**NHS Scotland COVID-19 Vaccination Programme**

**Covid-19 vaccination for those who require it for travel entry certification and ad-hoc occupational purposes for foreign countries**

**Version 1 – 10 August 2023**

**Please note that the information in this document has been agreed and signed off by the Scottish Government Seasonal Vaccines & Strategy Unit**

# Vaccination for travel entry purposes

As there are still a small number of countries that require proof of Covid-19 vaccination status for entry purposes (see **Annex A1**), and because there is currently no private sales mechanism for the Covid-19 vaccines, Health Boards must make available vaccination to those who require it for this purpose, at any point of the year, not just within seasonal programmes. *This offer includes countries that require individuals who are not fully vaccinated to quarantine on arrival in a country.*

Health Boards are free to operate this programme as they see fit, via FVCV clinics, or via NHS travel health teams. SG understand and accept that the number of clinics offering vaccination outside of seasonal programme will be much reduced and that individuals may need to travel further distances to receive vaccination. SG also acknowledge and accept that due to the vaccine pack sizes and the expectation that numbers coming forward for this purpose will be small, that there may be a high level of vaccine wastage.

Covid-19 vaccines should only be administered via NHS services, not via private entities as some other travel vaccines are.

NHS Inform will be updated to reflect the policy and will direct people to their Health Board website for local information on how to book. You must ensure that your pages are up to date with a booking number or system. Bookings for this purpose should not be made via the online portal or NCC, as many requests will fall outside of seasonal programmes and boards must scrutinise the need for vaccination at the point of booking.

NHS Inform and the National Vaccination Helpline will state that patients will need to provide proof of travel to a country requiring proof of vaccination status. The aim of this is to reduce the numbers of people potentially falsely attempting to receive vaccination for this reason.

**Key points:**

This is only available to:

* Persons who ordinarily reside in your Health Board area;
* Persons who reside ordinarily outside of the UK who are in your Health Board area;
* Persons who are registered patients with a GP Practice in your Health Board area or;
* Persons who ordinarily reside outside of Scotland, including in other parts of the UK, who are registered with a GP practice in your Health Board area as a temporary resident (please see the definition included in **Annex A4**).

It is available to:

* Those who require proof of vaccination to enter a foreign country.
* Those who are required to self-fund periods of quarantine in a foreign country if they are unvaccinated.

It is NOT available for the following reasons:

* Those asking for vaccination for clinical protection, whilst travelling abroad to countries that do not require proof of vaccination for entry purposes.
* For those travelling to countries where you are allowed to enter unvaccinated if you provide a negative Covid test.

It is to be offered as follows:

* Via NHS services only.
* To offer the number of doses that the foreign country requires, be it primary doses or boosters, even though the JCVI has advised that the UK move to a one dose primary course in winter 2023.
* Vaccines can be administered under National Protocols, PGDs or PSDs, as determined by Boards, in accordance with the Covid-19 Green Book Chapter 14a. Dose intervals should be based on clinical guidance in the Green Book Chapter. Where individuals request for intervals to be shortened or expedited for particular travel dates, your local clinical assessment processes should be followed.
* It is to be offered all year round (except for days when clinics are closed for Bank Holidays etc) and is not to be a chargeable service.

# Booking

* At the point of booking the call handler should check that they meet the eligibility criteria.
* The call handler should enquire if the individual ordinarily resides in Scotland and if they are registered with a GP in Scotland and therefore have a CHI number. If they don’t have a CHI number, one must be created for them, so that their vaccination can be added to VMT, so that the data can flow into NCDS, allowing a vaccination record to be generated.
* At the point of booking the vaccination appointment the call handler must ask which country the person is travelling to. The call handler should check the entry requirements for this country on the UKG Foreign travel advice page

[Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

1. Sometimes the FCDO website takes time to update changes. If the website does not state that the country requires proof, but the individual has proof that the country has requested it, then you can vaccinate on this basis, if they can provide proof (see evidence list below).

* At the point of booking, it may be preferrable to ask the individual to send proof of need to the booking team. The team could then check this and share with the clinic if needed. This could prevent potential conflict at the appointment itself. Alternatively the individual could be asked to bring proof of travel to their appointment. Boards can choose which mechanism they wish to use.
* The call handler should check with the individual if at any previous appointment they have been unable to receive the mRNA vaccines for clinical reasons, or have previously received a dose of Novavax. If they are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine, then they will need to be issued with an exemption letter **(Annex A3)** because from 31 May 2023 there is currently no non-mRNA vaccine in stock in Scotland.

1. ***PLEASE NOTE*** that there is no guarantee that particular countries will recognise and accept this document.

# At the appointment

* The vaccinator should check their proof of travel requirement for vaccination for entry purposes if the Board requires it at this stage.
* If everything is in order, the vaccine should be administered and recorded via VMT.
* The vaccine administered should be in line with the National Protocols, PGDs, PSDs etc and the Green Book Chapter.
* The individual should be offered a follow up appointment at the requisite dose interval, if another dose is needed.

# Proof of travel

* Foreign visa application proof.
* Email or paper proof of flight / rail / bus booking to country where vaccination proof is required.
* Email or letter from a foreign immigration department requesting proof of vaccination for entry.
* This list is not exhaustive and boards can make their own judgements on the proof that individuals provide, as some may be entering countries via land borders on foot.

# Vaccination for ad hoc occupational or study reasons from foreign companies or institutions

**Please note that we do not offer ad hoc vaccinations occupational or study reasons from Scottish companies or institutions.**

If you receive a request for vaccination from individuals requesting Covid-19 vaccination for **foreign** occupational or study reasons (including such things as internships and or entrance to sporting events), where not being fully vaccinated would result in them being disqualified from their course, job or activity abroad, you should use the following approach:

1. Explain to the patient that Covid-19 vaccination is no longer available in the UK for healthy individuals aged 5-64 or age and that for all other higher risk groups, vaccination is only available during seasonal programmes (e.g. spring or winter) and send the patient the SG letter in **Annex A2**.

1. If the patient comes back to your team saying that the foreign educational establishment or company refuses to accept this, then you should offer vaccination, if the patient can provide evidence of this request (see below), so as not to disadvantage the patient.

1. If the request if from a Scottish company or institution, the SG letter should be sent. If they come back to the board with queries, please direct them to the SG mailbox on the letter.

**Key points:**

This is only available to:

* + Persons who ordinarily reside in your Health Board area;
  + Persons who reside ordinarily outside of the UK who are in your Health Board area;
  + Persons who are registered patients with a GP Practice in your Health Board area or;
  + Persons who ordinarily reside outside of Scotland, including in other parts of the UK, who are registered with a GP practice in your Health Board area as a temporary resident (please see the definition included in **Annex A4**).

It is available to:

* + Those who have been asked to prove vaccination status by a **foreign** employer, educational establishment or institution, and when the letter provided in **annex A2** has been sent, but the employer, educational establishment or institution still insists on vaccination.

It is NOT available for the following requests:

* + Those who have been asked to prove vaccination status by a **Scottish-based** employer, educational establishment or institution. In these cases, the letter provided in **annex A2** will be sent and vaccination refused. In cases where the employer, educational establishment or institution challenges this, the SG Seasonal Vaccines & Strategy Team will engage with them directly.
  + Ad hoc asks from **Scottish companies** who wish to obtain vaccination for groups of staff for clinical protection whilst travelling or working abroad to destinations that do not require it for entry. In these cases, the letter provided in **annex A2** will be sent and vaccination refused. In cases where the employer, educational establishment or institution challenges this, the SG Seasonal Vaccines & Strategy Team will engage with them directly.

It is to be offered as follows:

* + Individuals are to be offered the number of vaccines that the company, organisation or institution requires, even though the JCVI has advised that the UK move to a one dose primary course in winter 2023.
  + Vaccines can be administered under National Protocols, PGDs or PSDs, as determined by Boards, in accordance with the Covid-19 Green Book Chapter 14a.
  + Dose intervals should be based on clinical guidance in the Green Book Chapter. Where individuals request for intervals to be shortened or expedited for particular travel dates, your local clinical assessment processes should be followed.
  + It is to be offered all year round and is not to be a chargeable service.

# Booking

* In the first instance, the individual must email the request to the Board. The letter contained in **Annex 2** should then be sent back to the individual, advising that they send that on to the institution or company requesting vaccination.
* If the individual comes back to the team saying that the institution or company is insisting on vaccination then there are 2 routes:
  1. If it is a Scottish company or institution, then vaccination is refused and the individual should go back to the company or institution and direct them to Scottish Government, as per the letter.
  2. If it is a foreign institution or company, then vaccination can be booked as follows:

* At the point of booking the call handler should check that they meet the eligibility criteria.
* The call handler should enquire if the individual ordinarily resides in Scotland and if they are registered with a GP in Scotland and therefore have a CHI number. If they don’t have a CHI number, one must be created for them, so that their vaccination can be added to VMT, so that the data can flow into NCDS, allowing a vaccination record to be generated.
* The call handler should check with the individual if at any previous appointment they have been unable to receive the mRNA vaccines for clinical reasons, or have previously received a dose of Novavax. If there are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine, then they will need to be issued with an exemption letter **(Annex A3)** because from 31 May 2023 there is currently no non-mRNA vaccine in stock in Scotland.

1. ***PLEASE NOTE*** that there is no guarantee that particular institutions or companies will recognise and accept this document.

# At the appointment

* The vaccine should be administered and recorded via VMT.
* The vaccine administered should be in line with the National Protocols, PGDs, PSDs etc and the Green Book Chapter.
* The individual should be offered a follow up appointment at the requisite dose interval, if another vaccine is needed.

If there are any requests that Boards do not feel fall within the above guidance, they should consult the Scottish Government Seasonal Vaccines & Strategy Unit for advice: Laura.Wilson3@gov.scot

This policy will be revoked by Scottish Government when a) Covid-19 certification is no longer needed for travel entry purposes or b) individuals are able to privately purchase Covid-19 vaccines.

Scottish Government would also re-evaluate the policy if there were further outbreaks and the list of countries requiring proof of vaccination status was to expand, or if we saw a particularly large increase in requests for ad hoc vaccination from foreign institutions or companies.

# Annex A1: Countries requiring proof of Covid-19 vaccination for entry

**Notes:**

* Information obtained from the Foreign and Commonwealth & Development Office website (travel advice section) [UKG Foreign travel advice site](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)
* Information correct as of 04 August 2023
* Text in orange boxes are countries that require you to self-fund quarantine unless you can prove fully vaccinated status

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| Micro | | | nesia | [Entry requirements - Micronesia (Federated States of) travel advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/micronesia/entry-requirements)    [Regulations – Federated States of Micronesia (visit-micronesia.fm):](https://visit-micronesia.fm/regulations/)  “Vaccination or certification is not required unless the traveller comes from an infected area.”    **Please note** that although the island of Guam is part of this island group, it is actually a territory of the USA and therefore follows USA entry rules. Guam does not require proof of vaccination for entry. |
| Nauru | | |  | All passengers must be fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior to their travel date.    [Entry requirements - Nauru travel advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nauru/entry-requirements) |
| Niger | | |  | Travellers who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19 must present a negative COVID-19 PCR test certificate taken within 72 hours before arrival to the airport authorities. Before travelling, you should register and upload your PCR test results online on the Trusted Travel site. Unvaccinated travellers will need to quarantine for 7 days. Unvaccinated travellers who are staying in Niger for more than 7 days will need to quarantine at their final destination (home, hotel) for 7 days. On the 7th day of quarantine, you must take a COVID-19 antigen test at a Government agreed testing centre. If the test is negative, you can end your quarantine. If the test is positive, you must follow local guidance on quarantine procedures.    **Number of vaccines required:**  Fully vaccinated travellers are those who have had the primary course (not including boosters). It must be more than 4 weeks since the last dose.    [Coronavirus - Niger travel advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/niger/coronavirus) |
|  | Timor- | |  | Travellers who have not received a full vaccination for COVID-19 shall undertake 10 days mandatory quarantine designated by the competent authorities of the Ministry of Health. Alternatively, they could undertake home quarantine provided that the facility is suitable and with the authorisation from the Director General of Public Health Service.    **Number of vaccines required:** full vaccination = two doses    [Entry requirements - East Timor (Timor-Leste) travel advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/timor-leste/entry-requirements) |
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# Annex A2: Ad Hoc Covid-19 Vaccination Letter for Boards 

To:

By e-mail:

Date:

To Whom It May Concern,

The Scottish Covid-19 vaccination programme is led by Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland (PHS) and delivered by NHS Scotland Health Boards. The scope of the programme is informed by advice from the UK’s Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) who advise on immunisations for the prevention of infections and / or disease following due consideration of the evidence on the burden of disease, on vaccine safety and efficacy and on the impact and cost effectiveness of immunisation strategies.

On 8 November 2022 the JCVI released their [statement on interim plans for the Covid19 programme in 2023.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-2023-jcvi-interim-advice-8-november-2022/jcvi-statement-on-the-covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-2023-8-november-2022) The primary aim of the COVID-19 vaccination programme continues to be the prevention of severe disease, hospitalisation and mortality arising from Covid-19, but as Scotland and the UK starts to transition away from a pandemic emergency response towards pandemic recovery, the advice has focussed on a move to focus on protecting those persons at higher risk of severe Covid-19.

**This means that as of 01 July 2023, it is no longer possible for those not in a JCVI-defined clinical at risk group aged 5 to 64 years of age to access Covid-19 vaccination in Scotland.**

At the time that this letter was issued, Covid-19 vaccination is only available in seasonal programmes to those who are determined to be eligible for further Covid-19 vaccines. For more information see the [COVID-19 greenbook chapter 14a (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1153300/Greenbook-chapter-14a-26April2023.pdf)

In additional to this, there are currently no private sales of Covid-19 vaccines in Scotland and the rest of the UK, so individuals are unable to purchase their own vaccines.

This means that [INSERT PATIENT NAME] is no longer able to access Covid-19 vaccination at this time.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact our team at covid19vaccinepolicymailbox@gov.scot

Yours sincerely,

***Seasonal Vaccines & Strategy Team***

Public Health Capabilities

Directorate for Population Health

Scottish Government

# A3: Forms of words for those who cannot receive vaccination for clinical reasons

To Whom It May Concern,

[PATIENT NAME]

[PATIENT DOB]

[PATIENT CHI]

[PATIENT ADDRESS]

[PATIENT PASSPORT NUMBER]

After a patient assessment by our Covid-19 vaccination service, it was determined that the patient was not eligible for vaccination with any of the current Covid-19 vaccines in use as part of the national Scottish Covid-19 programme.

At present in the UK there are no private sales of Covid-19 vaccines, so the patient is also unable to source an alternative brand of Covid-19 vaccine.

As such, it is not possible to vaccinate the patient against Covid-19 at this time.

Yours sincerely,

**[SIGNATORY TO THIS LETTER TO BE DETERMINED BY BOARD - YOU CAN USE A GENERIC TEAM IF YOU WISH I.E. NHS FIFE VACCINATION & IMMUNISATION TEAM]**

# A4: Explanation of eligibility criteria

Vaccination is to be offered to the following individuals:

1. Persons who ordinarily reside in a Scottish Health Board area;
2. Persons who reside ordinarily outside of the UK who are in a Scottish

Health Board area;

1. Persons who are registered patients with a GP Practice in a Scottish

Health Board area or;

1. Persons who ordinarily reside outside of Scotland, including in other parts of the UK, who are registered with a GP practice in a Scottish Health Board area as a temporary resident

This is based on the following considerations:

* We have agreed to offer this as per other services in a Health Board’s area based on: o Section 2C of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 which provides that Boards must provide or secure the provision of primary medical services as respects their area.

o Functions of Health Boards (Scotland) Order 1991 which provides that in exercising functions conferred on the Boards (these functions include section 40 of the 1978 Act which allows Health Boards to make arrangements for the vaccination or immunisation of persons against any disease) that Boards have to provide health care to: (i) persons who reside ordinarily in its area and (ii) persons who reside ordinarily outside of the UK who are in its area.

* We also understand that Health Boards also currently provide services to:
* persons registered with a GP practice on a permanent basis in their area and
* persons registered with a GP practice as temporary residents in their area.

* Taking into account the effect of the legislative provisions and the way in which Boards provide services at the moment, Health Boards would not be required to vaccinate people who live in other parts of the UK (because they are not ordinarily resident in its area or outside of the UK), except if they are registered with a GP practice as a temporary resident, or are registered on a permanent basis with a Scottish GP (in the Borders, some people live in England, but their local GP is in Scotland (and vice versa).
* This would also mean that Health Boards could be required to vaccinate people who reside ordinarily outside the UK but who are currently in their area. This would allow foreign students studying in Scotland to be vaccinated, but could also mean that other people from outside the UK who are visiting could ask to be vaccinated.