



From the NHS Chief Executive, Sir Simon Stevens
Skipton House
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Meg Hillier MP
Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
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11 February 2021

Dear Chair,

Follow up to the Public Accounts Committee Oral Evidence Session on Covid-19 Vaccines

Prioritisation of vaccine

In response to questions from Dame Cheryl Gillan, I agreed to write to the Committee regarding those who are about to start cancer treatment or chemotherapy and their ability to access vaccines.

The Covid-19 vaccine deployment programme follows the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation's (JCVI) guidance in terms of prioritisation. The JCVI has now updated its guidance, to make it clear that anyone who is about to receive immunosuppressive treatments may be offered vaccination alongside those in Priority Group 4, ahead of treatment. The vaccine would be offered in advance of starting treatment, thus likely improving the effectiveness of vaccination. Updated Green Book guidance can be found here (p10): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954724/Greenbook_chapter_14a_v5.pdf

Vitamin C and Vitamin D

NICE has looked into the issue of Covid-19 and vitamin D and produced a rapid evidence review. NICE have also been working with colleagues in PHE who worked together with the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) to produce a rapid guideline, which was published in December 2020 [COVID-19 rapid guideline: vitamin D](#). NICE have recommended that more evidence is gathered.

With regards to vitamin C, we are awaiting a readout of the REMAP-CAP trial currently underway. The US National Institutes of Health recommended in November 2020 that:

"There are insufficient data for the COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines Panel (the Panel) to recommend either for or against the use of vitamin C for the treatment of COVID-19 in non-critically ill patients"

Two other ongoing trials/evidence report similar findings:

- [Zhang et al](#): prospective RCT (n=54) of high dose vit C vs placebo. No significant difference 28-day mortality and days without ventilation support for 28 days after enrolment
- [LOVIT](#): based in Canada, ONGOING. Target enrolment 800 ICU patients. Primary outcomes: mortality and organ dysfunction by day 29.

Communications with volunteer vaccinators

Dame Cheryl Gillan requested assurances that people who had volunteered to be vaccinators would be communicated with appropriately. Dame Cheryl asked us to look at our FAQs and other communications.

A frequently asked questions page covering the various routes of recruitment for the Covid-19 vaccination programme has been published on the NHSEI website since late November 2020. Following the hearing, we have reviewed the FAQs to ensure they reflect and answer the points raised. This is available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/join-the-nhs-covid-19-vaccine-team/faqs/>

Similar messaging is also woven through all the national recruitment channels (delivered by NHS Professionals, St John Ambulance and NHS Volunteer Responders) and the Bringing Back Staff route.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Simon Stevens
NHS Chief Executive