

Dear Colleague

DETAILS OF THE 2015-16 SHINGLES (HERPES ZOSTER) VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Introduction

1. This year's shingles programme will run from 1 September 2015* until 31 August 2016. The programme is aimed at:

- People aged 70 years (routine)
- People aged 78 years (catch-up).

Additional considerations in 2015-16

2. Opportunistic Vaccination: Those who were eligible for the programme since it began in September 2013 (and who did not previously take up the offer of vaccination) can still be vaccinated if they ask for it. Vaccine should not be offered to anyone who is aged 80 or over, even if they have previously been eligible, as efficacy of the vaccine declines with age.

3. Early Immunisation Opportunity: Any GP who wishes to start vaccinating from **1 August 2015*** (ahead of the official date), to help use up pre-existing vaccine stock can do so.

4. Zostavax® is the only shingles vaccine with market authorisation available in the UK. It contains live, attenuated virus derived from the Oka/Merck strain of varicella zoster virus. This vaccine is contraindicated in some patients (eg immunosuppressed). An easy to use tool has been created to help with eligibility and screening for contraindications for use by healthcare practitioners. This tool can be accessed at: <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/immvax/shinglesvaccine.aspx>.

5. A separate DOB eligibility tool is being developed by NHS Health Scotland which will allow members of the public to insert their DOB into an online calculator to check eligibility for the 2015/16 Shingles programme. This will be

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Addressees

For action

NHS Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Immunisation Coordinators
NHS Board Medical Directors
Nurse Directors, NHS Boards
Directors of Public Health
Infectious Disease Consultants
General Practitioners
Practice Nurses
Health Visitors
CPHMs
Scottish Prison Service
Scottish Ambulance Service

For information

Directors of Pharmacy
Consultant Paediatricians
Consultant Physicians
Health Protection Scotland
Chief Executive, NHS Health Scotland
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Further Enquiries

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available at www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/shingles from September 2015.

Action

6. Recipients are asked to note the contents of this letter, and to take action as necessary to support this important programme

7. **Annex A** to this letter provides some additional detail.

8. Thanks to you and your practice staff for your support in continuing to deliver this important vaccination programme.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Calderwood
Chief Medical Officer

Fiona McQueen
Chief Nursing Officer

Rose Marie Parr
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

2015-16 SHINGLES (HERPES ZOSTER) VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Eligibility

1. Vaccination should be offered to people aged 70 years – this is the routine programme. We are continuing the catch-up immunisation programme in 2015-16 for people aged 78 years (otherwise known as the catch-up).
 - The routine cohort for those **aged 70** in 2015/16 is defined by the patient's age on 1st September 2015. Those born between 2 September 1944 and 1 September 1945 should be offered the vaccine in the 2015/16 routine programme.
 - The catch-up cohort for those **aged 78** in 2015/16 is defined by the patient's age on 1st September 2015. Those born between 2 September 1936 and 1 September 1937 should be offered vaccine in the 2015/16 catch-up programme.
2. NHS Boards and GP practices are reminded of their responsibilities in the vaccination of eligible persons (who are housebound) and those in care homes and long-term hospital care.

Vaccine Supply

3. Central vaccine supply must only be used for those in the eligible cohorts.

Early Immunisation Call Up

4. It has been brought to our attention that some of the existing shingles vaccine held by Boards is nearing the end of its shelf life. To minimise any unnecessary wastage we have agreed that GPs can, if they wish, start calling up patients who are eligible from 1 August 2015 onwards - ie before the *official* start date – to use up this existing stock. We would appreciate your assistance with this pragmatic approach wherever possible. A separate communication has gone to all GP practices highlighting this change. The accompanying DES has been amended to support this arrangement to ensure that claims for appropriate payment can be made by any GPs that participate.
5. Remember, vaccination can be administered at any time of the year – it does not need to be given at the same time as seasonal flu vaccinations. If Practices decide to offer vaccination at the same time as flu, please be aware that the contraindications for the two vaccines are different.

Call Up

6. There will be no central call or recall for this programme. We would encourage all GP practices to provide call and recall by way of a letter, to make their patients aware they are eligible for vaccine, as recent experience has indicated that such letters can have a very positive impact on uptake. A template letter will be available nearer the time to help with this (see <http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/23880.aspx>). Leaflets are also provided to GP practices to accompany letters

Eligibility – screening tool for contraindications for shingles vaccine

7. To help with eligibility and minimise the potential for vaccination errors, a screening tool has been devised to support this year's programme. This simple tool is aimed at Healthcare Practitioners and provides a series of questions to help assess whether an individual should be offered the shingles vaccine. This tool can be accessed at <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/immvax/shinglesvaccine.aspx>.

8. A separate tool is being developed by NHS Health Scotland, aimed at the general public. This will help with checking date of birth against eligibility for vaccination.

Usage

9. Full details on use, dosage, administration, concomitant administration with other vaccines, contraindications, consent and reporting of adverse reactions with Zostavax® (the vaccine used in the programme) is set out in the chapter 28a on Shingles (Herpes Zoster) This is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-herpes-zoster-the-green-book-chapter-28a>.

Patient Group Direction (PGD)

10. A national specimen Patient Group Direction (PGD) for administration of Zostavax® updated for year three of the programme will be available on the Health Protection Scotland website at <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/immvax/pgd.aspx>

Supply

11. Zostavax® should be ordered through NHS vaccine holding centres using the ordering system required by each NHS Board. GP practices and vaccine holding centres must liaise closely to ensure sufficient vaccine availability prior to the scheduling of immunisation appointments. Please ensure that stock with the shortest expiry date is used first to preserve this expensive vaccine.

Uptake Rates

12. Average provisional uptake rates in practices across Scotland to the end of May 2015 were 56.3% for the 70 year olds in the routine programme and 52.1% for the 78 year olds and 52.5% for the 79 year olds in the catch-up cohort.

Other issues

13. General Information on the topics listed below can be found in earlier communications on this vaccination programme (see: [http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO\(2014\)21.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2014)21.pdf))

- Storage
- Vaccine Stock Management
- Reporting of Adverse Events
- Monitoring Vaccine Uptake: Data Extraction
- GP Contractual Arrangements

Communication Materials

14. In line with previous years, information leaflets and posters will be made available to GP practices to support this immunisation programme and to help inform the general public. NHS Education for Scotland in partnership with Health Protection Scotland has produced educational resources for registered healthcare practitioners. These resources, once updated, will be available at www.immunisationscotland.org.uk and <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/public-health/health-protection/immunisation/shingles.aspx> respectively.