



HM Prison &  
Probation Service



29 April 2021

To: HMPPS Executive Directors, Heads of Group, Prison Group Directors, Prison Governors and Directors (England)  
NHS England and Improvement Health & Justice Commissioners

### **FOR ACTION - VACCINE ROLL-OUT IN ENGLISH PRISONS**

We wish to offer our sincere thanks for all the hard work and dedication of everyone who is supporting the successful vaccination roll-out to those in our care. Our success to date is due to the tireless efforts and effective partnership working between healthcare commissioners, prison healthcare teams and HMPPS colleagues, and we are enormously grateful for all the progress that has been made. You should be immensely proud of your efforts so far.

The government's commitment to vaccinate all adults before the end of July is an ambitious target, which will require us to sustain and build on the pace of vaccination in custody. The only way to do this successfully will be to continue to work together. We understand that there are many competing demands on staff time, and appreciate the additional pressures caused by staff absences or those needing to work remotely. This will require us all to maintain strong partnership working, to ensure both NHS and HMPPS resources are balanced to enable both the vaccine delivery programme and other healthcare and COVID priorities are delivered.

The continued success of the vaccine programme depends on safe and efficient pace of delivery and maximising uptake by staff and prisoners. It remains critical that prison and health colleagues keep working together on communication and engagement to maximise participation in the vaccine programme, encouraging all those who live and work in our prisons to access the vaccine when they are called to do so.

#### **We are therefore asking you to take some specific actions to maximise uptake:**

- Commissioners should continue to work closely with the relevant regional HMPPS, PHE and NHS teams to monitor progress with the rollout in different establishments and prevalence of vaccine hesitancy, supported by the NHS and HMPPS national vaccination teams. This should be based on the most up-to-date data available locally and shared on the basis of usual NHS information governance requirements.
- Information should be discussed collaboratively, and clear actions agreed by NHS and HMPPS to support prisons with high rates of hesitancy or relatively low rates of delivery. This should include clarity on who is responsible for each action, and progress reviewed regularly.

- This should include practical steps to address hesitancy and ensure ongoing engagement with those who have initially declined the vaccine. This could include adopting an outreach approach, with healthcare attending residential units to answer questions, address concerns directly and potentially deliver the vaccine in wing based spaces; ensuring different staff groups (such as keyworkers) have the relevant information to promote the programme; and making use of peer support to encourage uptake.
- Where regions identify best practice we encourage you to share this more widely or if you require additional support, this should be highlighted to the national teams.

We are hugely grateful for efforts so far in what has been an extremely challenging time. There is no doubt that your work to date has saved lives and helped to protect the NHS, and we will make every effort to support you in maintaining that momentum in the coming weeks and months.



**Phil Copple**  
Director General of Prisons  
Her Majesty's Prison and  
Probation Service



**Kate Davies**  
Director of Health & Justice, Armed  
Forces and Sexual Assault Services  
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