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Primary Care COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Last week NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) republished the Enhanced Service (ES) Specification and details of wave 1 mobilisation of the Primary Care COVID-19 Vaccination Programme 2020/21. NHSE&I recognise that "the scale and complexity of this vaccination programme make it one of the greatest challenges the NHS has ever faced". They are working closely with CCGs and PCNs to start vaccinating patients at designated sites from Tuesday 15 December.

Enhanced Service Specification

There have been some changes to the original ES draft specification, which have been agreed with the BMA, including the number of days which is now 3.5 to administer the vaccine with storage at 2-8 °C. Primary care guidance on the COVID-19 vaccination programme is kept up to date on the NHS England and NHS Improvement coronavirus [website](#) and the [FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#) is a central resource for information and FAQs.

Patient Specific Direction (PSD)

One of the key issues about the first COVID-19 vaccine is that it is a prescription only medicine (POM). Whilst waiting for the national patient group direction (PGD) or national protocol to become available, a patient specific direction (PSD) mechanism based on the framework agreed in this administration document must be used to prescribe the COVID-19 vaccine for now. This document also gives details about additional prescriber roles, the accountability and responsibility of the prescriber and suggested staffing models. It also highlights the business continuity risks which may need to be considered if large numbers of doctors are required to support in large numbers of vaccination centres, as they would be removed from core work. A useful table which clarifies the different requirements for PSDs, PGDs, a National Protocol and Written Instruction is available on page 8 of the above-mentioned document and explains which delivery model they can be used within and who is able to work under them.

Webinars

NHSE&I will be holding a series of webinars over the coming days including one on Thursday 10 December at 5.30pm for anyone in primary care seeking further updates on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

COVID Swab Testing in General Practice

COVID PCR swab testing capability is available to all general practices in England on a voluntary, opt-in basis. Practices must register to use the service and you can apply for coronavirus tests for your Practice on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website with your Unique Organisation Number (UON).

Long COVID

NICE guidelines about the management of the long-term effects of COVID-19 are being developed, in conjunction with the RCGP, and will be published before the end of the year. Their [website](#) contains lots of useful guidance, resources and other information.

Flu Vaccine Update

The [guidance](#) for obtaining the government-secured flu vaccines has been updated to reflect the additional doses of vaccines now available from Seqirus.