

Health and Social Care Secretary accepts JCVI advice on autumn booster programme

Press release

All people aged 50 and over will be eligible for autumn Covid booster and flu vaccine



Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

I have accepted the independent advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation to offer an autumn Covid booster to people aged 50 and over, residents and staff in care homes for older adults, frontline health and social care workers, unpaid carers, individuals aged five to 49 in clinical risk groups and household contacts of those who are immunosuppressed.

NHS staff and volunteers provided an outstanding service to the public through the biggest and fastest vaccination rollout in England's history, which saved countless lives and allowed us to live with this virus without restrictions on our freedom.

Viruses spread more easily in the colder seasons with people socialising inside, so the risk of getting Covid is higher. It is absolutely vital the most vulnerable groups receive a booster vaccine to strengthen their immunity against serious disease over winter to protect themselves and reduce pressure on the NHS.

The flu virus could also be highly infectious at this time of year, so today I am also announcing that those eligible for a free flu vaccination this year will include everyone aged 50 and over, primary school children and secondary school pupils in years 7, 8 and 9, as well as people in clinical risk groups, unpaid carers and household contacts of those who are immunosuppressed.

If you or your child are eligible for a Covid or flu vaccine, I urge you to come forward as soon as you are invited by the NHS.

BACKGROUND:

Further information is available [here](#)

Covid

- The programme is expected to start in early autumn. Details of how the programme will be delivered including how people will be invited for vaccination will be set out nearer the start of the programme.
- The definition of frontline health and social care workers is published in the [Green Book](#)
- Clinical risk groups are set out in the [Green Book](#) – Tables 3 and 4
- The definition of carers aged 16 to 49 years is set out in the [Green Book](#) – Table 3

Influenza

The groups that are now eligible for the flu vaccine this coming season are:

- all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2022
- all primary school aged children (from reception to Year 6)
- those aged 6 months to under 65 years in clinical risk groups
- pregnant women
- those aged 65 years and over
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- frontline staff employed by the following types of social care providers without employer led occupational health schemes:
 - a registered residential care or nursing home
 - registered domiciliary care provider
 - a voluntary managed hospice provider
- Direct Payment (personal budgets) or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants

And later in the season:

- All adults aged 50 to 64 years
- Secondary school children in years 7, 8 and 9, who will be offered the vaccine in order of school year (starting with the youngest first)
- The flu vaccine programme outlined above applies to England only

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