

# Scottish Vaccination and Immunisation Programme

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## Lines to take – Winter Flu and COVID-19 Vaccination 2025

- Decision-making on Scotland's vaccination programme is guided by the independent, expert advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).
- The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has published its [advice to UK governments on the forthcoming COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) and the [UK Government accepted this advice](#) on 26.06.2025. The Scottish Government will follow the same advice as per the UK Government statement.
- The JCVI's advice is to offer the vaccines to those at high risk of serious illness from flu or COVID-19 and who are therefore most likely to benefit from vaccination.
- Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland (PHS) are finalising plans for the roll out of Scotland's winter vaccination programme, delivered at a local level by NHS Boards across the country. Details of how and when eligible people will receive their vaccine will be announced in due course.

## COVID-19 vaccination

- Eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccination programme is based on the advice and recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).
- This is informed by robust evidence of which groups are at risk of severe disease, hospitalisation and death from COVID-19.
- Vaccination will be offered to those at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

These groups include:

- adults aged 75 years and over
- residents in a care home for older adults
- individuals aged 6 months 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](#))

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- The JCVI recommendations are reviewed annually and are based on a combination of factors including consideration of the risk of disease and benefit of vaccination for different groups of individuals.

## Flu vaccination

- The flu vaccine is usually offered between September and March.
- Full details on those eligible for their flu vaccines this winter will be available on [NHS Inform](#).
- The following groups are eligible for seasonal influenza vaccine this winter:
  - **Adult Programme**
    - Those living in long-stay residential care homes or other long-stay care facilities
    - All those aged 65 and over
    - All those aged 18 to under 65 years in defined risk groups. This includes:
      - those in clinical at-risk groups set out in Green Book Chapter 19
      - those experiencing homelessness
      - those experiencing substance misuse
      - asylum seekers living in Home Office hotel or B&B accommodation
      - all prisoners within the Scottish prison estate
      - pregnant women
    - Frontline health and social care workers
    - Non-frontline NHS workers
    - Poultry workers & bird keepers
    - Unpaid carers and young carers
    - Household contacts of those with immunosuppression
  - **Childhood programme**
    - Children aged from 6 months to 18 years in clinical risk groups (if not eligible in accordance with bullets below)
    - All children aged 2-5 years not yet at school (age as of 01/09/2025)
    - All primary school children (primary one to primary seven)
    - All secondary school pupils (years one to six)

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- Vaccination is required every year because flu viruses are constantly changing, and immunity may wane. The vaccines offered this year will give those eligible the best possible protection against the viruses likely to be circulating this winter.
- Flu vaccines are available to purchase privately for those who are not eligible under the national programme and many employers offer vaccination.

## Health and social care workers (HSCWs)

- Frontline HSCWs are eligible for flu vaccination this winter in line with the JCVI advice.
- This winter the JCVI has **not** advised COVID-19 vaccination for frontline HSCWs workers.
- We also continue to offer flu vaccination to non-frontline NHS workers as part of the national programme, as a Scottish Government policy decision.

## Further lines regarding eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine

- The COVID-19 programme is focused on protecting those most at risk of serious illness from COVID-19 who are adults 75 years or older, those in a care home for older adults and those who are immunosuppressed as these individuals are more vulnerable to COVID-19-related illnesses.
- There are currently no plans to increase or expand the groups eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.
- The primary aim of the COVID-19 programme has always been the prevention of severe illness, hospitalisations and death in those most at risk and this remains unchanged for 2025.
- Any decision on expanding COVID-19 eligibility or further vaccination of certain groups would be a decision for the JCVI and we would of course stand ready to assess any further recommendations from them.
- In those who aren't eligible for vaccination this year, many people have a level of protection against COVID-19 from previous vaccination or infection.

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- We know that carers may wish to seek the COVID-19 vaccination to protect those they care for. The most important consideration is to make sure that the person being cared for receives their COVID-19 vaccine, if they are eligible. This will give them optimum protection against the COVID-19 virus.
- We understand that carers may want to seek vaccination to protect loved ones from COVID-19, but the current vaccines provide very limited impact on transferring the virus from one person to the other (transmission).
- We understand that carers may wish to seek COVID-19 vaccination to prevent themselves from becoming ill and being unable to care for those they look after, but the current vaccines do not prevent a person from catching COVID-19. What they do is prevent severe illness, hospitalisation and death. Those carers who are not considered “at risk” by the JCVI, due to their age or clinical condition, should experience much less severe symptoms than during the early stages of the pandemic, should they contract COVID-19.
- Over the last five years, population immunity to COVID-19 has been increasing due to a combination of naturally acquired immunity following recovery from infection and vaccine-derived immunity (this combination is known as ‘hybrid immunity’).
- COVID-19 is now a relatively mild disease for most people. It can still be unpleasant, although rates of hospitalisation and death from COVID-19 have reduced significantly since COVID-19 first emerged.
- Age has always been strongly associated with the risk of hospitalisation and mortality from COVID-19, with the oldest in the population being the most vulnerable.
- As COVID-19 becomes an endemic disease (regularly occurring within the community), and with a move towards longer term plans, the focus of the programme is shifting towards targeted vaccination of those over 75 years of age, residents in a care home for older adults and individuals who are immunosuppressed. These are the groups who continue to be at higher risk of COVID-19 related serious disease, including mortality.

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## Private COVID-19 vaccination

- Pharmacy companies, private clinics and private GP services in the UK offer private sales of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Private sales of COVID-19 vaccines are not controlled or managed by NHS Scotland or Scottish Government.
- NHS Scotland does not have any responsibility over which pharmacies or private clinics offer private COVID-19 vaccines, which vaccine types they stock or what they charge.
- Private sales are managed by arrangements between individual private providers, pharmacy companies and vaccine manufacturers.
- NHS Scotland continues to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to those eligible this winter, free of charge, as recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.