

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



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

HSS(MD)9/2022

FOR ACTION

Chief Executives HSC Trusts (*for onward cascade to
Medical Directors*)

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and Social
Care Board.

GP Medical Advisers, Health & Social Care Board
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (*for onward
distribution to practice staff*)

Community Pharmacies

Director of Pharmacy at the HSC Board (*for cascade to
prescribing advisers and community pharmacies*)

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST
BT4 3SQ

Tel: 028 9052 0563

Email: Michael.McBride@health-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: HSS(MD)9/2022

Date: 25 February 2022

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST

Dear Colleague

**JCVI UPDATE ON ADVICE FOR PRIMARY COVID-19 VACCINATION OF
CHILDREN AGED 5 TO 11 YEARS**

1. JCVI has now issued updated advice in relation to COVID-19 vaccination of children aged 5 to 11 years of age. The full JCVI statement can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jcvi-update-on-advice-for-covid-19-vaccination-of-children-aged-5-to-11/jcvi-statement-on-vaccination-of-children-aged-5-to-11-years-old>

2. JCVI advises a non-urgent offer of two 10 mcg doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (Comirnaty®) to children aged 5 to 11 years of age who are not in a clinical risk group.
3. The 2 doses should be offered with an interval of at least 12 weeks between doses. The intention of this offer is to increase the immunity of vaccinated individuals against severe COVID-19 in advance of a potential future wave of COVID-19.
4. In Northern Ireland, it is intended that this cohort will be vaccinated at Trust led vaccination clinics, which are currently vaccinating children aged 5-11 years of age in a clinical risk group. As additional supplies of the Comirnaty® 10mcg paediatric vaccination formulation becomes available it may be possible to widen the delivery options beyond HSC Trust led sites in due course.

5. For deployment teams, JCVI advises that:

- The offer of COVID-19 vaccination to 5 to 11 year olds who are not in a clinical risk group should not displace the delivery of other paediatric non-COVID-19 or COVID-19 immunisation programmes.
- Delivery of paediatric non-COVID-19 immunisation programmes across all ages should receive due attention, particularly where vaccine coverage has fallen behind due to the COVID-19 pandemic and where there is evidence of health inequalities.

5. This advice on the offer of vaccination to 5 – 11-year olds who are not in a clinical risk group is considered by JCVI as a one-off pandemic response programme. As the COVID-19 pandemic moves further towards endemicity in the UK, JCVI will review whether, in the longer term, an offer of vaccination to this, and other paediatric age groups, continues to be advised.

6. Vaccination of children aged 5 to 11 years who are not in a clinical risk group is anticipated to prevent a small number of hospitalisations and intensive care admissions in this population and would provide short-term protection against non-severe infection (asymptomatic and symptomatic infection that does not require hospital-based care). The extent of these impacts is highly uncertain. They are closely related to future levels of infection in the population in the period following vaccination; these in turn are influenced by the timing, size and severity of any future waves of infection, and the characteristics of any new variants that may dominate future waves of infection.

7. In all instances, the offer of vaccination must be accompanied by appropriate information to enable children, and those with parental responsibility, to provide informed consent prior to vaccination. Teams responsible for the implementation and deployment of COVID-19 vaccination for persons aged 5 to 11 should be appropriately trained and confident regarding the information relevant to the vaccination of these persons.

Yours sincerely



Professor Sir Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



Linda Kelly
Acting Chief Nursing Officer



Mrs Cathy Harrison
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

