



## HPV vaccine programme update

### Briefing pack for UKHSA stakeholders

June 2023

This briefing pack explains the changes to the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine programme and provides content for stakeholders to explain and promote the change to the public. It contains background information, statistics, key messages, suggested social media copy, social media assets and links to useful information.

#### HPV vaccine change

Currently, the HPV vaccine is routinely given in two doses, and three doses for those that are living with HIV or known to be immunocompromised at the time of vaccination.

Following recommendation from WHO and the JCVI, the routine immunisation programme for 12 and 13 year olds in Years 8 and 9 will change to one dose of the vaccine from 1 September 2023.

The programme will also change for men who have sex with men (MSM) and those who are immunosuppressed and those who are HIV positive.

The schedules from September 2023 will be:

- **Routine adolescent HPV immunisation programme for all children in School Year 8 (aged 12-13 years)** will move from two doses to one dose, offered mainly in secondary schools and includes children not in mainstream school via a community clinic delivery model.
- **Eligible GBMSM under the age of 25** will move from two doses to one dose, offered through sexual health clinics.
- **Eligible GBMSM aged 25 to 45 years** will remain on a two-dose schedule, offered through sexual health clinics.
- **Eligible individuals who are immunosuppressed or those known to be HIV-positive** will remain on a three-dose schedule.
- **Catch-up** will be eligible individuals who started their HPV vaccination schedule and have already received one dose of the vaccine by September 2023 will be considered fully vaccinated. Those who missed out on their one dose HPV vaccine can catch up until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday via their GP practice.

#### Key messages

- The HPV vaccination programme is one of the most successful in the world and has dramatically lowered the rates of cervical cancer and harmful infections in both women and men – preventing many cancers and saving lives.
- Evidence suggests that one dose provides similar protection to that from two doses.

- The JCVI decision to change the schedule is based on robust up to date evidence and in keeping with WHO advice, which suggests that vaccine efficacy from one dose is high and comparable to that from two doses.
- Gay and bisexual men and men who have sex with men aged 25-45 are recommended to remain on two doses because there is currently insufficient evidence of the efficacy of a single dose in this age group. However, if they received 1 dose prior to their 25th birthday, they do not require a second dose.
- Immunocompromised individuals, including those who are HIV positive, should continue to receive three doses as there is limited evidence regarding the efficacy of a single dose in this group.
- If you missed your HPV vaccine it is vital you get protected. Contact your school nurse, school immunisation team or GP practice to arrange an appointment – you remain eligible to receive the vaccine until your 25th birthday.

### What is HPV?

HPV is a virus that lives on the skin in and around the whole genital area, so using condoms does not provide complete protection from HPV.

HPV infection is very common and does not usually cause any symptoms. More than 70% of unvaccinated people will get it. It can be passed on by any skin to skin contact of the genital area.

There are many different types of HPV and most HPV infections do not cause any symptoms and get better on their own. However, some infections do not clear up and can lead to cancer, whilst others cause genital warts.

### The HPV vaccine

The UK's HPV vaccination programme is one of the most successful in the world, with high uptake and millions of doses given since its launch in 2008. The HPV vaccine helps protect against cancers caused by HPV, including:

- cervical cancer
- some mouth and throat cancers
- some cancers of the anus and genital areas

It also helps protect against genital warts.

However, as the HPV vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV that can cause cervical cancers, it is important that women who have received the HPV vaccine still come forwards for their cervical screening which uses a test to check for all types of high-risk HPV.

The HPV vaccine does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections

### History of HPV vaccines

The HPV vaccine was introduced in 2008 to protect secondary school year 8 girls (aged 12 and 13 years old) against cervical cancer. At that time, a catch-up programme also took place to vaccinate girls ages 13 to 18 years old. The vaccine was administered in 3 doses.

The recommendation for three doses of the HPV vaccine in the vaccination programme for adolescent girls was reviewed by JCVI in May 2014. Following this, a 2-dose schedule was recommended for girls under fifteen years of age as antibody response to 2 doses was found to be as good as a 3 dose course.

In September 2019, the HPV vaccination programme was extended to boys from 12 years of age.

This year's change to the routine immunisation programme follows WHO's and JCVI's 2022 reviews which confirmed that a single-dose schedule can provide a comparable efficacy and durability of protection to a two-dose regimen.

### Effectiveness of the vaccine

In the latest evidence from evaluation of the programme, [published in the Lancet in 2021](#), the HPV vaccine was shown to dramatically reduce cervical cancer rates by almost 90% in women in their 20s who were offered the vaccine at age 12 to 13 years in England, when compared to an unvaccinated population.

In 2020, the [rate of genital warts diagnoses among 15 to 17 year old girls was 95% lower](#) compared to 2016 and a decline of 89% was seen in the same aged heterosexual boys over the same period, suggesting substantial herd protection.

In 2018, 10 years after vaccination was introduced, [no HPV16 and/or 18 infections were detected in 16 to 18 year olds](#), indicating the programme has succeeded in delivering both direct and indirect protection.

### HPV vaccination rates

[Latest UKHSA data](#) noted that the biggest impact to school-based vaccine programmes was observed in the 2019 to 2020 academic year when all schools were closed and whilst vaccine coverage in 2020 to 2021 improved significantly, it was still not back up to pre-pandemic levels. Data from the 2021 to 2022 academic year in England showed that:

- **67.3% of year 9 females had two doses of the vaccine.** This is compared to 60.2% in 2020 to 2021, 64.7% in 2019 to 2020, 83.9% in 2018 to 2019 and 83.8% in 2017 to 2018
- **62.4% of year 9 males had two doses of the vaccine** compared with 54.4% in 2020 to 2021.

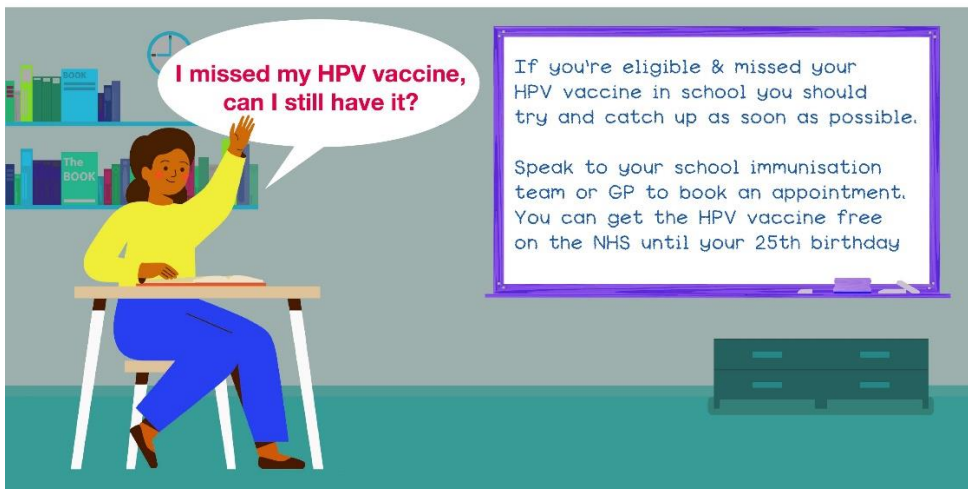
### Communication assets

All social media assets can be [downloaded via this Google Drive link](#). Examples included below:

# All children are offered the HPV vaccination in school year 8

It is **highly effective** at protecting against cervical cancer and genital warts, and should also prevent a range of other cancers.

The evidence shows **one jab** offers excellent and long-lasting protection, so we will now offer **one dose instead of two.**



## Suggested social media copy

### *For general audiences*

#### Link to relevant assets

#### **Post option 1**

From 1 Sept, teens and gay and bisexual men under 25yrs will only need a single dose of the HPV vaccine, following updated advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Find out more: (link to press release)

#### **Post option 2**

The #HPV vaccine helps to prevent HPV-related cancers from developing in boys and girls, with millions of doses given as part of the NHS vaccination schedule since 2008. From 1 Sept, some of those eligible for the HPV vaccine will only need a single dose.

### **Post option 3**

From 1 Sept, the #HPV vaccination programme will change so that teens and gay and bisexual men under 25 yrs will only need a single HPV jab to prevent HPV-related cancers. More info: (link to press release)

### **Post option 4**

The #HPV vaccine offers long-lasting protection against developing HPV-related cancers and has been part of the NHS vaccination schedule since 2008. If you think you've missed your HPV jab, you can catch up until your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

More info: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-hpv-vaccine/>

## **For parents**

### **[Link to relevant assets](#)**

#### **Post option 1**

🔊 Attention parents 🔊 From 1 September, teens going into Year 8 at school will only need a single dose of the #HPV vaccine to offer long-lasting protection. Find out more about the vaccine: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-hpv-vaccine/>

#### **Post option 2**

If your child is going into Year 8 at school this September, they'll only need to have a single #HPV vaccine jab to give long-lasting protection against developing HPV-related cancers.

More info: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-hpv-vaccine/>

## **For teens**

### **[Link to relevant assets](#)**

#### **Post option 1**

If you're going into Year 8 this September, you'll be offered a single #HPV vaccine jab to help protect you against developing HPV-related cancers. The vaccine offers excellent and long-lasting protection – find out more: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-hpv-vaccine/>

#### **Post option 2**

From 1 September, you'll only need to have 1 dose of the #HPV vaccine to offer long-lasting protection – the vaccine has a great track record of reducing the risk of developing HPV-related cancers. Find out more: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-hpv-vaccine/>

## **[Vaccine Q&A](#)**

### *How effective is one dose compared to two?*

- The HPV routine adolescent vaccine programme has been subject to a lot of changes over the years due to emerging evidence that is continually reviewed by independent scientific experts.

- The UK's JCVI and WHO's expert committee have concluded that the growing evidence over the past few years now clearly shows that a single HPV vaccine provides similar robust protection to 2 doses.
- In addition, the evidence shows that the vaccine induces a steady level of antibodies over a long duration of more than 10 years – with ongoing persistence and it is expected that this protection will continue along the same level.

### *Why is the programme different for the GBMSM and immunocompromised programme?*

- Gay and bisexual men and men who have sex with men aged 25-45 are recommended to remain on two doses because there is currently insufficient evidence of the efficacy of a single dose in this age group. However, if they received 1 dose prior to their 25th birthday, they do not require a second dose.
- The reviews also concluded that immunocompromised individuals, including those who are HIV positive, should continue to receive three doses as there is limited evidence regarding the efficacy of a single dose in this group.

### *What should you do if you have had one dose and are due to get your second dose after September 2023?*

- For anyone under 25 years of age who started on, but did not complete, a 2 dose schedule the following applies:
  - (a) if they have already received one dose of the vaccine they will be considered fully vaccinated
  - (b) those who have not yet received any HPV vaccinations will be eligible to receive one dose
- This applies both to those eligible for the NHS HPV adolescent programme – boys and girls - and those eligible for the GBMSM programme who are under 25 years of age.

### *Why are people who missed the vaccine only offered the catch-up up to the age of 25?*

- The risk of acquiring HPV infection peaks in young adulthood among heterosexuals whereas the risk in GBMSM continues to remain high after the age of 25.

### *Why are GBMSM over the age of 25 offered the vaccine but not heterosexuals?*

- In 2015, the JCVI advised that all Gay, Bisexual and other Men who have Sex with Men (GBMSM) up to and including 45 years of age who attend sexual health and/or HIV clinics should be offered the HPV vaccine.
- This advice was based on the evidence that this group were at continued higher risk of HPV infection and were expected to receive lower indirect protection or benefit from the adolescent female HPV vaccination programme, which commenced in 2014, with boys being offered the vaccine from 2019.

- In April 2018, after a successful pilot, the HPV vaccination programme was extended to include GBMSM up to and including 45 years attending all specialist Sexual Health Services (SHSs) and HIV clinics.

### *How long does the HPV vaccine protect you for?*

- Studies have shown that the vaccine protects against HPV infection for at least 10 years, although experts expect protection to last for much longer.
- But because the HPV vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer, it's important that all women who receive the HPV vaccine also have regular cervical screening once they reach the age of 25.

## Useful links

### Latest update

- [Press release – 15 June 2023](#)
- Press release – 23 January 2023 - [Concern over drop in HPV vaccine coverage among secondary school pupils - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### General

- [UKHSA information on HPV vaccine](#)
- [NHS Q&A on HPV and HPV vaccine](#)
- [UKHSA documents relating to the vaccination programme](#)

### Changes to the vaccine

- [Bipartite letter – June 2023](#)
- [WHO updates recommendations on HPV vaccination schedule](#)
- [JCVI statement on a one-dose schedule for the routine HPV immunisation programme](#)

### Guidance for practitioners

- [HPV vaccination guidance for healthcare practitioners \(version 6\) – last updated 7 April 2022](#)

### Statistics

- [HPV vaccine coverage estimates in England: 2021 to 2022](#)
- [HPV vaccine coverage estimates in England: 2020 to 2021](#)

## For further information, please contact:



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