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Dear Colleague

DETAILS OF THE 2017-18 SHINGLES (HERPES ZOSTER) VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Introduction

1. The 2017-18 shingles programme will run from 1 September 2017 until 31 August 2018. The programme is aimed primarily at:

- People aged 70* years (routine)
- People aged 76* years (catch up)

* this is defined by the patient's age on 1st September 2017

2. In line with previous years, those who were eligible for the programme from the start (and who did not previously take up the offer of vaccination) can still be vaccinated. This includes those aged 71-74 (inclusive) and 77 to 79 (inclusive) – see **Annex B** for further detail on dates of birth. Vaccine should not be offered to anyone aged over 80, even if they have previously been eligible, as efficacy of the vaccine declines with age.

Live Vaccine

3. Zostavax® is the only shingles vaccine with market authorisation available in the UK. It contains **live, attenuated virus** derived from the Oka/Merck strain of varicella zoster virus. **This vaccine is contraindicated in some patients (eg immunosuppressed).**

Administration

4. The Zostavax® vaccine can be administered by intramuscular (IM) or subcutaneous (SC) injection, preferably in the deltoid region of the upper arm. Intramuscular injection is the preferred route of administration, as injection-site adverse reactions were significantly less frequent in those who received the vaccine via this route of administration. For individuals with a bleeding disorder, Zostavax should be given by deep subcutaneous injection to reduce the risk of bleeding. The vaccine must not be given intravascularly.

5. An easy to use tool has been created to help with eligibility and screening for contraindications for use by healthcare practitioners. This tool can be accessed at: <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/pubs/detail.aspx?id=1650>.

From the Chief Medical Officer
Chief Nursing Officer
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Dr Catherine Calderwood
Professor Fiona McQueen
Dr Rose Marie Parr

8 August 2017

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Addressees

For action

NHS Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Immunisation Coordinators
NHS Board Medical Directors
Nurse Directors, NHS Boards
Primary Care Leads, NHS Boards
Directors of Public Health
Infectious Disease Consultants
General Practitioners
Practice Nurses
Health Visitors
CPHMs
Scottish Prison Service
Scottish Ambulance Service

For information

Directors of Pharmacy
Consultant Physicians
Health Protection Scotland
Chief Executive, NHS Health Scotland
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Scottish General Practitioners Committee

Further Enquiries

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Medical Issues

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Pharmaceutical and Vaccine Supply

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Green Book

6. The Green Book chapter can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-herpes-zoster-the-green-book-chapter-28a>.

7. Vaccination can be administered at any time of the year – it does not need to be given at the same time as seasonal flu vaccination. If GP practices decide to offer the shingles vaccine at the same time as the flu vaccine, **please be aware that the contraindications for the two vaccines are different.**

Uptake Rates in 2016-17

8. The cumulative uptake in Scotland for the 2016-17 programme (September to May inclusive) are:

- **44.4%** for the age 70 cohort (compared to 51.9% May 2016)
- **37.3%** for the age 76 cohort
- **40.8%** for the age 77 cohort
- **41.2%** for the age 78 cohort (compared to 48.3% May 2016)

Action

9. Recipients are asked to note the contents of this letter, and to take action as necessary to support this important programme

10. **Annex A** to this letter provides some additional detail and **Annex B** outlines the relevant dates of birth for those eligible.

11. Thanks to you and your practice staff for your support in continuing to deliver this important vaccination programme.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Calderwood
Chief Medical Officer

Fiona McQueen
Chief Nursing Officer

Rose Marie Parr
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Annex A

2017-18 SHINGLES (HERPES ZOSTER) VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Eligibility

1. Vaccination should be offered to people aged 70 years – this is the routine programme. We are continuing the catch-up immunisation programme in 2017-18 for people aged 76 years (as at 1 September 2017)

- The routine cohort for those **aged 70** in 2017/18 is defined by the patient's age on 1st September 2017. Those born between 2 September 1946 and 1 September 1947 should be offered the vaccine in the 2017/18 routine programme.
- The catch-up cohort for those **aged 76** in 2017/18 is defined by the patient's age on 1st September 2017. Those born between 2 September 1940 and 1 September 1941 should be offered vaccine in the 2017/18 catch-up programme.

2. NHS Boards and GP practices are reminded of their responsibilities in the vaccination of eligible persons who are housebound and those in care homes and long-term hospital care.

Vaccine Supply

3. Central vaccine supply of Zostavax® must only be used for those in the eligible cohorts.

Call Up

4. There will be no centralised letter for this programme. We encourage all GP practices to provide call and recall by way of a letter, to make their patients aware they are eligible for vaccine. A template letter will be available from 1 September 2017 to help with this (see <http://www.healthscotland.com/shingles>). Leaflets are also provided to GP practices to accompany letters.

Aimed at Health Practitioners: Eligibility screening tool for contraindications for shingles vaccine

5. As noted earlier in the letter, to help with eligibility and minimise the potential for vaccination errors, a screening tool is available to support the programme. This provides a series of questions to help assess whether an individual should be offered the shingles vaccine. This tool can be accessed at <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/immvax/resourcedetail.aspx?id=1650>

Aimed at General Public: Ready Reckoner for checking age eligibility

6. To help raise awareness of the programme an online ready reckoner tool for members of the public to check their age eligibility for the shingles vaccine is available. This appears on the NHS Immunisation Scotland website <http://www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/vaccines-and-diseases/shingles.aspx>. The ready reckoner for checking age eligibility will be available to use from 1 September 2017.

Vaccine Usage

7. Full details on use, dosage, administration, concomitant administration with other vaccines, contraindications, consent and reporting of adverse reactions with Zostavax® is set out in the chapter 28a on Shingles (Herpes Zoster) This is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-herpes-zoster-the-green-book-chapter-28a>.

Patient Group Direction (PGD)

8. A national specimen Patient Group Direction (PGD) for administration of Zostavax® is available on the Health Protection Scotland website at: <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/immvax/pgd.aspx>.

Supply

9. Zostavax® should be ordered through NHS vaccine holding centres. GP practices and vaccine holding centres must liaise closely to ensure sufficient vaccine availability prior to the scheduling of

immunisation appointments. GP practices should ensure that stock with the shortest expiry date is used first to preserve vaccine supplies.

Storage

10. Vaccines should be stored in the original packaging at +2°C to +8°C and protected from light. All vaccines may be sensitive to some extent to heat and cold. Heat speeds up the decline in potency of most vaccines, thus reducing their shelf life. Do not freeze. Freezing may cause increased reactivity and loss of potency for some vaccines. It can also cause hairline cracks in the container, leading to contamination of the contents.

Vaccine Stock Management

11. Please ensure sufficient fridge space is available for the vaccine. Each site holding vaccine is asked to review current stocks of all vaccines. No more than 2 to 4 weeks of stock is recommended, and higher stock levels should be reduced to this level. A review of available fridge space will be necessary to ensure adequate storage capacity at the start of the programme.

12. Effective management of vaccines throughout the supply chain is essential to reduce vaccine wastage, including the use of appropriate cool boxes/bags for transporting the vaccine during home/care home visits. Local protocols should be in place to reduce vaccine wastage to a minimum. Even small percentage reductions in vaccine wastage will have a major impact on the financing of vaccine supplies.

Reporting of Adverse Reactions

13. Suspected adverse reactions (ADR) to vaccines should be reported via the Yellow Card Scheme (www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard). Chapter 9 of the Green Book gives detailed guidance about which ADRs to report and how to do so. Additionally, Chapter 8 of the Green Book provides detailed advice on managing ADRs following immunisation. Information on the side effects of Zostavax® is available in Chapter 28a of the Green Book. These chapters are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/series/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>.

GP Contractual Arrangements

14. Please refer to PCA(M)(2017)03 for information on payments associated with the shingles vaccination programme. This is available at: <http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/publications/>.

Communication Materials for the Public

15. Information leaflets and posters will again be made available to GP practices to support this immunisation programme and to help inform the general public. The supply of public facing materials will start arriving at GP practices the week commencing 4 September 2017.

16. These materials will be available to view online from 1 September 2017 at www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/shingles.

17. The leaflet will also be available in Urdu, Chinese and Polish, and in Easy Read format. NHS Health Scotland is happy to consider requests for other languages and formats. Please contact 0131 314 5300 or email nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net.

Workforce Education Materials

18. NHS Education for Scotland in partnership with Health Protection Scotland has produced educational resources for registered healthcare practitioners. These resources will be available at <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/public-health/health-protection/immunisation/shingles.aspx>.

Age on 1 st September 2017	2017-18 programme: Patient's date of birth is:	
69	02/09/1947 or later	Ineligible
70	02/09/1946 to 01/09/1947	New routine cohort
71	02/09/1945 to 01/09/1946	Mop up cohort from previous years – to be offered vaccine
72	02/09/1944 to 01/09/1945	
73	02/09/1943 to 01/09/1944	
74	02/09/1942 to 01/09/1943	
75*	02/09/1941 to 01/09/1942	Ineligible
76	02/09/1940 to 01/09/1941	New catch up cohort
77	02/09/1939 to 01/09/1940	Mop up cohort from previous years – to be offered vaccine
78	02/09/1938 to 01/09/1939	
79	02/09/1937 to 01/09/1938	
80	02/09/1936 to 01/09/1937	Ineligible

* Those born between 2 September 1941 and 1 September 1942 (both dates inclusive) may be eligible in 2018