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NHS Publishing Approval Reference: 000001347  
PHE Gateway Number: GW-946

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20 December 2019

## **Changes to the infant pneumococcal conjugate vaccine schedule**

Dear Colleague

This letter provides information on the forthcoming changes to the infant pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) programme.

As you are aware, PCV became part of the routine childhood vaccination programme in 2006 to offer protection against seven pneumococcal serotypes. In 2010, the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV7) was changed to one that offered protection against 13 pneumococcal serotypes (PCV13 (Prevenar 13®)). These vaccines were administered following a 2 + 1 schedule at 8 and 16 weeks, with a booster dose given at one year old (on or after the first birthday).

Following the decision in April 2019 to follow a 1 + 1 schedule, based on the advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), all infants born on or after 1 January 2020 will be offered the changed schedule. This will be a single dose of PCV13 given alongside the routine DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB and rotavirus immunisations at 12 weeks of age, followed by a PCV13 booster at one year old (on or after the first birthday). This is referred to as a 1 + 1 PCV schedule. This 1 + 1 schedule will replace the previous schedule of 2 + 1 (at 8 and 16 weeks, and a booster dose given at one year old (on or after the first birthday)).

This letter is aimed at health professionals who will be responsible for implementing the changes to the PCV schedule. We encourage you to share this guidance with all those who will be involved in helping to deliver the national childhood immunisation schedule in your area.

### **Key points about the changes to the programme**

- The same vaccine that is currently used for the infant programme (Prevenar 13®, which helps protect against invasive disease caused by pneumococcal serotypes 1, 3, 4, 5, 6A, 6B, 7F, 9V, 14, 18C, 19A, 19F, and 23F), will be used
- Infants born on or after 1 January 2020 should be offered Prevenar 13® routinely as a 1+1 schedule (at 12 weeks and one year old (on or after the first birthday))
- Infants born on or before 31 December 2019 should remain on the previous schedule of 2+1 (at 8 and 16 weeks, and a booster dose given at one year old (on or after the first birthday))

### **Additional information**

- A revised version of the infant immunisation information leaflet will be available on the PHE Immunisation webpage from December 2019
- Further detailed information for healthcare professionals will be available on the PHE Immunisation webpage from December 2019
- A summary of key issues relating to the changes in the schedule is set out in **Annex A**
- Details of how the COVER programme, (the routine quarterly and annual childhood vaccine coverage data collection) will be modified to capture data on uptake of the first dose of PCV vaccine are set out in **Annex B**
- The pneumococcal chapter of the Green Book (Immunisation against infectious disease) will be published in December 2019. Publication will be made available here: [Pneumococcal chapter of the Green Book](#)
- The JCVI minutes from June 2018 (page 12-16) recommending the change to the infant PCV programme are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation#minutes>

- An updated patient group direction (PGD) template from Public Health England, for the administration of PCV, will be available for NHS England - NHS areas to adopt and authorise for their commissioned services ahead of the requirement to administer the first scheduled PCV dose at 12 weeks of age to those born on or after 1 January 2020

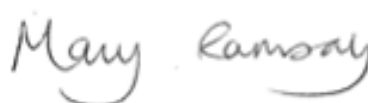
We would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved for their continuing hard work in delivering immunisation programmes to infants.

If you have any queries about the content of this letter please contact [immunisation@phe.gov.uk](mailto:immunisation@phe.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully



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**Director of Public Health**  
**Commissioning and Operations**



**Professor Mary Ramsay**  
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## **Annex A - guidance on immunisation of infants with pneumococcal conjugate vaccine**

1. This guidance is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI)<sup>1</sup>, the UK's independent advisory committee of immunisation experts. Full guidance will be available in the updated chapter on pneumococcal disease included in the 'Green Book' (Immunisation against infectious disease)<sup>2</sup>.

### **Timing**

2. The PCV13 vaccine will continue to be offered to all infants. Those born on or after 1 January 2020 will follow the new schedule. The vaccine will continue to be available to order through the ImmForm website<sup>3</sup>.
3. For healthy infants born on or after 1 January 2020:
  - The first dose should be given at 12 weeks of age, at the same time as the second set of primary immunisations
  - As the immunogenicity of a single dose of PCV13 is lower when given at a younger age, any dose given before 12 weeks of age will not be counted and another dose should be given once the infant reaches 12 weeks of age, allowing at least four weeks between the two PCV13 doses
  - The booster dose should be given at one year of age (on or after their first birthday)
  - The minimum time between the primary dose and the booster dose should ideally be 8 weeks. This can be reduced to a 4-week interval if the primary dose is not given until 11 months of age so that immunisations due at one year of age are not delayed
  - Children who start the immunisation schedule after their first birthday should be given a single PCV13 dose

All unimmunised or partially immunised healthy children remain eligible for PCV13 up to their second birthday. Routine immunisation with PCV13 is not offered after the second birthday unless the individual is at increased risk of pneumococcal disease (see Green Book Pneumococcal chapter (chapter 25) for risk groups).

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<sup>1</sup> JCVI minutes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation#minutes> (June 2018 – page 12-16)

<sup>2</sup> Green Book chapter: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pneumococcal-the-green-book-chapter-25>

<sup>3</sup> ImmForm website: <https://portal.immform.dh.gov.uk/Logon.aspx?returnurl=%2f>

For advice on at risk groups, incomplete vaccination and those vaccinated abroad, please see the Green Book chapter and the Information for healthcare practitioners PCV schedule change document.

### **Patient Group Directions**

4. An updated PGD template from Public Health England for the administration of the PCV will be available for NHS England - NHS Improvement areas to adopt and authorise for their commissioned services ahead of the requirement to administer a scheduled PCV dose at 12 weeks of age to those born on or after 1 January 2020.<sup>4</sup>

### **Child Health Information Services (CHIS)**

5. NHS England and NHS Improvement have met with NHS Digital to coordinate the changes required to the CHIS system to implement the PCV13 schedule for infants born on or after 1 January 2020 to follow the updated 1 + 1 schedule (1<sup>st</sup> Dose at 12 weeks + booster given at one year old (on or after the first birthday)). Data flows should be activated from 25 March 2020. For SNOMED codes see below.

#### SNOMED codes

6. The recommended SNOMED codes for recording receipt of PCV doses in electronic patient records (CHIS/GP) are as follows:

#### *Three dose schedules*

<b>Dose</b>	<b>SNOMED Code</b>	<b>SNOMED Description</b>
<b>PCV 1st dose</b>	247631000000101	First pneumococcal conjugated vaccination
<b>PCV 2nd dose</b>	247641000000105	Second pneumococcal conjugated vaccination
<b>PCV 3rd dose</b>	247651000000108	Third pneumococcal conjugated vaccination

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<sup>4</sup> PGD website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-patient-group-direction-pgd>

### *Two dose schedules*

<b>Dose</b>	<b>SNOMED Code</b>	<b>SNOMED Description</b>
<b>PCV 1st dose</b>	247631000000101	First pneumococcal conjugated vaccination
<b>PCV 2nd dose</b>	247641000000105	Second pneumococcal conjugated vaccination

*Vaccine codes for Prevenar 13<sup>®</sup> are as follows:*

- 16649511000001100
  - 16649411000001104 (potential new code)
  - 21562911000001100 (potential new code)
7. NHS England and NHS Improvement is responsible for the commissioning of CHIS. Parents and caregivers of infants born on or after 1 January 2020 will be notified of their eligibility for the updated schedule and will be contacted by a healthcare professional with the offer of an appointment.
  8. General practice must update the electronic patient records and the (Personal Child Health Record (Red book)).

### **Funding and service arrangements**

9. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Statement of Financial Entitlement (SFE) will be amended in early 2020 to reflect the new delivery requirements.

### **Communications and information for parents, caregiver and health professionals**

10. An integrated communications strategy has been produced for the change in schedule to the PCV immunisation programme. The strategy is led by PHE and provides communications colleagues in partner organisations with information and resources to assist with the delivery of the programme. Partners include DHSC, NHS England and NHS Improvement and national meningitis charities.
11. A patient information flyer and range of leaflets have been produced for parents and caregivers, to support the change of the vaccine programme. They are NHS branded and are available from the DHSC / PHE Publications Orderline to order now.

12. A document entitled 'Changes to the infant pneumococcal conjugate vaccine schedule: Information for healthcare practitioners' which provides further information in relation to programme eligibility, scheduling and vaccine administration will be available from December 2019 in the Pneumococcal section on the PHE Immunisation webpage.
13. The PCV vaccine information for parents on the NHS website will be updated from mid-December 2019 and will be available [here](#)<sup>5</sup>
14. Training slides detailing the schedule change will be available in the Pneumococcal section on the PHE Immunisation webpage from December 2019 and will be available [here](#)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Information for parents and caregivers <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pneumococcal-vaccination/>

<sup>6</sup> Training slide set: <https://publichealthengland-immunisati.box.com/s/wkwregsb204bawfmfj2n7ucugs8cg3o9> and <https://bit.ly/2qYYx4r>

## **Annex B - COVER programme vaccine coverage data collection**

The Coverage of Vaccine Evaluated Rapidly (COVER) programme is responsible for the data collection in England of Local Authority (LA) and GP level immunisation coverage data from Child Health Information Systems (CHISs) for children aged one, two and five years of age.

Two dose coverage of PCV vaccine evaluated at 12 months and booster coverage at 24 months has been part of the routine quarterly COVER programme since PCV vaccine was introduced in the routine childhood immunisation programme in 2006.

To continue accurately monitoring the coverage of PCV vaccine coverage at 12 months of age the COVER programme will be modified to also collect coverage of the first dose of PCV. Specifications for the revised collection of vaccine coverage data through COVER will be available on the NHS Digital COVER Information Standard page: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-standards/information-standards-and-data-collections-including-extractions/publications-and-notifications/standards-and-collections/dcb0089-cover-of-vaccination-evaluated-rapidly-cover>