

Friday 17 September 2021

Ministers announce Jersey's winter vaccination programmes

Ministers have announced details of the vaccination programmes that will be starting before the winter, including a booster programme for Islanders who are most at-risk of COVID-19, vaccines for 12 to 15-year-olds and the annual flu vaccination programme. In addition, guidance has been issued to minimise risk during the autumn.

COVID vaccines for 12 to 15-year-olds

Following recommendations from the Chief Medical Officers in the UK, 12 to 15-year-old Islanders will soon be offered the Pfizer vaccine. Like all vaccinations, this will be voluntary, and parental consent will be required for young people to get their vaccination.

While young people are not at significant clinical risk from the effects of COVID-19, medical experts assessed the benefit of vaccination purely for this age group, without considering any benefit to other groups. They agree that vaccination will help reduce disruption to education and avoid further damage to the mental health and wellbeing of young people who have been at home away from their friends, their schools and their outside activities. When taking these wider impacts into account, the risk/benefit ratio favours offering vaccination to this age group.

A Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been put together by the Children's Commissioner, alongside officers from Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance (SPPP) and Children, Young People Education and Skills (CYPES).

The CRIA considers the proposals to extend the COVID-19 vaccination programme to 12 to 15 year-olds from the perspective of the rights and perspectives of children and young people. A CRIA has previously been produced for the closure and reopening of schools earlier in the pandemic.

Vaccinations will be available for younger Islanders from Monday 27 September. The team at Fort Regent will be setting up a specialist area, with a team of staff who have experience in vaccinating young people, to make the process as welcoming as possible.

The Minister for Children and Education, Deputy Scott Wickenden, said: "We know that young people are at lower clinical risk from the effects of COVID, but it is still important to protect them as much as possible, and getting vaccinated remains one of the most important ways of keeping safe.

"The decision to offer vaccination for young people has been taken based on all of the factors specific to young people, including their mental and physical health, wellbeing and right to access education. It is a decision that has been taken with the right of children first – young people are not being offered vaccination just to protect others; this is about protecting them.

"I would like to thank the Children's Commissioner who has been very supportive of the vaccination recommendations and has worked on a CRIA with Government officers to ensure the breadth of children's right were considered carefully and met."

Booster vaccinations for at risk Islanders

Following the latest advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and the Chief Medical Officers in the UK, Jersey will be launching a COVID-19 booster vaccination programme, to protect those who are most at risk from the virus.

The guidance issued by the JCVI earlier this week recommended that booster vaccines be offered in the UK to those more at risk from serious disease, and those who were vaccinated in the early stages of the vaccine programme.

Jersey's booster programme will begin on Monday 20 September for care home residents, Islanders aged 80 and older, and **all** health and social care workers. The priority groups cover:

