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Friday, 17 February 2023

West Yorkshire COVID-19 vaccination programme update

Dear colleague

The autumn booster offer has now come to an end, with the 12 February being the final date for people to get the top-up jab. In total, 700,747 eligible people across West Yorkshire came forward for their booster during the campaign, with services seeing a slight flurry over the past two weeks after the cut-off date was announced.

This is a great achievement and reflects the hard work by our vaccination teams in all areas and their commitment to reaching as many people as possible. It has understandably been a bigger challenge this year, with the public being much less concerned about COVID and the focus shifting to the cost-of-living crisis that so many people are unfortunately having to contend with.

Our primary care networks and community pharmacy colleagues have again played a vital role in delivering the vital top up jab and they and other vaccination teams have continued to use a wide variety of approaches to encourage people to get protected. This has included providing large numbers of outreach services and clinics in local communities, often in conjunction with educational initiatives or other health events, and we are enormously grateful to partners across the region for their support with this. This partnership approach has been fundamental to addressing health inequalities and reaching inclusion groups, with the work with local community groups being particularly successful. There have been some excellent initiatives carried out in all areas and the learning from these is being used to inform planning for the next phases of the programme.

First and second doses will continue to be available for anyone who has not yet had these vaccinations. Although many services will be paused now that the booster offer has ended, there are still services operating in each Place. People can book appointments online at www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine or by calling 119, or use the national site finder (www.nhs.uk/grab-a-jab) to find details of any local walk-in clinics.



As you will be aware, the JCVI has recommended that the booster becomes a seasonal offer and we will be working to move the COVID vaccination programme to a 'business as usual' approach, similar to that for the flu vaccination. Ensuring a fully joined up approach for these two programmes will also be vital to help us deliver them successfully going forward.

We are also making plans for delivering an additional booster to some particularly vulnerable groups this Spring, which the JCVI has said is likely to be needed. We are awaiting clarification on this and the groups who will require it but working on the basis that it will be similar to the offer made last Spring.

We will keep you updated on plans for the Spring Booster as these develop but in the meantime, I would just like to thank all of you who have been involved in or supported the latest booster programme and helped us ensure people in West Yorkshire have remained as protected as possible against COVID this winter.

With best wishes



Dr James Thomas
Medical Director, NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

