

From the Chief Medical Officer
Professor Sir Michael McBride



HSS(MD)16/2023

For Action:

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Strategic
Planning and Performance Group/HSC Trusts/NIAS
GP Medical Advisers, SPPG
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (*for onward
distribution to practice staff*)
SPPG Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management
(*for onward distribution to community pharmacies*)

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Our Ref: HSS(MD)16/2023
Date: 20 March 2023

Dear Colleague

CHANGES TO THE HPV VACCINATION SCHEDULE – REDUCTION TO ONE DOSE

ACTION REQUIRED

HPV Vaccination Programme

Chief Executives must ensure this information is drawn to the attention of all staff involved in the HPV vaccination programme, including:

- school health teams, health visitors, community children nurses, and paediatricians
- GUM clinics

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group must ensure this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners, practice managers and community pharmacies for onward distribution to all staff involved in the HPV vaccination programme.

Introduction

1. Following my letter of 16th January 2023 [HSS \(MD\) 02/2023](#) announcing the reduced dosing schedule of the HPV vaccination programme from 3 to 2 doses for those aged 15-25 years of age and eligible gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM), this letter provides information about a further change to the national HPV vaccination programme.

2. **From 1st September 2023** there will be a change in the HPV vaccine schedule from **2 doses to 1 dose** in the routine adolescent programme and GBMSM programme for everyone under the age of 25 years of age.
3. This policy change is outside the terms of the Gardasil 9 vaccine product licence but is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) who have concluded that single-dose schedules provide comparable efficacy to the 2- or 3- dose regimens. The Green Book Chapter 18a will be updated to reflect the change.
4. This letter is aimed at health professionals who are responsible for commissioning and operationally delivering the Northern Ireland HPV vaccination programme, including the GBMSM HPV vaccination programme. We encourage you to share this guidance with all those involved in delivering the programme in your organisation.
5. There is no change to the eligibility criteria for the programme. Key points about the change to the programme are:
 - From **September 2023**, those individuals who would have been eligible to receive 2 doses of HPV vaccine (i.e. anyone in school year 9 to under 25 years of age¹, including GBMSM) who are completely unvaccinated), will only require **1 dose** to be considered fully vaccinated.
 - a 2-dose schedule from the age of 25 in the GBMSM programme will continue;
 - a 3-dose schedule for individuals who are immunosuppressed or those known to be HIV-positive will continue.
6. Individuals to whom this change applies and who start the HPV vaccination programme prior to September 2023 will be advised that they are effectively protected with one dose and that a second dose will therefore not be required. This will include those individuals who have already consented for a second dose.
7. School nurses will provide the required dose during school year 9 and will provide an opportunity for catch-up throughout years 9 and 10. Those adolescents who miss both opportunities to be vaccinated while in years 9 or 10 can be given the vaccination by their GP on request.

¹ Females born on or after 2 July 1991 and males born on or after 2 July 2006 see [HSS\(MD\) 16/2009](#)

8. Accurate recording of all vaccines given, and good management of all associated documentation, is essential.
9. The provider must ensure that information on vaccines administered, including the product name of the vaccine administered, i.e., Gardasil 9, is recorded on the appropriate system for the purposes of updating the patient's record and uptake surveillance, in line with current practice. For those under the age of 19, this must be recorded on the unscheduled immunisations (CHS7) form and returned to the local Child Health Office.
10. Information provided in the annexes of this letter:
Annex A - detailed information and guidance for healthcare professionals
Annex B - vaccine coverage data collection
Annex C - supporting programme resources
11. If you have any further queries, in the first instance please email pha.immunisation@hscni.net
12. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in commissioning and operationally delivering the HPV vaccination programme and the GBMSM HPV vaccination programme. These programmes are vital in helping to reduce the risk of individuals developing certain types of cancer later in life.

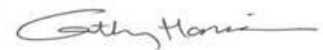
Yours sincerely



Prof Sir Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



PP (Deputy CNO)
Maria McIlgorm
Chief Nursing Officer



Mrs Cathy Harrison
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>

CIRCULATION LIST

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Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, SPPG (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*)
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Trade Union Side
Clinical Advisory Team
Louise McMahon, Director of Integrated Care, SPPG

Annex A - detailed information and guidance for healthcare professionals

1. This guidance is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) the UK's independent advisory committee of immunisation experts.
2. The committee has been considering the mounting evidence about protection from a single dose of HPV vaccine since 2018 and has been considering the issue of a potential change in the vaccine schedule to one dose of the HPV vaccine during this time. The first major review of a one-dose schedule took place in June 2020.
3. After a further review of the latest evidence on one-dose schedules in December 2021 the committee issued an interim statement for consultation on 10 February 2022.
4. At that time the committee agreed that there was enough evidence to advise a change in the schedule from 2 doses to one dose of HPV vaccine in the routine adolescent programme for children and young people aged up to (and including) 14 years of age. This advice was interim, pending a stakeholder consultation. The consultation ran for 6 weeks.
5. The HPV subcommittee met on 17 May 2022 to review the stakeholders' responses and reported its findings at the June 2022 JCVI meeting. In August 2022 JCVI considered it was ready to conclude its advice on this issue and the statement setting out the key aspects and final conclusions of the committee can be accessed [here](#).

Timing

6. **From 1st September 2023** there will be a change in the HPV vaccine schedule from **2 doses to 1 dose** in the routine adolescent programme and GBMSM programme before their 25th birthday.

Vaccine supply

7. UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) will continue to supply vaccine for the HPV vaccination programmes in the usual way. Please consider the schedule change when placing orders for HPV vaccine, and make sure that locally held stocks of vaccine are rotated in fridges so that wastage is minimised. Vaccine for uses not covered by the routine HSC schedule should be procured locally.

Patient Group Directions (PGDs)

8. The regional HPV PGD produced by SPPG/PHA will be updated to reflect this change.

Information and guidance for healthcare professionals and patients

9. Detailed clinical guidance on HPV vaccination is contained in chapter 18a of Immunisation Against Infectious Disease (the Green Book). Please note a revised HPV chapter will be published in due course to reflect those changes to the programme.
10. Healthcare professional information and guidance to support the HPV programme including a training slide set will be updated in due course to reflect the above change and become available on the Public Health Agency's website and SharePoint.
11. Updated patient information materials will be available on the Public Health Agency's website in due course.

Annex B - vaccine coverage data collection

12. This change will not impact on the vaccine coverage collection for the school-based adolescent HPV vaccination programme in any way.
13. HPV vaccination uptake collections for the GBMSM HPV vaccination programme will not be significantly impacted by the change announced in this letter.

Annex C – supporting programme resources

Health professional guidance

[HPV vaccination guidance for healthcare practitioners](#)

Patient facing resources

[Universal HPV leaflet](#)