

- To:
- Regional directors of commissioning
 - Integrated care board chief executive officers
 - General practices
 - Primary care networks

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

- cc.
- Regional heads of primary care
 - Regional heads of public health

23 September 2024

Dear colleagues,

Confirmation of national pertussis vaccination and immunisation catch-up campaign for 2024/25

Thank you for all you are doing to support vaccinations and immunisations delivery.

You will be aware that practices are required to participate in a national vaccination and immunisation campaign each year, as a requirement of the GP contracts.

Due to the number of cases of pertussis increasing and the recent infant deaths, the 2024/25 campaign will focus on the pertussis vaccination programme for pregnant women.

Pregnant women are eligible for their pertussis vaccination from 16 weeks of pregnancy. Receiving vaccination between 20 and 32 weeks of pregnancy provides optimal protection. Vaccination may still be given after week 32 of pregnancy until delivery; however it may not offer as high a level of passive protection to the baby.

We would like practices to undertake a pertussis marketing campaign, with a focus on preventing illness, sharing information with pregnant women around the benefits of getting vaccinated, using all relevant opportunities to signpost to pertussis vaccination, and offering pertussis vaccination opportunistically to pregnant women registered with the practice.

Campaign timings

The pertussis vaccination programme remains an essential service within the GMS contract and practices are required to offer and provide vaccinations on an opportunistic or on a

request basis. The campaign will run from Tuesday 1 October 2024 to Monday 31 March 2025.

A summary of the requirements that practices are required to undertake to support vaccination of pregnant women can be found in annex A of this letter.

Actions under the heading “*Proactive systematic checks for practices*” are activities which practices would already be doing as part of their core contracts to support the delivery of vaccinations and immunisations to their eligible patients. The new catch-up campaign requirements are outlined under “*Further actions for practices*”.

Funding and vaccine ordering

Funding for participation in the national campaign is included in global sum payments. Practices are also eligible for an item of service payment of £10.06, in line with requirements set out in GP contracts, for each administered pertussis vaccination.

The pertussis vaccine continues to be available for practices to order through IMMFORM.

Further information

You can find further information to support general practice in the [FutureNHS Vaccinations and Screening workspace](#) (FutureNHS login required), including the Primary Care Comms Toolkit.

Thank you again for supporting this vital campaign and helping protect women and infants against this highly infectious disease.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Temmink

Director of Vaccinations

NHS England

Annex A: Summary of requirements for practices

Proactive systematic checks for practices

Practices must:

- a) ensure the named practice immunisation lead takes responsibility for improving practice staff awareness and communication to eligible patients on the importance of the pertussis vaccination for pregnant women and infants
- b) apply the vaccination core contractual standards to the planning and delivery of the pertussis (pregnant women) campaign, including undertaking the proactive systematic checks and actions as outlined below
- c) undertake the following proactive systematic checks as part of this campaign:

Where the practice is aware of an individual's pregnancy status, a minimum of 3 opportunistic offers per patient as follows:

- First invitation to offer an appointment.
- Second invitation to offer an appointment, confirm receipt and/or check if the patient already has a record of vaccination – for example, when attended antenatal clinic.
- Third invitation should be a practice healthcare professional discussion with the patient, either face-to-face or via telephone.
- Practices can make use of the [UK Health Security Agency resources](#) – including guidance, posters and leaflets – to support informed choice and improve uptake and coverage.
- Check for any other missing vaccinations and offer these.
- Check the paper/electronic patient record and if necessary, correct the computerised record to ensure accurate pertussis vaccination status recording.
- Continue to update computerised records for patients who do not respond or fail to attend scheduled clinics or appointments and offer opportunistically as and when possible.

Further actions for practices

Practices must:

- a) consider options to offer vaccinations more flexibly to the eligible cohort; for example, by offering a range of times across the week including enhanced hours appointments on evenings and weekends for working adults and parents/carers;
- b) use every point of patient contact (for example, booking, attending the practice, text and written communications) to promote a review of pertussis vaccination status in

pregnancy and, if required, booking an appointment, and – where feasible – offering a same day appointment;

- c) consider also discussing and promoting RSV vaccination, which is a routine programme available to pregnant women from 1 September 2024 onwards;
- d) consider and implement options to adapt general practice booking processes – specifically for winter vaccines – to include a vaccination status check for pertussis if the patient is pregnant; and, if required, offering this and booking if accepted. This is particularly important for pregnant women who are eligible for the seasonal flu vaccine;
- e) have a practice-specific process in place to support pregnant women who have received reminders; this process should include checking the vaccination status for valid vaccinations, and booking an appointment for vaccination if clinically appropriate;
- f) clearly display accessible leaflets within the practice on the pertussis vaccination programme for pregnant women, within the waiting room and reception areas;
- g) where a practice uses digital information board within the waiting area, use this to provide information to deliver messages on the importance of pertussis vaccinations in pregnant women and how to get their vaccination;
- h) when pregnant women attend the practice for other reasons, support reception staff to reinforce messages about the importance of being vaccinated and offer an appointment;
- i) when checking the results of the infectious diseases blood test in pregnancy, offer appointment for vaccination when the patient calls the practice for their results; and
- j) put a flag on the GP IT system, where pregnancy status is known, to raise the offer of vaccination where the patient attends the practice for other reasons or to see the midwife.