 vaccines during hot weather

Vaccines must be stored and used within temperatures specified by the manufacturer and MHRA-authorized conditions of use, to ensure their safety, quality and efficacy. During the summer, there is an increased risk of temperatures in ambient areas rising above 25°C (the maximum permissible storage temperature for all the COVID-19 vaccines authorised in the UK). This is particularly likely in venues that are susceptible to significant fluctuations in temperature such as vehicles, marquees, tents and some local community facilities. The Specialist Pharmacy Service have published [advice on using COVID-19 vaccines during hot weather](#) to aid sites in their risk assessments.

Significant fluctuations in temperature can occur in vehicles so CARS would like to remind colleagues of two Standard Operating Procedures, from the Specialist Pharmacy Service which can be found here: [Transporting the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca](#) and [Transporting the COVID-19 Vaccine Pfizer BioNTech](#).

Colleagues are asked to please read through these to ensure the guidance is being adhered to.

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## Preventing black particles in vaccine vials

London Immunisation Team, NHSE/I, has provided an update on black particles, which featured in [the Clinical Bulletin dated 14th June 2021](#), highlighting the action to take when local teams identify vaccine vials which contain particles. Further to this, as this issue has most commonly been seen with the Pfizer BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine, Pfizer have investigated this ongoing issue and concluded in a report submitted to the MHRA that the incidents are due to particulates entering the vials during routine vaccine dilution and dose withdrawal steps. The report identifies the following changes to current technique to minimise particles breaking off from the rubber bung/stopper and entering the vial:

- Insert the needle into the centre ring of the top plug.
- The needle should be inserted vertically (at an angle of 90 degrees) into the stopper. Non-vertical insertion of the needle into the stopper can result in the needle scraping rubber off the inner wall of the small channel of the stopper
- Don't twist or rotate the needle once inserted. If the needle is rotated or twisted during piercing of the stopper, a particle may be cored out of the stopper. This damage is more significant when a wider needle gauge is used so extra care must be taken.

Vials must be visually inspected for appearance and particles before and after dilution and each time a dose is drawn up. Vaccinating teams are advised to review their drawing up technique based on the above factors and share this learning widely. Pfizer have produced an educational website which aims to support technique regarding the preparation of the vaccine: [www.cvdvaccine.co.uk](http://www.cvdvaccine.co.uk)

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## Updated Patient Decision Aid - AstraZeneca (AZ) Covid-19 vaccine and the risk of blood clotting

Capillary leak syndrome is now included as a contraindication to the AZ vaccine. Please see the [SPC](#) for further information. The patient decision aid (PDA) has subsequently been updated to reflect this change and is available on the [SELCCG GP website](#). The

document also provides information on managing suspected adverse effects from the vaccine.

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## **Risk assessment considerations for GP staff exemption from contact isolation**

Regional IPC, medical and PHE colleagues have produced a [paper](#) to support local discussions around General Practice risk assessments for staff exemption from contact isolation. Please forward any comments and share any local work to Nicola Sirin, Infection Prevention and Control Lead, NHS England and Improvement – London, at [n.sirin@nhs.net](mailto:n.sirin@nhs.net).

Please read the [risk assessment tool](#) developed by PHE LCRC, which may be helpful for those systems that have not yet developed their own processes.

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## **COVID-19 staff testing and reporting**

Regular antigen testing of all practice staff is critical to protect staff and patients and slow the spread of Covid-19. Staff testing is vital - even after vaccination. ALL test results regardless of outcome must be reported. Find out more [here](#) in our weekly update.

## **GP updates**

### **Amanda Pritchard has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of NHS England.**

On Friday 30 July, we were delighted to inform staff that Amanda Pritchard had been appointed NHS Chief Executive. Amanda will be the first woman in the health service's history to hold the post, which she commenced on Sunday 1 August. On Monday 2 August, Amanda wrote a message to all staff as the new NHS Chief Executive. Read Amanda's message [here](#).

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### **Temporary Emergency Registered GPs - Continuation of Support**

The temporary emergency registration provided by the GMC to doctors, as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, will remain until the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care declares the emergency over. The GMC is currently contacting doctors on the temporary register to ask about their plans. GPs on the register are supporting the COVID vaccination programme and upcoming flu campaigns, where inclusion on the Medical Performers list (MPL) is not a prerequisite.

Other options, depending on MPL status, include:

- Patient facing and remote work in GP practices
- Providing medical cover to an increased in-patient bed base

- Providing back-office functions such as supporting medicines management, providing leadership to care homes and nursing teams, supporting the relationship with shielding patients
- Leadership roles in PCNs and CCGs

Please contact [england.primarycareworkforce@nhs.net](mailto:england.primarycareworkforce@nhs.net) if you would like to be connected with your regional lead to discuss local opportunities.

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## Primary Care Data Gathering Programme

NHS South East London CCG is taking part in the Primary Care Data Gathering Programme, a national estates programme being undertaken by NHS England in order to learn more about GP practice premises. The CCG is working with Community Health Partnerships and Fulcrum locally, to gather all data held centrally and now require practice knowledge to complete remaining gaps and validate information collated during the initial programme stage.

From w/c 2 August 2021, representatives from Fulcrum will contact each GP practice via email, providing a copy of the practice return for your completion and/or review. A more detailed overview of the programme can be accessed [here](#).

For more information, please contact [tony.rackstraw@nhs.net](mailto:tony.rackstraw@nhs.net) or [craig.gibbard1@nhs.net](mailto:craig.gibbard1@nhs.net)

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## General Practice Fellowship programme guidance updated for 2021/22

The [General Practice Fellowship programme guidance](#) has been updated for 2021/22, outlining the two-year programme of support available to all newly qualified GPs and nurses working substantively in general practice.

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## Stakeholder Survey - potential changes to the access pathway to Terminations of Pregnancy

SEL CCG are carrying out a review of the TOP Central Booking Service (CBS), which is a single point of access to terminations by Marie Stopes (MSI) and British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) for Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark. Bexley can access these services directly from MSI and BPAS.

The aim is to understand the benefits to service users of a CBS compared to direct booking and provide consistency across all boroughs within SEL from 1 April 2022.

This review will not affect the consultations, treatments and any associated services provided directly to service users by either MSI, BPAS or the National Unplanned Pregnancy Advisory Service.

Please complete a stakeholder survey via this [link](#) by 23 August 2021.

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## General Practice Enhanced Service Specifications for the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme 2021/22

NHSE/I have published the two [Enhanced Service Specifications for the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme 2021/22](#). This follows the publication of the [Annual Flu letter](#) on 17 July 2021.

The service specifications for 2021/22 are largely based on the 2020/21 flu service specifications, with the exception that the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme specification (covering adults and at-risk groups) will be commissioned as an Enhanced Service this year to enable greater responsiveness to any subsequent JCVI advice or Government policy. The Childhood Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme 2021/22 was previously commissioned as an Enhanced Service. The Enhanced Services will be offered to all GP practices providing essential services and will not be capable of amendment by CCGs.

A further key change to the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme 2021/22 Enhanced Service Specification is that for this season, practices will be able to vaccinate various cohorts of patients that are not registered with the practice.

We are inviting all practices to opt-in to the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme 2021/22 enhance services by **23:59 on Monday 16 August 2021**.

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## **SEL paediatric formulary – now available via the AppStore**

There is a new way to access the SEL paediatric formulary. Search for the “Paediatric Formulary” on the AppStore on iOS and Android. The app updates automatically and has improved search and view functions. There is no change to content. Please **DOWNLOAD THE APP** onto your device and contact [LetsTalkMedicines@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:LetsTalkMedicines@gstt.nhs.uk) if you have any queries.

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## **New video on best practice in prescribing antibiotics in primary care**

Health Education England (HEE) has launched a new [video to support health and care staff who recommend, prescribe, dispense and supply antibiotics in primary care](#). Based on the [TARGET Toolkit](#) and [NICE Guidance](#) on 'Managing common infections and antimicrobial stewardship'.

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## **Inappropriate anticoagulation of patients with a mechanical heart valve**

Since 1 March 2020, 14 incidents have been reported nationally for patients with a **mechanical heart valve** being switched to a LMWH (e.g. enoxaparin) or a DOAC (e.g. edoxaban). Two patients were hospitalised with valve thrombosis and one was hospitalised with severe anaemia.

The Open SAFELY team have discovered 750 patients nationally with a code for a mechanical heart valve and a DOAC prescription.

You may have been contacted via a 'task' from EMIS to urgently review any patients identified at your practice to ensure they are prescribed appropriate anticoagulation and monitoring. This was due to be actioned by 28 July 2021.

Some patients may have an incorrect valve coding on the EMIS system which may complicate these searches. A search is available on the EMIS library, under the following: **Emis > Reporting > Population Reporting > EMIS Library > SNOMED CT > EMIS Clinical Utilities > Drug Monitoring > DOACS**

Please contact local AC teams if you identify a **patient with a mechanical valve prescribed a DOAC** that requires a review:

- For UHL: [LH.Anticoagulation@nhs.net](mailto:LH.Anticoagulation@nhs.net)
- For QEH: [LG.QEAnticoagulant@nhs.net](mailto:LG.QEAnticoagulant@nhs.net) or [lg.qe-anticoagreferrals@nhs.net](mailto:lg.qe-anticoagreferrals@nhs.net)
- For PRUH: [kch-tr.br-anticoag@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.br-anticoag@nhs.net)
- For KCH: [kch-tr.dh-anticoag@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.dh-anticoag@nhs.net)
- For GSTT: [gst-tr.anticoag@nhs.net](mailto:gst-tr.anticoag@nhs.net)
- Bexley, for community service: [anticoag.bellegrove@nhs.net](mailto:anticoag.bellegrove@nhs.net)
- Bromley, for Boots community service: [muhammad.patel@boots.co.uk](mailto:muhammad.patel@boots.co.uk)

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## Transfer of pathology services to new SYNLAB/NHS partnership

GP practices in Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham have this week received letters reminding them that diagnostics, testing and digital pathology services are set to be transferred in October 2021 to the new service formed by Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts in partnership with SYNLAB UK & Ireland.

Further information about the transfer and pathology services can be found at [SYNLAB's website](#) or [here](#).

## Information from Acute Providers

### Consultant Connect advice line for General Paediatrics – service extends hours

From 1 July 2021, the advice line at Guy's and St Thomas' will be available from 9:00 to 19:00, Monday to Friday. Please call for urgent advice. Non-urgent advice is available via ERS or through your PCN child health team.

## Cancer updates

### Updated - South East London Cancer Alliance

Please find below a link to the latest version of the update, which also includes FAQs for primary care on cancer services in south east London to support GPs and patients during the pandemic.

[Cancer updates for GPs \(28 July 2021\)](#)

## Online seminars, webinars and e-Learning

### Webinar – The future of Primary Care

This webinar will enable GP, PCN and federation leads to understand the likely impact of the Bill on the future of primary care and the independence of GP practices.

*Thursday 12 August 2021 – 12.30 to 13.30*

Register [here](#).

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### Respiratory Surge in Children – introductory webinar

Learn more about the [Respiratory Surge in Children programme](#) which supports the cross-skilling of the National NHS workforce to increase capacity and enhance capability in those caring for children in all care settings. The 45-minute webinar will be followed by a Q&A.

*Thursday 5 August at 11.30.*

The webinar can be accessed via [this link](#).

## Resources

### Communications pack for JCVI guidance on vaccinating specific groups of children and young people

NHSE/I has produced a communications pack to help general practices and community pharmacies to communicate with the public about recent [JCVI guidance on vaccinating specific groups of children and young people](#). The [pack](#) contains a script with key messages, some template web text, and some FAQs, and updates will be available on [FutureNHS](#).

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### Managing challenging behaviours at vaccination sites: Guide for site managers

NHSE/I have developed a short [pack with safety awareness steps to take by staff and volunteers should they come across challenging behaviours](#). The pack outlines to staff and volunteers how they can help manage challenging behaviours and includes posters which can be displayed at vaccination sites.

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### Conversation guides for midwives on the COVID-19 vaccination

NHSE/I has produced two 'top tip' conversation guides to enable midwives to have confident conversations about the vaccine – one for when speaking with colleagues and one for when speaking to pregnant women.

- [PDF: Conversation guide midwives to pregnant women](#)
  - [PDF: Conversation guide midwives to midwives](#)
  - [Word doc: Conversation guide midwives to pregnant women – editable](#)
  - [Word doc: Conversation guide midwives to midwives – editable](#)
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## **COVID-19 vaccination: women of childbearing age, currently pregnant or breastfeeding**

In addition to the leaflet for all women of childbearing age which must be read before they go for a vaccination, PHE has now produced a poster aimed at pregnant women encouraging them to have both of their COVID-19 vaccinations. For further information, please visit the GOV.UK [website](#).

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## **New animation from Doctors of the World – how to book a GP appointment**

Doctors of the World has produced an animation: '[How to register with a GP and book a vaccine' animation](#), which illustrates 11 steps explaining how everybody can register with a GP without the need for documentation, and how to book vaccine appointments. It is available in 12 languages: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, French, Italian, simplified Chinese, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Tigrinya, Vietnamese and English.

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