

## Increasing Vaccine Uptake

We continue to make good progress in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. I am pleased to report that we have met our target to offer a second dose of the vaccine to all those over the age of 18 by 12 September, as well as our target to offer a first dose to all 12 to 17-year-olds at higher risk of COVID-19 by the end of August. To date, Scotland has vaccinated 92% of adults aged 18 and over with first doses and 86% with second doses. We have also now provided 71% of all 16 and 17-year-olds, and 12% of all 12 to 15-year-olds with a first dose of the vaccine.

In line with the most recent advice from the JCVI and the Chief Medical Officer, drop-in clinics for 12 to 15-year-olds began on 20 September. Blue letters offering Covid vaccination appointments are now being sent out to 12 to 15-year-olds.

Appointments for COVID-19 booster vaccinations are now also being scheduled, to be co-administered with seasonal flu vaccinations where possible. Since 21 September, health and social care workers have been able to book their booster appointment using the [online portal](#) on the NHS Inform website. Additionally, appointments for third primary doses for the severely immunosuppressed are being scheduled from 27 September.

Regarding vaccine uptake, it should be noted that we are still in the active delivery stage of the vaccination programme. Due to the current infection rates in the community, a substantial number of young people will need to reschedule their appointment offer, as vaccination cannot take place sooner than 28 days after a positive COVID-19 test, and many individuals are self-isolating. This will impact on the uptake rate for this cohort in the short term, but the offer of vaccination will of course remain open to individuals beyond 28 days.

We recognise, however, that vaccine hesitancy in some communities does exist. We continue to gather and share insights on vaccination uptake and reasons for hesitancy and work with Health Boards, faith and community groups and the third sector to find new approaches and solutions. Our Vaccine Inclusive Steering Group meets regularly to advise on inclusive policy and delivery and is a forum for a range of partners to share practice and learning. We also use data to inform our approach including Public Health Scotland's regular publication on uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination by ethnicity and deprivation.

We have ensured our COVID-19 vaccination communications are suitable for everyone in Scotland, with the production of translated information and assets in a range of languages on NHS Inform and the development of our vaccine explainer video, informed by insights from organisations representing various under-served.

All NHS Boards have dedicated inclusion plans within the vaccination programme, outlining how they will actively offer vaccination to people who may face barriers in taking up the vaccine. Some examples of outreach include offering vaccinations in places of worship, in other community settings, providing concessionary bus travel to appointments and working with community leaders to promote uptake.

We are working to make it as simple as possible for people to get their vaccines and are increasing the options available for how and when people choose to be vaccinated, such as drop-in clinics. We have engaged with the public, particularly young people, in a variety of ways, including social media, to make sure they have access to the correct information on vaccines.

In addition, health boards are striving to maximise vaccine uptake by supporting outreach in food banks, religious centres and workplaces, and we are working with large employers to encourage uptake among their staff. There is a wide range of places to get vaccinated including at drop-in mobile centres which have visited a range of sites such as football grounds, parks, workplaces and shopping centres. We continue to urge everyone to come forward to get their first and second doses, as every jab helps to curb transmission and reduce death and serious illness.

Further information on our efforts to make the vaccination programme as inclusive as possible can be found in the Scottish Government's [vaccine deployment plan](#).