

Scottish Vaccination and Immunisation Programme

COVID-19 eligibility FAQs – September 2025

CALLER	Who is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine this Winter?
AGENT	<p>Eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccination programme is based on the advice and recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).</p> <p>This is informed by robust evidence of which groups are at risk of severe disease, hospitalisation and death from COVID-19.</p> <p>Vaccination will be offered to those at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19. These groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)

CALLER	I'm a carer why am I not being offered the COVID-19 vaccine this winter?
AGENT	<p>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).</p>

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	<p>We understand that carers may also 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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CALLER	<p>Why am I not being offered the COVID-19 vaccine this winter?</p> <p>Why has the eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine changed over time?</p>
AGENT	<p>The recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) about who should be vaccinated against COVID-19 has changed because more data is now available. Since COVID-19 first appeared, most people have had contact with the virus and/or have been vaccinated against it. This means that immunity has increased in the population and that COVID-19 has become milder for many people. There are now far fewer hospital stays or deaths than at the beginning of the pandemic. Additionally, the currently available vaccines do not provide as much protection from getting mild COVID-19 infections and passing on the virus to others in contrast to the flu vaccine, which can do both of those things.</p> <p>For these reasons, the COVID-19 vaccine programme has shifted its focus to protect those most at risk. Data tells us that those most at risk are currently older people, residents in care homes or those with a weakened</p>

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	immune system. The COVID-19 vaccine is the most effective and direct way of protection for these groups. Getting vaccinated will help to reduce their risk of becoming so ill from COVID-19 that they would need hospital treatment or could die.
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Additional information

- 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.
- 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.