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|  | **Operational prison guidance on the facilitation of prisoner/resident vaccinations.**  |

**Introduction:**

This briefing outlines HMPPS responsibilities to facilitate prisoner vaccinations. It is intended to provide frontline prison management teams with guidance to assist local delivery. The document is split into sections, each devoted to a different element of the vaccination process. For simplicity the document contains a series of tables containing bullet point lists of HMPPS requirements. The programme is health-led and will therefore be overseen by local health practitioners in each prison. The HMPPS role is to **enable** the programme to run **safely**, **securely** and **efficiently**. The vaccination programme in Wales commenced on 11 January 2021 and operates under governance overseen by PHW for the devolved Welsh Government. As such this document refers to the vaccination process for prisons in England only.

1. **Programme introduction**

**Programme overview**

The vaccination programme in England commenced formally on 11 January with the delivery of pre-programme equipment (‘vaccination starter packs’) to prisons. Vaccinations themselves commence on 25 January. Prisoners are being prioritised by age. The vaccination decision (e.g. which prisoners are identified to receive the vaccination) is a clinical decision that must be made by health practitioners. As such if an identified prisoner refuses the vaccination health colleagues must determine which prisoner the vaccination appointment is transferred to.

**Programme governance**

Prisoner vaccinations are a health responsibility overseen estate-wide by Public Health England/NHS England (NHSE) and operated in each prison by the local contracted healthcare provider. The healthcare provider will be responsible for all aspects of the programme including but not limited to; logistical arrangements for receipting and storing all equipment and vaccinations, the identification and notification of vaccine-eligible prisoners, dispensing the vaccination itself and post-vaccination recording and monitoring. Health providers will record which prisoners have been vaccinated for medical records.

HMPPS or private prison providers where applicable will be responsible for enabling healthcare providers to administer all aspects of the vaccination process effectively, efficiently and safely. Prison responsibilities will therefore include but not be limited to; ensuring prisoners that have been identified for vaccinations are safe in the lead up to the appointment, escorting prisoners to vaccination appointments, verifying their identity if required, escorting them back to their accommodation and ensuring their safety as a vaccinated person within the establishment. Arrangements in regards to data sharing and recording will be forwarded in due course.

**From this point forward the document lists the prison requirements to support delivery of the programme. Prisons will need to agree localised plans to ensure the requirements of this guidance are met.**

1. **Pre-programme preparation**

The pre-programme preparation stage commenced at the start of January 2021. Health practitioners have completed a readiness assessment on each site, with Governors providing an equivalent assessment for HMPPS. The HMPPS responsibilities pre-programme are outlined below. The health practitioner responsibilities for overseeing all aspects of the programme are summarised in the **NHS mobilisation letter** attached

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| Prison responsibilities: pre-programme |
| * The prison should consider appointing a designated SPOC to support the Healthcare lead to deliver all aspects of the prisoner vaccination programme effectively.
* The prison will ensure that Gate Staff are suitably and effectively briefed to ensure that all equipment in the vaccination starter pack, vaccinations themselves and any replacement stocks are received and that a named member of healthcare staff is informed to attend and receipt the items promptly. All deliveries will be received between 08:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday. The prison will need to ensure that no equipment that is required for administration of the vaccine or vaccines themselves are turned away and may need to temporarily suspend any local arrangements under which deliveries are not accepted over the staff lunch break.
* Healthcare providers will receive 24 hour notice of all impending deliveries and prisons should seek assurance that there is a local process in place for receipting all items.
* LTHSE prisons must ensure a process is in place to ensure all items proceed through the establishment RID store promptly and are receipted by healthcare colleagues as soon as possible after arrival. All vaccination equipment and supplies are a healthcare responsibility from the moment they enter the establishment and cannot be delayed unnecessarily in reaching healthcare staff.
* The prison SPOC will support the healthcare SPOC to ensure the timely and effective briefing on all aspects of the programme to prisoner and staff groups.
* The prison should seek assurance that the healthcare providers has a process in place to complete each prisoner’s primary care registration and has arranged continuity of care appointments as part of pre-release resettlement planning.
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1. **Enabling the vaccination**

The actual process for administering the vaccine to an individual is a healthcare responsibility. Healthcare providers need to develop a local plans for administering the vaccine in adherence with an NHS Standard Operating Procedure. This must be in place by Friday 22 January and must include arrangements for staffing all vaccination sessions. By this point the Health provider must have completed the required training for all staff involved in the vaccination process.

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| Prison responsibilities: enabling vaccinations |
| * The Prison will ensure that the local healthcare delivery plans are disseminated to the prison staff group and that all staff with involvement in the process are sufficiently briefed. In the first cohort, each prison will only have very small numbers of prisoners being vaccinated, however as this ramps up it is important that staff are aware of the process and their role in enabling it.
* Health colleagues have produced a suite of patient comms and information products for prisoners. Prison staff should ensure that these are provided to prisoners and that they have opportunities to ask any questions.
* The health provider will be responsible for booking the appointments and notifying the prisoner and securing the prisoner consent. The prison should agree local plans with the healthcare provider for relevant staff to be notified of the upcoming appointment.
* Health practitioners will be responsible for securing consent and for handling any issue of a prisoner not deemed capable to give consent. Prison staff will need to enable health colleagues to secure consent and ensure that the prisoner is available for any discussions with health colleagues in advance of the appointment.
* The prison must ensure that the vaccination programme is prioritised and that where required other tasks are dropped to ensure the vaccination goes ahead whenever scheduled. Where a prisoner is required to attend another activity within the prison, this must be rescheduled where possible. Once notified of the appointment, prisons must ensure the prisoner’s NOMIS movements are checked to ensure there is no clash. Where there is a clash with an external appointment – e.g. court or hospital this should be discussed. It is expected that a court appearance will hold primacy over a vaccination which may therefore need to be rescheduled.
* Prison staff must ensure that prisoners are available for their appointments and brought to them promptly at the appointed time.
* Healthcare colleagues will determine where the vaccination clinic takes place and must notify the prison and the prisoner of the vaccination arrangements.
* Movement of the prisoner to receive the vaccine should be in line with the establishment’s current movement protocols. Where such arrangements allow, prison staff will escort the prisoner to the appointment and remain with them for the duration (15 minute post-vaccine monitoring) then return them to their unit. Healthcare staff are required to set post-vaccination monitoring in place and will determine how this is delivered.
* Prison staff must ensure the safety of the identified prisoner from point of notification and should be aware that the vaccination appointment is a highly sought after and potentially tradable commodity in the way that other vaccines have not been, prisoners may be pressurised into selling or giving away an appointment and prisons must therefore ensure that the individual is kept safe and monitored from the point of notification.
* The prison member of staff may be required to verify the identity of the individual prisoner at the start of the appointment. Prison and health colleagues need to agree a system for verifying identification.
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1. **Post-vaccination management**

All prisoners receiving a vaccination must receive post-vaccination monitoring and the prison must have plans in place for post-vaccination management. This plan must be agreed at the point at which vaccinations commence within the establishment.

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| Prison responsibilities: post vaccine |
| * It is recommended that a prison key worker or other member of staff is designated to conduct regular welfare checks with the prisoner following the vaccination. Staff should refer any medical concerns to healthcare colleagues following the vaccination. Please note that any existing welfare checks can used for this purpose.
* The prison must ensure that the vaccination programme is prioritised and that where required other tasks are dropped to ensure the vaccination goes ahead whenever scheduled. Where a prisoner is required to attend another activity within the prison, this must be rescheduled where possible. Once notified of the appointment, prisons must ensure the prisoner’s NOMIS movements are checked to ensure there is no clash. Where there is a clash with an external appointment – e.g. court or hospital this should be discussed. It is expected that a court appearance will hold primacy over a vaccination which may therefore need to be rescheduled.
* The prison will ensure that the process for obtaining consent and facilitating the appointment are adhered to in the same way in advance of a second appointment. All other requirements outlined for the first appointment must be followed in the same way for the second appointment.
* The Prison will ensure that no changes are made to the management of a vaccinated individual on the basis of receiving one or both vaccination doses. We await health advice on the impact of vaccinations on shielding, compartmentalisation and involvement in activities. We cannot automatically move a prisoner out of shielding as a result of vaccination, or that their regime arrangements can be altered on account of being vaccinated. All pre-existing arrangements must remain in place and prisoners who are shielding must be advised to continue to do so. Prisoners may sign themselves off shielding however the HMPPS waiver must be signed and their decision must be recorded on NOMIS, furthermore HMPPS staff must encourage the prison to continue shielding and record having done so.
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1. **Continuity of Care**

If a prisoners receives the first vaccination whilst in custody but is due for release before the second vaccination being administered arrangements must be made to ensure that the prisoner has been registered with a General Practitioner prior to release to ensure that arrangements can be made to receive the second vaccination.

Pre-registration has increased in importance during the COVID-19 pandemic as it allows prisoners to access the necessary healthcare support and ensures continuity of care, which will be essential in facilitating the smooth rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination. As part of the booking process for the COVID-19 vaccinations, providers must ensure that eligible prisoners can attend both appointments for both doses of the vaccine within the required timescales or are aware that they may have to receive the second dose in the community.

For prisoners leaving the secure estate between the first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine who have been registered with a community GP, their GP record will be updated to show their COVID-19 vaccination status. It is also essential that a NHS number is allocated to all individuals. A reminder has been sent by NHS to primary care colleagues about their contractual obligation to accept patients from the secure estate who are being registered with them ahead of their release.

The Health provider will identify a suitable GP practice in the community to administer vaccination appointments where prisoner discharge precedes a planned vaccination appointment in custody. The health provider will contact that practice and will escalate any issues arising from this (such as the practice being over-subscribed and therefore unable to fulfill the appointment requirement). The Health provider will send a pre-registration notification to the receiving practice using a GMS1 registration form signed by the prisoner. Prisons must take a pro-active approach to ensuring that release dates and locations are provided to healthcare colleagues at the earliest opportunity, and that any changes to arrangements are notified promptly, working with probation service staff as may be helpful. The community practice will then confirm that the patient has been registered and that the appointment has been booked. Health providers in the prison will then arrange for the digital and physical transfer of medical records to the community practice in the usual way.

**Further information**

Please note that if foreign nationals are in the eligible cohort to receive the vaccine, then they will be offered it, just like any other detainee/prisoner. This approach will also be taken for any IRC detainees who remain in detention for > 7days. If they are deported after their first dose, they will need to access vaccination services in their receiving country in line with their arrangements. Please note that there is no legal basis for continuing to detain someone to facilitate administration of a vaccine or for any other medical reason for that matter.

Any issues or queries arising from this guidance or in relation to the vaccination programme generally should be forwarded to the HMPPS Vaccination and Testing Team at the following functional mailbox address: HMPPSVaccines@justice.gov.uk