

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride

HSS(MD)16/2019



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

For Action:

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and
Social Care Board/HSC Trusts/NIAS
GP Medical Advisers, Health and Social Care Board
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (*for onward
distribution to practice staff*)

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)16/2019

Date: 4 July 2019

Dear Colleague

EXTENSION OF HPV VACCINATION PROGRAMME TO BOYS AGED 12/13 YEARS OF AGE

ACTION REQUIRED

Chief Executives must ensure that this information is drawn to the attention of all staff involved in the school health service.

The HSCB must ensure that this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners and Practice Managers for onward distribution to all primary care staff.

Introduction

1. The purpose of this letter is to provide information about the extension of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme to include boys aged 12/13 years of age from September 2019.
2. The decision follows new scientific evidence and advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert committee, that advises the four UK Health Departments. JCVI have recommended that the existing HPV vaccination programme for adolescent girls should be extended to include adolescent boys as well.
3. Key points about the programme:

- The same vaccine that is currently used for the girls' programme (Gardasil®, (which protects against HPV types 6,11,16 & 18)) will be used for the universal programme.
- Gardasil® should be offered routinely to all individuals in school year 9 (age 12 and 13 years) born from 2 July 2006 to 1 July 2007, through the school based programme.
- For practical reasons, any individual in school year 9¹, (regardless of their date of birth), should be offered HPV immunisation.
- A second dose should be offered within the same school year (separated by a minimum of 6 months).
- Individuals who were not vaccinated while in school year 9 will be offered the vaccine again while they are in school year 10. This already applies to girls but will only start to apply to boys from September 2020.
- A catch-up programme for older boys will not be offered (i.e. anyone in year 10 and above in September 2019).
- Those eligible for vaccination will remain eligible until their 25th birthday.

4. Additional information will be available in the form of:

- A revised information leaflet is available on the PHA Immunisation webpage.
- A revised factsheet for health professionals: *Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Immunisation Programme: Factsheet for healthcare practitioners*⁷ is available on the PHA Immunisation webpage.
- Further detailed clinical guidance for healthcare professionals is attached at **Annex A**.
- The HPV chapter of the Green Book (*Immunisation against infectious disease*) is due to be updated in July and will be available here: [Human papillomavirus chapter of the Green Book](#)
Health Professionals should familiarize themselves with the latest version of the Green Book prior to beginning to vaccinate.
- The JCVI statement about HPV vaccination and expansion to boys is available at: [JCVI statement: extending the HPV vaccination programme – conclusions](#)
- An updated patient group direction template from the PHA/HSCB will be available in due course through the normal distribution mechanism.

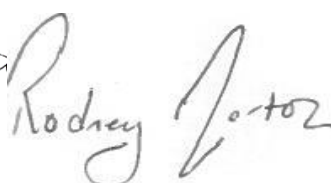
¹ This includes any individual who is eligible to be in, or is in school year 9.

5. The vaccination programme is expected to help prevent additional cases of HPV-attributable anal, penile and oropharyngeal cancers in men. It is also expected to prevent additional cases of HPV-attributable cervical and non-cervical cancer in women, particularly in unvaccinated girls, and additional cases of anogenital warts.
6. Once the universal programme begins from September 2019, it has now been agreed that those eligible to receive the vaccine will remain eligible until they turn 25 years of age. Therefore should an eligible individual not receive the vaccine via the school health service for whatever reason, they can approach their GP to seek the vaccine. For boys this will initially only be those born from 2 July 2006 to 1 July 2007, with the lower age range increasing as each subsequent school year becomes eligible. GPs can claim the normal Item of Service fee for any eligible individual who seeks the HPV vaccine in this way.
7. Supplies of the HPV vaccine (Gardasil) can be ordered in the normal way.
8. It is important to note that the national cervical screening programme for women remains essential to the prevention of cervical cancer and will remain unchanged following the extension of the HPV vaccination programme to boys. It is vital to ensure that cervical screening rates remain high. Immunisation will not protect against all the HPV types that cause cervical cancer.
9. We do not underestimate the additional work the introduction of the universal HPV programme will bring, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved for their continuing hard work in delivering immunisation programmes to school-aged young people. The extended programme builds on the success of Northern Ireland's HPV vaccination programme for girls and also the HPV programme for men who have sex with men (MSM) introduced in 2016 and delivered through Trust Genitourinary Medicine services. We can now look forward to a future where we can be even more confident that we will reduce cervical cancer and other HPV related cancers that affect both men and women.

Yours sincerely



Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



PP Rodney Morton
Deputy Chief Nursing Officer
Professor Charlotte McArdle
Chief Nursing Officer



PP Chris Garland
Senior Principal
Pharmaceutical Officer
Cathy Harrison
Acting Chief Pharmaceutical
Officer

Annex A

Clinical guidance on immunisation of school-year 9 boys against human papillomavirus infection

1. This guidance is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI)¹, the UK's independent advisory committee of immunisation experts. Full guidance can be found in the updated chapter on human papillomavirus included in *Immunisation against infectious disease* ('the Green Book')².
2. The vaccine will be offered to boys, in addition to girls, in school year 9 (12 – 13 year olds) as part of the school-based immunisation programme from 1 September 2019. The vaccine will be available to order in the normal way from the beginning of August 2019.
 - The first dose can be given at any time during the school year and in previous years has been given during the first school term (September to December).
 - The **minimum** time between the first and second dose should be six months (where the priming dose is received at less than 15 years of age); previously given during the third school term.
 - The **maximum** time between the first and second dose is 24 months. Boys and girls that missed HPV vaccination during Year 9 will be offered the vaccine again by the school health team during Year 10, as in previous years.
 - If the first dose is given before the age of 15 years the two-dose schedule can be followed. If the course is interrupted, it should be resumed but not repeated, even if more than 24 months have elapsed since the first dose.

¹ JCVI statement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jcvi-statement-extending-the-hpv-vaccination-programme-conclusions>

² Green Book chapter: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-papillomavirus-hpv-the-green-book-chapter-18a>

- Individuals in eligible cohorts who have not had their first dose of HPV vaccine by the time they are 15 years old should be offered a three-dose schedule. This is because the antibody response in older individuals is not quite as good. The three doses should be offered on a 0, 1 and 4 - 6 month schedule.

Patient Group Directions

3. An updated patient group direction template from the PHA/HSCB will be available in due course.

Information for parents, young people and health professionals

4. Patient information leaflets and posters are being produced for young people and parents, to support the expansion of the vaccine programme. They will be distributed by the PHA to Trust School Health Services in due course.
5. The HPV chapter of the Green Book (*Immunisation against infectious disease*) is due to be updated in July and will be available here: [Human papillomavirus chapter of the Green Book](#)³ Health Professionals should familiarize themselves with the latest version of the Green Book prior to beginning to vaccinate.
6. PHA has produced the document: “*Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Immunisation Programme: Factsheet for healthcare practitioners*” which will provide information and answers to commonly asked questions in relation to programme eligibility, scheduling and vaccine administration. The document is available on the PHA webpage.
7. The HPV vaccine information for parents and young people on the NI Direct has been updated and is available here:

³ Green Book chapter:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-papillomavirus-hpv-the-green-book-chapter-18a>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/hpv-vaccine-adolescents-aged-12-13-years-old>⁴

8. A training slide set will be made available on the PHA Immunisation webpage from July 2019.

⁴ Information for parents and young people:
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/hpv-vaccine-adolescents-aged-12-13-years-old>