

**From the Chief Medical Officer  
Professor Sir Michael McBride**



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Männystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

**HSS(MD) 07/2026**

**For Action:**

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/HSC Trusts/ NIAS  
Chief Operating Officer, SPPG

GP Medical Advisers, All General Practitioners and GP

Locums (*for onward distribution to practice staff*)

Community pharmacists (*for onward distribution to staff*)

OOHs Medical Managers (*for onward distribution to staff*)

RQIA (*for onward circulation to independent sector*

*health and social care providers*)

Castle Buildings

Stormont

BELFAST

BT4 3SQ

Tel: 028 9052 0563

Email: [cmooffice@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:cmooffice@health-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: HSS(MD) 07/2026

Date: 26 January 2026

**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST**

Dear Colleague

**END OF COVID-19 2025/26 CAMPAIGN AND DETAILS OF SPRING 2026  
VACCINATION CAMPAIGN**

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

Chief Executives must ensure this information is drawn to the attention of all staff involved in the:

- autumn/winter 2025/26 COVID-19 vaccination campaign and
- planning for the forthcoming COVID-19 spring 2026 vaccination campaign

The SPPG must ensure this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners, practice managers and community pharmacies for onward distribution to all staff involved in the:

- autumn/winter 2025/26 COVID-19 vaccination campaign and
- planning for the forthcoming COVID-19 spring 2026 vaccination campaign

The RQIA must ensure this information is cascaded to all Independent Sector Care Homes for onward distribution to all staff involved in planning for the COVID-19 spring 2026 vaccination campaign.

1. The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention two important information points, which are:

- that the COVID-19 autumn/winter 2025/26 vaccination campaign will officially end on the 31 January 2026; and
- the advice issued by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) with regards to the forthcoming spring 2026 COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

2. The current COVID-19 autumn/winter 2025/26 vaccination campaign, which began on the 6 October 2025, will officially come to an end on 31 January 2026.
3. Providers are not required to vaccinate those eligible for an autumn 2025/26 COVID-19 vaccination from that point onwards. Note the influenza autumn/winter 2025/26 vaccination campaign will continue as normal until 31 March 2026.

## SPRING 2026 COVID-19 CAMPAIGN

4. On 13 November 2024, JCVI published [advice on the COVID-19 vaccination programme for spring 2025, autumn 2025 and spring 2026](#). In line with JCVI advice, a COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to those in the population most vulnerable to serious outcomes from COVID-19 and who are therefore most likely to benefit from vaccination.
5. Eligibility remains the same as last year's spring campaign and therefore in Northern Ireland during spring 2026 vaccination should be offered to:
  - All adults aged 75 years (by 30 June 2026) or over;
  - residents in a care home for older adults (in NI this will apply to all residents of a care home for older adults);
  - individuals aged 6 months (by 30 June 2026) and over who are immunosuppressed (as defined in the 'immunosuppression' sections of tables 3 or 4 in the [COVID-19 chapter of the Green Book](#))
6. The Public Health Agency leads on the operational delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign and is working with providers to finalise the details of the spring 2026 campaign, but the vaccination campaign is expected to start by **20 April 2026** and the indicative date for completion is **30 June 2026**.
7. The Department is working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in England to progress amendments to the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 to support the ongoing supply and deployment of vaccinations across the UK. The proposed amendments include provisions that would replace Regulation 247A with a new permanent provision that would replace vaccination protocols with a new Vaccine Group Direction (VGD), developed and authorised by the relevant public health body in each of the UK nations and adapting the robust governance arrangements already in place for

PGDs. The proposed amendments are subject to consideration and approval by both Houses of Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Further information will be provided in due course.

8. As with previous spring COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, and subject to final agreement with NIGPC, GPs are expected to be asked to actively invite their eligible patients aged 75 years and older (i.e. those born on or before 30 June 1951), and those patients aged 18 years and older (i.e. those born on or before 30 June 2008), who are immunosuppressed, in for vaccination.
9. GPs will also issue a notification to their patients aged 5 to 17 years (i.e. those born between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2020) who are immunosuppressed, to advise they are eligible for vaccination, and they can attend a Trust led clinic to receive the vaccine.
10. Subject to final agreement with CPNI, community pharmacies are expected to pair with a care home and attend the home to offer vaccination to all residents. Community pharmacies should prioritise care home residents from the beginning of the spring booster programme.
11. In addition to being actively invited by their own GP, anyone aged 75 years or older or immunosuppressed individuals aged 18 years or older, also have the option to receive their vaccination via a participating community pharmacy.
12. Trusts will be responsible for the vaccination of eligible housebound patients from lists supplied by GPs. GPs should therefore make housebound referrals as early as possible in the programme to allow for planning of home visits and supply a list of their eligible housebound patients to their local Trust by 9 May 2026. Late referrals will lead to a delay in vaccination for these patients.
13. Trusts will identify and offer vaccination to those aged 6 months to 4 years with an immunosuppressed status (i.e. those born between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2025).
14. GPs should notify their patients aged 5 to 17 years who are immunosuppressed to advise they are eligible for vaccination via a Trust led clinic (as mentioned at paragraph 9).

#### Summary of spring 2026 delivery model:

<b>Eligible group:</b>	<b>Contacted by:</b>	<b>Can be vaccinated by:</b>
75 years and over	GP	GP/community pharmacy/Trust clinic
<b>Immunosuppressed:</b>		
• 18 years and over	GP	GP/community pharmacy/Trust clinic
• 5-17 years	GP	Trust clinic
• 6 months - 4 years	Trusts	Trust clinic
Care home residents	N/A	Community pharmacy

Eligible housebound	Trusts based on GP notifications	Trusts
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15. A small pool of Sessional Vaccinators who are employed by the Public Health Agency are available to support GPs and community pharmacies with administration of COVID-19 vaccines throughout the campaign. Further information on this workforce and requests for support can be raised by contacting [PHAVaccinesitrep@hscni.net](mailto:PHAVaccinesitrep@hscni.net).

16. The vaccine products to be used in the spring programme 2026 will be set out in [COVID-19: the green book chapter](#) alongside clinical advice on their use.

### Future COVID-19 vaccination campaigns

17. Population immunity to COVID-19 has increased due to a combination of naturally acquired immunity following recovery from infection and vaccine-derived immunity. COVID-19 is now a relatively mild disease for most people, though it can still be unpleasant, with rates of hospitalisation and death having reduced significantly since COVID-19 first emerged.

18. The focus of the programme is on vaccination of the oldest adults and individuals who are immunosuppressed. These are the two groups who continue to be at higher risk of serious disease, including mortality and therefore should be encouraged to take up the offer of vaccination.

19. Further advice will follow in due course on eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination in autumn/winter 2026/2027.

20. An operational letter from the PHA Immunisations team will be issued to vaccine service providers to advise on the vaccine type and strain, vaccine allocation, stock ordering, quotas, storage and distribution, and professional training resources in due course.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Sir Michael McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer

**Ms Maria McIlgorm**  
Chief Nursing Officer

**Professor Cathy Harrison**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

### Circulation List

Director of Public Health/Medical Director, Public Health Agency (*for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff*)  
 Assistant Director Public Health (Health Protection), Public Health Agency  
 Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency  
 Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, SPPG (*for onward distribution to SPPG Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team and community pharmacists*)

Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts  
Director of Social Care and Children, SPPG  
Family Practitioner Service Leads, SPPG (*for cascade to GP Out of Hours services*)  
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Consultants, Occupational Health Physicians and School Medical Leads*)  
Nursing Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Community Nurses, and Midwives*)  
Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts  
RQIA (*for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals*)  
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust  
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust  
Professor Kenda Crozier, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery QUB  
Andrea Shepherd, Head of School of Nursing, Ulster University  
Heather Finlay, Head of HSC Clinical Education Centre  
Maurice Devine, Open University  
Professor Paul McCarron, Head of School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Ulster University  
Professor Gavin Andrews, Head of School, School of Pharmacy, QUB  
Postgraduate Pharmacy Dean, NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development, QUB  
Michael Donaldson, Head of Dental Services, SPPG (*for distribution to all General Dental Practitioners*)  
Raymond Curran, Head of Ophthalmic Services, SPPG (*for distribution to Community Optometrists*)  
Trade Union Side  
Clinical Advisory Team  
Louise McMahon, Director of Integrated Care, SPPG  
Dr Camille Harron, NIMDTA  
Prof Pascal McKeown, QUB  
Prof Alan Smyth, QUB  
Prof Louise Dubras, Ulster University  
Dr Kathy Cullen, Director of the Centre for Medical Education at QUB

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>