HMPPS is working closely with the NHS and the Department for Health and Social Care on the vaccination programme.

The national roll out of vaccinations is currently in phase one which is vaccinations based on age and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

Current evidence strongly indicates that the single greatest risk of mortality from COVID-19 is increasing age which is why the roll-out is being done this way.

Occupational prioritisation could form part of a second phase of the programme, which would include healthy individuals from 16 years of age up to 50 years of age, subject to consideration of the latest data on vaccine safety and effectiveness.

**Residents in prisons and approved premises**

HMPPS is working with the NHS to enable health staff to vaccinate our prison residents in line with the government’s high priority groups.

Residents in Approved Premises will be vaccinated in the same way as all members of the community are and will be contacted by their GPs when they are eligible. Residents in APs are signed up with a GP as part of their induction process.

Our vaccination programme in prisons will begin in the second week of January with the arrangement of delivery of items needed to vaccinate the over 80s population which amounts to just over 300 prison residents across 65 sites. We will then continue to follow the priority list of the government to make sure our most vulnerable people in prisons are vaccinated.

We are well used to working with the NHS to run successful vaccination programmes (such as seasonal ‘flu) in prisons so we have existing processes in place. This gives us an excellent starting point but vaccinating our population in line with the community where possible will be a huge logistical task, as it will be for the vaccinations in the community. We now have a number of people whose work in the next few months will be dedicated to managing the logistics of this and supporting the NHS in the delivery of the programme.

**Our Staff**

At the moment, the government’s priority is to vaccinate the most vulnerable people and therefore HMPPS staff will be vaccinated in the community and in line with the priority roll-out.

Occupational prioritisation could form part of a second phase of the programme and we have a strong rationale for prioritising prison and probation staff, which we have shared with DHSC. Our Ministers are also supporting this prioritisation of HMPPS staff as key public sector workers in conversations with their counterparts.

The vaccination programme for staff will happen in the community rather than on site. This is different to the way we vaccinate for flu because the roll-out is linked to your age or clinically vulnerability so it is managed through you doctor at this stage.

As part of our preparations for staff vaccinations, we have updated SOP so you can record when you have had your vaccination or give permission for your manager to record the details if you don’t have regular access to a computer. This will help us understand the level of protection our staff have. We know that updating SOP can be difficult so we have made the system as simple as possible.

**The impact of the vaccination.**

The COVID-19 vaccination will enable us to protect our most vulnerable residents, protect the NHS and save lives.

However, the process of vaccination will take some time and this is not a quick solution to our current situation.

We must continue to follow all the systems and COVID prevention methods we have put in place since March 2020. This is the case even if you have had a vaccination or the people you work with either colleagues or service users, have been vaccinated. These are:

* Maintain social distancing where you are able to. This is two metres away from other people and is one of the best ways to prevent transmission.
* If there are parts of your job which makes this harder, then you should wear a fluid resistant surgical mask. The situations where these are mandated are outlined in the Fluid Resistant Surgical Mask guidance for Staff
* Wear a face-coverings in other situations which are not mandated if you want to
* If you are able to in your workplace, open the windows for ventilation.
* Avoid touching your face and sneeze and cough into a tissue and throw it away immediately
* Regularly wash your hands
* Take part in any testing that is happening in your workplace. This can help identify early or asymptomatic cases and reduce the chance of transmission.
* Do not come to work if you display any COVID-19 symptoms. These are a new or continuous cough, a fever or a loss of smell or taste
* Follow the latest self-isolation guidance on gov.uk.

All of these measures help to protect you, your colleagues, your family and those in our care.

We will also continue with our compartmentalisation and testing strategy for residents in prison and our testing programme in approved premises.

As the number of staff who have had the vaccine increase, we will be able to reduce these mitigations. It will be important for us to be confident in the numbers who are protected in both our residents and staff which is why we have created a new section on SOP for you to update when you have had your vaccination. You can also give permission for your manager to update SOP if you do not have regular access to a computer.