

ACTIVATE

Scotland's Readiness Headlines – preparing to deliver a national COVID-19 vaccine

26 November 2020

Following the recent Cabinet Secretary Statement regarding Scotland's preparations for the national roll-out of a COVID-19 vaccination programme, the Scottish Government wishes to follow on from that communication, to provide a wider operational update to health and social care leaders, on Scotland's current readiness status.

This communication will be the first of a number of regular updates, and it is intended to provide real-time information on the progress of Scotland's planning for delivery of the first COVID-19 vaccines, to the people of Scotland.

It is strongly encouraged that information shared with you, in this document, is filtered into existing board communications as appropriate, for onward sharing with your professional Health and Social Care colleagues.

“This is a national vaccination programme which sets out clearly the parameters within which NHS Boards will lead local delivery. Nationally, the Scottish Government will set out the policy direction, a delivery framework accompanied by a service delivery guide, a national workforce model, national training, procurement and logistics, national information and advice, tools to record data about vaccinations when they take place, and from phase 2, a national booking service

“NHS Boards will then lead local delivery identifying acceptable and accessible locations both for mass vaccination and for local access, taking account of their population and geography, recruitment and deployment of staff and the management of local vaccination clinics.”

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Jeane Freeman
19 November 2020

HEADLINES:

- Following recent encouraging news on the potential first COVID-19 vaccines in phase 3, it is anticipated that the UK's **Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI)** will soon meet to further discuss and advise on a formal approach to prioritisation of groups and communities, to receive the first COVID-19 vaccinations, as they become available.

The current interim JCVI advice on prioritisation was published on 25 September, and this has formed the basis for a number of vaccination planning assumptions by The Scottish Government and Health Boards, as well as four nations partners. Details on this interim advice can be found [here](#).

- The JCVI is an independent expert advisory committee which advises the UK Government and its departments, on making recommendations concerning vaccination schedules and vaccine safety.
- The formalisation of the JCVI advice, once available, will help further Scotland's overall planning efforts for what will be our largest ever mass vaccination programme.
- A programme of this size will take time to roll out, but even now, NHS Scotland is well advanced in preparations
- As an initial communication, this overview will provide a summary of our current preparations. Further details will be shared following JCVI advice.

Current national planning status as follows:-

Weekly Planning Forums:

- The Flu Vaccination and COCIV Vaccination (FVCV) Programme has an established Planning Forum in place, lead by NSS Service Delivery leads, bringing together COVID Vaccination planners from across NHS Boards and other colleagues including Health and Social Care Partnerships.
- The forum has been meeting weekly, and has a dedicated Teams channels for ongoing discussion, information sharing, and questions.
- Key planning information decisions and assumptions for the programme, are shared via this group.
- All board planning will be supported by a national service delivery guide, which will set out detailed guidance to help and support overall board planning.
- Naturally, each board will have to plan based on some specific local needs. However the manual is designed to take account of this whilst offering a level of guidance to support consistency in planning decisions, based on needs.

Workforce:

- The planning assumption is that Scotland will need over 2000 vaccinators and support staff by the end of January.
- To deliver the resourcing needs, boards are putting all options on the table, and efforts are underway across the country to recruit and deploy the staff necessary to support the level of workforce required
- The Scottish Government is also already looking at military support in some capacity. From late November, 11 Military planners are being deployed to help support and bolster workforce planning and delivery needs.
- To further support boards in their efforts, the Scottish Government's Workforce Directorate is in the process of finalising a workforce modelling tool to guide local planning.
- The Scottish Government has also very recently concluded an agreement with the BMA on terms and conditions for GPs' involvement in the programme and are now working through agreements with other independent NHS contractors.
- Health and Care Support Workers have also been approved for use as vaccinators, and a job description is rapidly being progressed. It is worth noting that HCSWs will not be able to take consent or check someone is suitable to be vaccinated, but they will be able to deliver vaccinations and support other needs.
- Naturally, the preparation of staff with appropriate knowledge and skills is a critical dependency for the vaccination programme and colleagues within NHS Education for Scotland and Public Health Scotland are working to provide a suite of workforce education resources specific to Covid-19 vaccines as soon as possible.
- Boards are being asked to collectively plan to deliver enough trained vaccinator capacity to deliver 160,000 vaccine doses per week in the initial weeks of the programme, with further ramp-up planned throughout the remainder of December and early 2021.

HEADLINES (continued):

Supply and logistics:

- There are a number of logistical challenges associated with the properties of some of the initial vaccines including storage (at ultra-cold temperatures for the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine) and 'packing down' to appropriate volumes and stability in transportation.
- Issues like this with the first anticipated vaccine (Pfizer BioNTech), could impact the ability to vaccinate in smaller locations (e.g. Care Home or GP Practices).
- This remains to be confirmed, but the programme aim is to ensure a person-centred approach.
- Working with health boards, planning will continue to work through all the options available, no matter how difficult, in order to ensure that safe, effective, and efficient patient care is front of mind when looking at all possibilities.

An end-to-end digital approach:

- A significant level of work is happening to put in place a digital solution which allows end-to-end system efficiency - from scheduling to data outputs - and one which is accessible and user-intuitive for vaccination staff.
- Part of this will be a new National Vaccination Management Tool (an online App) that has been developed to capture details around vaccination uptake and administration.
- Because it is anticipated that more than one vaccine will be approved for use in the UK, it is essential that detailed and consistent information is collected including who has had the vaccine, how many doses, from which batch, and in what setting in order to inform assessments of effectiveness in addition to performance management data.
- This App is being trialled with good results in some vaccination centres. It will report data in 'real time' giving an uptake rate to enable visibility and uptake confidence amongst all of Scotland's health boards.
- **The Scottish Government will be mandating use of this app, in order to get clear consistent data.** The only exception being in GP surgeries where the data will be gathered by GPIT (unless the GP Practice feel able to use the app which we strongly encourage).
- In addition, a national approach to scheduling via a national scheduling tool will be in place by wave 2.
- In the meantime for wave 1, the requirement will be that Local Health Boards schedule their own appointments (wave one) Please note that SIRS will not be used during the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

National call centre operations

- The FVCV Programme is working on a national Freephone number to provide advice for public enquiries. This is to prevent undue pressure on other local numbers e.g. GP Practices.
- It is hoped that this will be available at the time of the first vaccination to members of the public.
- The helpline proposals are also exploring how a national helpline can offer support around scheduling and booking enquiries, but only as delivery moves into Wave 2.
- Any scheduling required for Wave 1, will be managed locally by health boards.

National Public Health information campaign

- A Scotland-wide Marketing campaign will start in early 2021 as more vaccines become available and the programme of vaccination becomes well underway.
- In the interim, public health information toolkits will be made available online to download from NHS Inform.

An update on the status of all vaccines on trial is available in the public domain for anyone interested in finding out more. Click [here](#) for more information.

Derek Grieve

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"Scottish Ministers will make the final decision as to our readiness to go live with the vaccination programme advised by the FVCV Programme Board."

"Our Programme board is made up of representatives from across Health and Social Care, importantly including lead clinicians in Scottish Government, and Directors of Public Health."

"Over the coming weeks and months, we will be sending information to everyone across Scotland explaining what the vaccine is, how we are prioritising who gets it, what to expect when vaccinated and so on. Those in the first wave of the programme will be contacted during December and January either by mail or, for health and social care workers, by their employer. They will be told where they will receive their vaccine, how to make an appointment and what they need to know."

"In truth, the programme is a major public service exercise. We need the expertise and resources that our local authorities, community planning partnerships and the third sector can bring, and we need locations—both fixed and mobile—so that we can make the mass vaccination programme as accessible as possible wherever someone lives in Scotland and whatever their circumstances."

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Brought to you by The
Scottish Government's Flu
Vaccination and COVID
Vaccination (FVCV)
Programme

