

To: GP Practices
Community Pharmacies
HSC Trusts

7th September 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Operational detail: Autumn Influenza & COVID-19 vaccination programme 2026/27

We are writing to you regarding the Autumn Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 vaccination programme 2026/27 with further operational details to help you with your planning.

1. Eligible cohorts

Following the recently issued Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) autumn/winter flu and COVID-19 statements, DoH have confirmed the policy positions for both vaccine programmes via the HSS(MD) [Influenza](#) and [COVID-19](#) letters. The eligible cohorts for each vaccine programme are now confirmed as follows:

Flu	COVID-19
✓ All those aged 65 yrs. and over	✓ All those aged 75 yrs. and over
✓ Care home residents (long stay residential)	✓ Care home residents (for older adults)
✓ Those in <u>clinical risk groups</u> aged 6mths – 64 yrs.	✓ Those <u>immunosuppressed</u> aged 6mths – 74 yrs.
✓ Pregnant women	
✓ HSC workers	
✓ All pre-school children 2 – 4 yrs.	
✓ All primary school children	
✓ Secondary school children in yrs. 8-12	
✓ Carers	
✓ Close contacts of those immunosuppressed	
✓ High risk poultry/avian and cattle/swine animal health workers	
✓ Those experiencing homelessness – rough sleepers and homeless hostel users	

2. Timing and Delivery Model

This year, for the majority of eligible cohorts, the **Flu** vaccination programmes will commence from **Thursday 1st October 2026**. The reason for this is this is to ensure a higher degree of protection for vulnerable cohorts during the winter months where infection is likely to be at its peak.

The children's flu programme, and vaccines for pregnant women, are an exception to the October start date; vaccinations may start as soon as vaccine becomes available.

The Moderna Spikevax XFG was recently approved by MHRA on Tuesday 1st September. As a result, the PHA are still awaiting a confirmed date for the delivery of COVID-19 vaccine into Northern Ireland from UKHSA. **A further communication will be issued to providers confirming order dates for the Covid-19 vaccine and a start date for the programme.**

Providers will therefore have the option to commence flu vaccination for those cohorts who are not eligible for Covid-19.

Information on the delivery model and the eligible groups each service provider will vaccinate has been outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

3. Vaccine Type

Further information regarding vaccine characteristics can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

3.1: The COVID-19 vaccines procured by UKHSA are allocated as follows:

Vaccine Provider	Vaccine Type
GP Practices	Moderna Spikevax (XFG)
Community Pharmacies	Moderna Spikevax (XFG)
HSC Trusts	Moderna Spikevax (XFG) Comirnaty 30 (XFG) Adolescent Comirnaty 10 (XFG) Infant / paediatric
A limited supply of Bimervax LP.8.1 (non-mRNA vaccine) is also available to Trusts for use in mRNA contraindicated adults	

3.2: Adult influenza vaccines procured by PHA as per JCVI advice, are as follows:

Cohort	Vaccine Type
Aged 65 years and over, and those aged 18 to 64 yrs. in eligible groups	IIVc: Cell-based PFS (Seqirus)

3.3: Children's influenza vaccines procured by UKHSA are as follows:

Cohort	Vaccine Type
Aged 6 months to less than 2 yrs. in clinical risk groups	IIVc: Cell-based PFS (Seqirus) <i>*Off label use*</i>
Aged 2 yrs. to less than 18 yrs. in eligible groups (including clinical risk groups)	1. LAIV ¹ : Fluenz influenza vaccine nasal suspension (AstraZeneca) 2. IIVc ¹ : Cell-based PFS (Seqirus)

4. Ordering and Delivery Dates

4.1: Order opening dates

There will be a phased ordering system in operation. Service providers can begin to place orders with Movianto from the following dates:

Provider:	Orders open:	Deliveries from:
<u>Flu:</u> Trusts / GPs	<u>Mon 14th September</u> (10am)	Dispatching from <u>Mon 14th Sept.</u> <i>*Allow up to 5 working days for all initial orders from this date*</i>
<u>Flu:</u> Community Pharmacies	<u>Fri 25th September</u> (10am)	Dispatching from <u>Fri 25th Sept.</u> <i>*Allow up to 5 working days for all initial orders from this date*</i>
<u>COVID-19***</u> All providers	<u>Fri 25th September</u> (10am)	Dispatching from <u>Mon 28th Sept.</u> <i>*Allow up to 5 working days for all initial orders from this date*</i>

***Covid-19 orders open date is subject to vaccine arriving into Movianto before this date. Subject to change.

We encourage GPs who are holding clinics later in the programme to order vaccines closer to the date of their clinics and no more than 2 weeks before clinics are due to take place. This is to maximise vaccine shelf life and to avoid vaccine loss due to cold chain incidents.

4.2: Delivery Timeframes

Orders placed by 12pm on any working day will be delivered within 2 working days. However, in the initial stages it may take up to 5 working days to receive delivery.

¹ Where LAIV is contraindicated or otherwise unsuitable (e.g. patients object to LAIV on the grounds of its porcine gelatine content).

Please ensure you are ready to accept an order, once it is placed with Movianto – all orders must be signed for and drivers are unable to leave vaccine unattended.

Please allow enough time for vaccine ordering and delivery to ensure you have vaccine in stock for clinic. Approval for emergency orders for vaccine will be granted in exceptional circumstances only e.g. fridge malfunction and not due to orders being placed outside of the **ordering guidelines** [Appendix 3](#). There is a high cost involved with emergency orders which then impacts on the finances/budget of the vaccination programme.

Emergency deliveries can only be facilitated for flu vaccines (COVID-19 vaccines cannot be defrosted and dispatched same day)

4.3: Quotas

PHA procures vaccines for the NI public programme based upon data driven insights which include a number of factors such as previous uptake, population projections and within-programme residual waste.

PHA have allocated quotas for practices based on the number of administered vaccines recorded on VMS for the Autumn 2025/26 Programme:

Each provider's full flu quota will be available to order from the beginning of the 2026/27 programme. This quota is based on the all administered vaccines from last year's programme

Due to the short expiry date of the Spikevax vaccine (30 days from defrost), practices will be able to draw down 80% of their total quota initially with the remainder being held in Movianto for mop up clinics later in the programme.

For GP Practices, if your practice is planning a mop-up clinic, requests for additional vaccine will be considered once all vaccine has been administered and recorded on VMS or there have been patients **confirmed** to attend clinic and the number of vaccines remaining in practice will not cover the confirmed bookings. Requests for an uplift to vaccine quota can be made using the following form: [GP Influenza and Covid-19 Vaccine Uplift Request Form](#).

All uplift requests should be made via the MS Form and all enquiries to be directed to the new, dedicated pha.vaccinesupply@hscni.net email inbox for the purposes of the audit trail.

For split practices, quotas have been divided equally between each practice. If your practice requires a different split of the quota, please contact PHA pha.vaccine_supply@hscni.net to make amendments.

For Community Pharmacies, uplift requests can be made to SPPG CPVS (Community Pharmacy Vaccination Service) and will be considered once all vaccine has been administered and recorded on VMS.

Over-ordering leads to vaccine waste and increased costs to the programme each year.

5. Management of Cold Chain Incidents

Each year there is significant wastage and clinic disruption due to cold chain incidents. There are significant costs relating to vaccine purchase, therefore every effort is needed to ensure vaccine wastage is minimal.

While often talked about as fridge failures, in fact most are human error including leaving vaccines sitting out of the fridge or turning off the power supply. Please ensure that vaccine stock is placed promptly in the fridge when delivered by Movianto.

Please take time to check your cold chain processes are in line with the *Guidance for Vaccine Handling and Storage in GP Practices* document found on the PHA website using this [link](#), and ensure that your practice has appropriate contingency plans in place for planned and unplanned power outages.

All significant cold chain incidents, such as vaccines stored outside of the recommended temperature ranges, should be reported to local/regional HSC Trust Pharmacy Medicines Information [Appendix 4](#) and the PHA Health Protection Duty Room in the first instance.

Do not dispose of any vaccines until the appropriate advice has been sought.

For cold chain incidents occurring in:

- Community Pharmacies, please refer to the SPPG guidance via the BSO website using the following [link](#).
- HSC Trusts, please refer to local Trust standard operating procedures.

6. Recording Vaccinations

VMS will continue to be used to record vaccinations. Please ensure you record the correct eligibility cohort and vaccine for each patient. We ask that you update your records as soon as possible after clinics to reflect the vaccinations administered. This not only helps to inform uptake and subsequent public health action, but assists in the planning of vaccine deployment.

All Flu IIVc and LAIV vaccines can be written back to the GP system within 24 hours of recording on VMS and is LIVE for all GP practices.

For the new COVID vaccines these updates are in EMIS MKB 238, pending roll out to practices and testing by VMS team.

Writeback of all new vaccine products from VMS is validated using test data at nominated practices for Optum (EMIS). VMS will release communications regarding the successful testing of the new vaccine products.

Clinic Mode on VMS is aimed at reducing the time it takes to record vaccines for patients, especially clinics with large number of patients. This feature considerably **cuts down** the administrative time for GP practices and allows better management of clinics.

In addition, the following features are also available on VMS for staff:

- GP Dashboards
- Duplicate records Dashboard for GPs, Trusts & Pharmacies

* More information on these new features can be found on [Appendix 5](#)

7. Housebound patients

All eligible housebound patients should be referred by GPs to Trusts as soon as possible and no later than **30th September**.

We wish to remind GPs that, due to the changed eligibility for COVID-19 (i.e. 75s and over), GPs should provide Trust vaccination teams with 2 separate housebound referral lists, one for those patients eligible for both flu and COVID-19 and the other for those patients eligible for flu only.

8. Sessional vaccinator resource

As with previous programmes, the sessional vaccinator workforce is available from PHA to support the Autumn Vaccination Programme. To request support, please contact PHAvaccinesitrep@hscni.net.

9. Training and supporting materials

9.1: Professional training resources

Training and supporting materials will be available from the PHA prior to the start of the programme. Training slides for the autumn/winter 2026/27 programme will be available on the PHA website [Information for healthcare and other professionals | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

9.2: Patient information leaflets

Patient information leaflets have been developed and are available on the PHA website at [Publications | HSC Public Health Agency \(hscni.net\)](#) when available. Hard

copies will also be delivered to each provider. The table below summarises which materials will be available to each provider:

9.3: Social media resources

Providers can use PHA-developed social media assets and message to spread awareness and promote vaccination programmes. These resources will be updated throughout the programme, so please check the page regularly: [Social media resources for vaccination programmes | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

Should you have any further questions please contact pha.immunisation@hscni.net

Sincerely,

PHA Immunisation Team

Appendix 1: Delivery Model - Flu and COVID-19 Vaccines

Group / cohort	Flu: Vaccinated by	COVID-19: Vaccinated by
65yrs +	- GP (identifies and informs patient) - Community Pharmacy - Trust Vaccination Team	n/a
75yrs+	See 65yrs + as above	- GP (identifies and informs patient) - Community Pharmacy - Trust Vaccination Team
Care home residents	Community Pharmacy (visits care home)	Community Pharmacy (visits care home)
Clinical risk groups (6mths – < 2yrs)	GP (identifies and informs parent)	<u>**Immunosuppressed only**</u> Trust Vaccination Team (identifies and informs parent)
Clinical risk groups (2 – 17yrs)	- School nursing team - GP (Severely at risk who would benefit from earlier vaccination should be offered by GP. GPs can vaccinate 16-17yr olds) - Trust Vaccination Team	<u>**Immunosuppressed only**</u> Trust Vaccination Team (Trusts identify & inform parents up to 4yrs) (GPs identify & refer pts. 5-17yrs to Trust)
Clinical risk groups (18 – 64yrs)	- GP (issues invite to patient) - Community Pharmacy - Trust Vaccination Team	<u>**Immunosuppressed only**</u> - GP (identifies and informs patient) - Community Pharmacy - Trust Vaccination Team
Pregnant women	- GP (invites pt. if pregnancy known) - Trust Vaccination Team (antenatal vaccine clinics) - Community Pharmacy	n/a (unless immunosuppressed)
All pre-school children 2-4yrs	GP (issues invite to parent)	n/a
All primary school children	School Nursing Team	n/a
Secondary school children (to Yr. 12)	School Nursing Team	n/a
HSC workers (inc. care home staff)	- Trust Vaccination Team - Community Pharmacy (care home staff also alongside residents visit) - GPs (practice staff or HCWs otherwise eligible)	n/a
Housebound patients	Trust Vaccination Team (GP identifies & refers pt. to Trust)	Trust Vaccination Team (GP identifies & refers pt. to Trust)
Inpatients (eligible cohorts)	Trust Vaccination Team (eligible inpatients identified)	Trust Vaccination Team (eligible inpatients identified)
Carers	GP/Community Pharmacy/Trusts	n/a
Close contacts immunosuppressed	GP/Community Pharmacy/Trusts	n/a
High risk poultry / avian & cattle / swine workers	Community Pharmacy/Trusts/GPs	n/a
Rough sleepers / homeless hostels	Trusts (via Inclusion Heath teams) Community Pharmacy / GPs	n/a

Appendix 2: Vaccine Characteristics

The following information has been included to facilitate logistical and operational planning with regards to pack sizes/doses and shelf-life. For information relating to vaccine policy, please refer to the HSS(MD) [Influenza](#) and [COVID-19](#) letters.

The full summary of product characteristics (SmPC) and patient information leaflets (PIL) for each individual vaccine product is available on the [Electronic Medicines Compendium \(EMC\)](#) website and links below.

COVID-19 Vaccines for Autumn 2026/27

COVID-19 Vaccine	SmPC / PIL (EMC) link	Pack and dose(s) per vial
Spikevax (XFG) <i>Adults</i> Ready to use Multi-dose vial (MDV)	Microsoft Word - 3051400103475076104_spc-doc.doc	1 pack contains 50 doses (10 vials, 5 doses per vial)
Bimervax (LP.8.1)* <i>Adults (non-MRNA)</i> Ready to use Single-dose vial (SDV)	Microsoft Word - 9189396920248990003_spc-doc.doc	1 pack contains 10 doses (10 vials, 1 dose per vial)
Comirnaty 30 (XFG)* <i>Adolescent</i> Ready to use Pre-filled syringe (PFS)	Comirnaty XFG 30 micrograms/dose dispersion for injection	1 pack contains 1 dose (1 pre-filled syringe)
Comirnaty 10 (XFG)* <i>Infant / paediatric</i> Ready to use Single-dose vial (SDV)	Comirnaty XFG 10 micrograms/dose dispersion for injection	1 pack contains 10 doses (10 vials, 1 dose per vial)

*Denotes HSC Trust-only vaccine

Please note:

- Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccines have a thawed shelf life of **10 weeks** at 2°C to 8°C within the 18-month shelf life.
- Please ensure that the correct thawed shelf life is followed as per the label affixed on the pack by Movianto NI, opposed to the manufacturer's 18-month shelf life.

Influenza Vaccines for Autumn 2026/27

UKHSA Approved Abbreviation	Name on Movianto and VMS	SmPC (EMC) Link	Product Packaging Artwork and pack size
IIVc	26/27 IIVC CELL-BASED FLU VACCINE PFS	Cell-based Trivalent Influenza Vaccine (Surface Antigen, Inactivated) Seqirus suspension for injection in pre-filled syringe	 10 prefilled syringes per pack
	IIVc – Cell-based Inactivated Influenza Vaccine - 0.5mL		
LAIV	26/27 LAIV FLUENZ NASAL SUSP	Fluenz Trivalent nasal spray suspension Influenza vaccine (live, nasal)	 10 single use applicators per pack
	LAIV – Fluenz Influenza Vaccine Nasal Suspension - 0.2m		

Please note:

- The IIVc and LAIV vaccines procured by PHA and UKHSA for Autumn 2026/27 are trivalent influenza vaccines as recommended by JCVI advice.
- The shelf life of aIV and IIVc is 1 year (12 months), and LAIV is 15 weeks, please refer to pack for dates.

Appendix 3: Guidance on Ordering

GP Practice - Guidance on Ordering Vaccines

➤ Quotas

Quotas have been based on previous uptake (recorded on VMS). Due to vaccine availability, vaccines will not be available for all eligible individuals in your practice/clinics as this does not reflect uptake. Please **do not** request vaccines for all patients invited as these will not be approved. You will be able to order 100% of your Flu quota and 80% of your Covid-19 from the start of the programme; however, we strongly advise that you order quantities to facilitate clinics and do not hold excess stock.

➤ Ordering timeframes

- Only order vaccines 2 weeks ahead of the date of arranged clinics.
- Deliveries may take up to 5 working days from your order being placed with Movianto at the start of the programme. Please allow enough time for order and delivery of vaccine before your planned clinic.
- If you require additional vaccine to facilitate booked patients, please request vaccine at least 6 working days ahead of clinics at the beginning of programme, and 4 working days later in the programme, to allow for the uplift to be actioned, order placed and delivery made.

➤ Planning clinics

- You should plan your clinics based upon the amount of vaccine that is available to your practice (i.e. your quota).
- Please only order enough vaccine to cover planned clinics as large amounts of vaccines should not be stored in fridges as this increases the risk of vaccine wastage and can create vaccine shortages if large quantities are ordered and not used.
- Practices can place an additional order for vaccine for mop up clinics when all their quota is used or they have booked patients exceeding the number of vaccines remaining in practice.

- Requests for an uplift to vaccine quota can be made using the following form: [GP Influenza and Covid-19 Vaccine Uplift Request Form](#). PHA aim to approve and actioned all uplifts submitted by 3pm on the same day, with uplifts available to order the next day. Requests submitted after 3pm may be approved the next working day.
- Please allow enough time for order and delivery before your planned clinic.

➤ **Vaccine Sharing**

- Please do not share any vaccine stock with other providers. This is for various complex legal reasons including vaccine traceability and governance – if for any reason a certain batch is recalled by the manufacturer e.g. product failure or contamination, we need to be able to trace which providers received that batch.

➤ **Emergency orders (i.e. needed same day/next morning)**

Emergency orders should only be placed in extenuating situations and not due to poor planning. Please note there is a high cost involved with emergency orders which then impacts on the finances/budget of the vaccination programme. Please note that Movianto can only facilitate emergency orders for flu vaccines, as Covid-19 vaccines cannot be defrosted and despatched on same day.

➤ **Cold chain failures**

There have been a large number of cold chain failures over the past number of vaccination programmes. We must try to minimise these moving forward. Please ensure that vaccine stock is placed promptly in the fridge when delivered by Movianto. Please see the [Guidance on vaccine handling and storage in GP practices](#) for information, and ensure that your practice have appropriate contingency plans in place for planned and unplanned power outages (e.g. remedial works and adverse weather).

For cold chain failures that occur in:

- Community Pharmacy settings, please refer to the SPPG guidance via the BSO website [link](#).
- HSC Trust settings, please refer to local Trust standard operating procedures.

➤ **Recording vaccinations**

Please ensure all vaccines administered are recorded on VMS promptly. VMS is used to monitor uptake and also how we calculate quotas. It is also important that all records are up to date to ensure the completeness of the patient vaccination record and reduces the risk of double vaccination.

Appendix 4: Contacts (for cold chain incidents)

Northern Ireland Medicines Information Services (NIMIS) Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

*****Please note, if the local MI/Trust service are unable to accept queries relating to cold chain, please contact the Regional Service in the Belfast HSC Trust*****

Trust	Email Address	Phone Number
Regional Service and Local Service for Belfast Trust	medicineinfo@belfasttrust.hscni.net	028 9504 0558
South Eastern Trust Local Service	medicines.information@setrust.hscni.net	028 9056 1445 028 9048 4511 ext. 10220
Western Trust Local Service	altnagelvin.medinfo@westerntrust.hscni.net	028 7161 1462 028 7134 5171 ext. 213756
Northern Trust Local Service	1st Contact <i>Specialist Vaccine Services Pharmacy Technician, Pharmacy Department, Mid-Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt</i> Alternative contact medicines.info@northerntrust.hscni.net	028 7936 6755 028 9442 4556 ext. 4763
Southern Trust Local Service	medicinesinfo.cah@southerntrust.hscni.net	028 3756 3893 028 375 63890

Public Health Agency:

PHA Duty Room Tele:	0300 555 0119
PHA Immunisation Team: (general queries)	pha.immunisation@hscni.net

Appendix 5: New Features on VMS

Clinic Mode

Training guide available using the following [link](#)

Using VMS Clinic Mode

Streamline your vaccination clinics with ease



Pre-Clinic Preparation

- Create Clinic Lists in advance for scheduled clinics.
- Search and select patients vaccinated in the last 16 months.
- Set eligibility before the clinic day.



Walk-in Clinics

- Set default vaccination details (e.g. vaccine type, batch number, vaccinator name).
- Quickly add patients as they arrive using surname or HCN



Post-Clinic Data Entry

- Record vaccinations after the clinic when VMS access was unavailable.
- Use batch entry to save time and ensure accuracy

GP Dashboards

It showcases the different type of vaccines administered by a practice in a financial year and potential duplicate records as well. It is a really helpful tool for practices when going through the figures at the end of the year, especially when dealing with probity requests.

Vaccine	Location	Vaccine	Financial Year	Records	Duplicates
☐ Covid-19	Surgery -	Covid-19	2020-21	1,780	3
☐ Flu	Surgery -	Covid-19	2021-22	3,602	1
☐ MMR	Surgery -	Flu	2021-22	1,422	4
☐ Pertussis	Surgery -	Covid-19	2022-23	1,579	0
☐ RSV	Surgery -	Flu	2022-23	1,678	7
☐ Shingles	Surgery -	Covid-19	2023-24	1,072	1
	Surgery -	Flu	2023-24	1,286	18
	Surgery -	MMR	2023-24	3	0
	Surgery -	Shingles	2023-24	83	0
	Surgery -	Covid-19	2024-25	758	2
	Surgery -	Flu	2024-25	1,118	1
	Surgery -	MMR	2024-25	1	0
	Surgery -	Pertussis	2024-25	1	0
	Surgery -	RSV	2024-25	112	0
	Surgery -	Shingles	2024-25	151	0
	Surgery -	Covid-19	2025-26	163	1
	Surgery -	RSV	2025-26	2	0
Total				4,247,868	12,421

This report counts all vaccinations which are recorded in VMS as being administered at the listed location, regardless of the patient's current registration status.

You can use the filters to the left to only show vaccinations of a specific type or in a particular financial year. Financial years run 1st April-31st March.

The Records column includes records which have been flagged as potential duplicates. Potential duplicates can be investigated using the Data quality dashboard in VMS.

Duplicates Dashboard

This dashboard is available to GPs, Trusts and Pharmacies to get an in-depth analysis of the potential duplicate records. This is useful to see if a patient had their vaccination recorded on VMS twice and allow staff to easily identify the records that need to be deactivated.

