

Vaccinations for young children and older people: invitations, reminders and escalation of contact

Invitations

- Invite people who are eligible for vaccination or their family members or carers (as appropriate) to book an appointment or attend an open access clinic. Do this opportunistically during consultations if possible, or by letter, email, phone call or text. Use the person's preferred method of communication for invitations if possible.
- Consider sending the vaccination invitation and any subsequent reminders from a healthcare practitioner or service that is known to the person or their family members or carers, such as a school, GP practice, doctor, nurse, midwife or health visitor.
- Ensure that people (or their family members or carers, as appropriate) who live in care homes or residential settings, or are housebound, or are housebound and are the parents or carers of babies and children, know how to get home visits for vaccination if they are unable to attend vaccination clinics or other settings where vaccinations are available.
- For contents of the invitation, see recommendations 1.3.11 and 1.3.12. Trusted sources include [Oxford University's Vaccine Knowledge Project](#), [NHS England](#) and the [World Health Organization](#).
- Ensure that the parents or carers (as appropriate) of babies who are in neonatal care units when they are eligible for their vaccinations receive relevant information (see recommendations 1.3.11 and 1.3.12) and are made aware of when and how their baby's vaccination will take place.

Reminders

Identify people who do not respond to invitations or attend clinics or vaccination appointments and send a reminder. Confirm receipt of the reminder.

Escalation

Older people

If older people do not respond to reminders, consider more direct contact such as a phone call. Explore with them the reasons for their lack of response and try to address any issues they raise.

For children aged 5 and under

Talk to parents or carers (as appropriate) who have not responded to a reminder if a vaccination delay is approaching:

- 2 weeks for babies aged up to 1 year
- 3 months for children aged 1 year and over.

Explore with them the reasons for their lack of response and try to address any issues they raise.

If someone declines an offer of vaccination, record this with the reason why, if given, and make sure they know how to get a vaccination at a later date if they change their mind.

- Consider a multidisciplinary approach to address any issues raised, involving other relevant health and social care practitioners such as health visitors, social workers or key workers, while respecting the person's decision if they refuse vaccination.
- Consider home visits for people who have difficulty travelling to vaccination services. Discuss immunisation and offer them or their children (as relevant) vaccinations there and then (or arrange a convenient time in the future).

Accessible information and supported decision making

- Try to provide the information, invitation and any subsequent reminders in a format and language appropriate for the person and their family members or carers (as appropriate).
- Ensure that the information, invitation and any subsequent reminders meet the person's communication needs (see [NHS England's Accessible Information Standard](#)). For more guidance on providing information to people and discussing their preferences with them, see [NICE's guidelines on patient experience in adult NHS services](#) and [shared decision making](#).
- If people need to provide consent for vaccination but need additional support with decision making (such as people with learning disabilities) or if they may lack mental capacity, follow the [recommendations on supporting decision making in the NICE guideline on decision making and mental capacity](#).

i Older people are adults who are eligible for routine vaccination on the UK schedule, excluding pregnancy-related vaccinations. At the time of publication (May 2022) the UK schedule has routine vaccinations for adults who are 65 and over, but this is expected to change. Consult [Immunisation against infectious disease \(the Green book\)](#) for information about current age limits and vaccinations for older people.