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Members of Parliament  
SPICe

14 February 2024

Dear Colleagues,

## Shingles Vaccination Programme

I am writing to you as an elected member about the delivery of the Shingles Vaccination Programme. We are aware of recent enquiries about the expansion to this programme and hope the following information helps you, should you receive similar queries.

Eligibility of the Shingles Vaccination Programme has changed to allow individuals to get protected at an earlier age. The choice of age group was based on Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) assessment of impact and cost effectiveness.

In time, the offer will expand to those turning both 60 and 65 years old. To deliver the programme effectively, NHS Scotland will deliver the vaccination programme extension on a phased basis over 10 years meaning by 2033, the vaccine will be routinely offered to everyone aged 60 and over.

Since 1 September 2023 the following groups have been eligible:

- People who were aged 65 or 70 on 1 September 2023
- People aged 71 - 79 who have not previously been vaccinated.
- People aged 50 or over, about to start immunosuppressive therapy.
- People aged 50 or over, with a severely weakened immune system.
- People aged 18 or over who have received a stem cell transplant.
- People aged 18 or over who have had CAR-T therapy.

Those currently aged 66 to 69 years will not be eligible for the vaccine until they turn 70 years old. They become eligible for vaccination from 1 September after their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is recognised that some people may be disappointed that they are not yet included in the age group to be offered a shingles vaccine this year.

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This phased approach is based on the advice of the JCVI and to ensure that NHS Scotland can deliver the programme effectively alongside other immunisation programmes. It is also in line with the roll out of the programme across the other UK nations.

When any vaccination programme is introduced or extended, recommendations are made about who will be offered the vaccine and when they will be invited to come forward. These decisions are based on a combination of factors including the risk of the disease and the effectiveness of the vaccine in different age groups.

NHS health boards are responsible for delivering vaccination programmes in Scotland. Local health boards will invite eligible individuals in their area forward for their appointments and **they should wait to be contacted**. The shingles vaccine can be offered all year round; however, most health boards started to invite those who are eligible in **January 2024**. For those who are unsure if they're eligible, there is further information and an [age eligibility calculator](#) available at [www.nhsinform.scot/shingles](http://www.nhsinform.scot/shingles).

The JCVI recommended that Shingrix should replace Zostavax in the routine programme and considers the vaccine to be both effective and cost-effective. From 1 September 2023, all newly eligible individuals will be offered the non-live shingles vaccine Shingrix. This is a two-dose schedule vaccine. Zostavax will no longer be used.

Shingles can be very painful and is more common among older people. The older you are, the worse it can be. For some, the pain caused by shingles can last for many years. Every year in Scotland, around 400 people aged 70 and over will be hospitalised due to shingles and related complications. The vaccine helps to build up immunity to the virus and helps fight it off more easily.

I hope this information is helpful in setting out the eligibility and planned delivery of the Shingles Vaccination Programme. I would be grateful if you could share this with constituents who enquire about the changes to this programme.

Yours sincerely



**Jenni Minto MSP**

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