

**FROM:**

NR

**COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Branch**

**DATE:** 16 February 2021

**TO:** Minister Swann

**COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME – NEXT PRIORITY GROUP AND  
MAXIMISING USE OF THE REGIONAL VACCINATION CENTRES.**

<b>ISSUE:</b>	To maximize use of capacity at the regional vaccination centers it is proposed to open up the booking system to a number of cohorts and move into priority group 6.
<b>TIMING:</b>	Urgent
<b>PRESENTATIONAL ISSUES</b>	The vaccination programme is attracting significant media interest and the issue of cost is likely to attract further coverage. Cleared by Press Office (PC) 15/2/21
<b>FOI IMPLICATIONS</b>	Fully disclosable
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	None.
<b>EXECUTIVE REFERRAL</b>	Not required
<b>LEGISLATION IMPLICATIONS</b>	None.
<b>EQUALITY/HUMAN RIGHTS/RURAL NEEDS IMPLICATIONS</b>	None.
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	That you agree to the expansion of the vaccination programme as outlined below.

**Introduction**

1. At present GPs are vaccinating priority group 4 which includes those aged 70-74 and CEV patients. This was part of a twin track approach which also saw those aged 65-69 years of age (priority group 5) being invited to book a vaccination slot at one of the regional vaccination centres.

2. While around 60,000 people within the 65-69 age cohort took up this invitation demand for vaccination slots has now reduced. On Friday 12 February it was agreed to open the online booking platform to any CEV patients who had yet to be offered vaccination by their GP. Since then around 6,000 people have booked a vaccination slot but the regional vaccination centres will have spare capacity from the 18 February based on current predictions.
3. We have now looked at further options which would allow more people to access the regional vaccination centres and also allow GPs and Trusts to start inviting people from priority group 6 (clinically vulnerable individuals and carers).
4. The options considered are set out below:

	<b>Description/ Priority Group</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
1	Age cohort 60-64 years (priority group 7)	Easily identified and called 106k total but some already vaccinated	• Out of priority order	Not yet recommended
2	Call out to CEV group with shielding letters (priority group 4): • All CEV (18-64 years - 95k) • 16-17 year olds unable to have AZ	• Priority group • Self identification • Booking immediately • Able to evidence eligibility	• GPs in process of calling & some already done • Not booking into Trust centres & low uptake • Many prefer to go to GPs	In progress
3	Clinically vulnerable (Priority group 6)	• Priority group	• Known to GPs • No easy access to identify by Trusts	Next cohort for GPs to commence

4	Carers (Priority group 6)	<p>Able to evidence those with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carers allowance (50k)</li> <li>• carers credit (25k)</li> <li>• Care partners (1k)</li> <li>• Carer of child with statement of special educational need (19k)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large cohort (220k potential)</li> <li>• Calling only part of the cohort</li> </ul>	Defined group to be called for Trust vaccination centres
5	2 <sup>nd</sup> doses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily identified and called</li> <li>• Allows time to refine cohort 6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of order</li> </ul>	Only used in exceptional circumstances to avoid waste of vaccine

5. Following discussions with Trusts and GP liaison leads from the HSCB we propose to expand the vaccination programme as follows:

- Anyone aged 65 years and over who has not yet been invited to receive the vaccine by their GP should be allowed to book a vaccination slot at one of the regional vaccination centres.
- GPs will continue to vaccinate anyone aged 70 years or over but they will also move to priority group 6 and invite adults aged 18 to 64 years who are clinically vulnerable to receive the vaccine, as vaccine supplies permit.
- GPs can vaccinate patients aged 65+ or CEV patients who the GP considers cannot reasonably attend the vaccination centres.

- A public call out will be issued to those carers who are in receipt of Carer's Allowance, Carer's Credit or are a registered care home Care Partner to book a vaccination slot at one of the regional vaccination centres. Following advice from social care colleagues we believe that providing proof of receipt of carer's allowance or credit will be difficult and therefore propose to rely on self identification. In order to try and manage this we propose to invite people based on their age. We will initially invite those carers aged between 60-64 years of age. Subject to the response and feedback from the centres we will then move to 55-59 year olds and then 50-55 year olds etc.
- Further work will be undertaken to help identify how carers, who are not in receipt of any of the allowances mentioned above but would class themselves as a carer, may be offered the vaccine by GPs.

6. This course of action will keep us in line with GB as everyone in priority groups 1-4 will then have either received an invite for vaccination from their GP or have had access to the booking platform to arrange a vaccination slot. Unlike GB this will also apply to priority group 5.

### **Recommendation**

7. That you agree to the expansion of the vaccination programme as outlined above.

**NR**

**COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Branch**

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**Prepared by** **NR**

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