Questions and Answers:

Vaccinations’ videoconference 4th October 21

Questions from parents and carers were answered by our panel of:

Dudu Sher-Ami: Acting Director of Public Health Enfield

Belinda Danso-Langley: Neurodevelopmental Community Paediatric Service Lead (covering immunisations)

Dr Ogechukwu Ilozue: GP Partner and Trainer and Clinical Advisor to the Covid Vaccination programme

The vaccinations programme for age 12 – 15-year-olds is currently being delivered in schools, and all relevant schools will now have been notified.

Vaccinations are only given when parental consent has been provided and parents have the right to withdraw consent up until the point when the vaccination is given.

The schools will send information about the dates to parents including asking questions about medical issues including allergies and health conditions, and whether the child has had Covid-19 within the last month (in which case the appointment will be re-booked, which may be in a community clinic rather than the school).

In special schools, school nurses will be present for the vaccination sessions and can provide support for children as needed. Arrangements can also be made for parents to be present to help the child if that is needed and the school agree.

The contact details for the immunisations team are Beh-tr.enfieldimmunisationteam@nhs.net Tel: 0208 702 3324.

#  General

1. Will the vaccinations be delivered in school, or do I need to book an appointment through my GP?

The vaccinations programme for age 12 – 15 is being delivered in schools, and schools will contact parents – there is no need to book an appointment or contact your GP.

# Reasonable adjustments

1. My child has a needle-phobia – what can be done to make the vaccination process manageable for her?

The vaccinations team have been trained by CAMHS and undertake refresher training each year, so they are very experienced in dealing with needle-phobias (for adults as well as children and young people). They can use a variety of different techniques including distraction techniques and verbalising. If a child refuses vaccination on the day, experienced staff can return to administer the vaccination on a different occasion.

1. My son has learning difficulties and doesn’t fully understand why he needs to be vaccinated. How can I explain this to him?

Within schools there will be a wide range of levels of understanding and the vaccinations team will liaise with clinical psychologists, speak to teachers and communicate with parents to understand the child’s level of understanding. The CYP Immunisation team also work with the Speech and Language team and so are able to use appropriate tools such as communications mats. It is also possible to arrange for parents to be present at the vaccination to give support if needed.

There are some easy read tools which can be used by parents as an aid to explaining the vaccination to their children – [see here](https://www.ourvoiceenfield.org.uk/news/show/149).

1. I am worried about how my Autistic son will cope with receiving the vaccination – I think he will find it extremely stressful. How can he be supported to make it as stress-free as is possible?

Vaccinations can be delivered in an environment that is comfortable for the child. This may be the school which will be a familiar environment for the child, or a different location such as at home. The community paediatrics team will generally know the children well and be able to support adapting the experience to whatever is needed for the individual.

# Safety issues with allergies and other medications and conditions

1. My daughter has serious (anaphylactic) food allergies. I have heard that people with allergies should not have the Pfizer vaccine – is this correct? I understand that 12 – 15-year-olds will normally receive the Pfizer – would there be an exception to this for a child with allergies and do I need to make separate arrangements myself?

Although some concerns were raised at the outset of the overall vaccination programme, in fact the experience has been that individuals with allergies have not suffered adverse reactions, and the vaccination is now considered safe for individuals with food or other allergies, with the exception of those with an allergy to PEG which is an ingredient in the Pfizer vaccine.

The immunisation team will always check on any allergies before giving the vaccination, and if there are any concerns the individual can be re-directed to the specialist allergy clinic.

Precautions are in place in case of any adverse reaction including a 15-minute observation period and the team are trained in resuscitation.

1. My son has several serious health conditions. How can I be sure that the vaccine will be safe for him?

In general. there have been very few issues relating to health conditions and vaccines and the benefits generally outweigh any risks, since the risks associated with catching Covid-19 are more likely to be serious for those with serious health conditions.

You should talk to your own Consultant/Doctor/Clinician about any possible issues relating to your child’s specific health issues.

1. My child is Epileptic and has ASD and ADHD. Therefore, he takes a lot of medication. Can he have this vaccine?

# If you have any concerns, you should talk to your child's consultant or GP about any possible issues.  The immunisation team will ask about current medication and any known allergies before administering the vaccine. The vast majority of people, including those on multiple medications have received the vaccine with no serious adverse effects.

# Under 12-year-olds

1. My daughter will be 12 soon but only 11 when the vaccine is due to be given at her school. What will happen about her vaccination?

For those children who have their 12th birthdays after the vaccinations are delivered at their schools, but before half-term, additional sessions will be set up during half-term.

For those with birthdays after the 1st of November, the plan has not yet been confirmed but we expect there to be a rolling programme which will provide vaccinations to these children after they turn 12.

1. Are there any situations where 11-year-olds can be vaccinated?

Currently the guidance from the JCVI does not allow for the vaccination of children under the age of 12.

# Boosters for parents

1. As a carer to my daughter will I get a booster jab and if so, how do I get this booked?

Booster vaccinations are being done separately, and the programme has already begun roll-out across eligible groups. You should expect to hear about 6 months after your second-dose vaccination. If you were originally contacted by your GP, they should contact you. If you originally booked via the national service, you can use the same route to check if you are now eligible to book. It is important to make sure that your local GP record has the information about your first and second vaccines. There are also walk-in sites available for those who are due for their boosters.