

For the attention of Linda Moan
Pbs.vaccination@phs.scot

By email: 22nd August 2024

Dear Linda

RE: Scottish Vaccination and Immunisation 5-year Strategy - Consultation

I am writing on behalf of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) in Scotland in response to the consultation on the Scottish Vaccination and Immunisation 5-Year Strategy. Although we did not receive the consultation directly, we believe it is crucial to provide our input on this significant matter.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is dedicated to advancing the profession of pharmacy for public and patient benefit. Our mission is to support pharmacists in their professional development, advocate for the role of pharmacy in healthcare, and ensure the highest standards of practice. Our vision is to be the world leader in the safe and effective use of medicines, enhancing the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

We must recognise our national success in immunisation in Scotland and agree that we must continue to do all we can to ensure the public health benefits of vaccination are realised. We agree with the mission statement within the strategy, to deliver a world-class, person-centred and public health led programme. With that in mind, we offer the following points of feedback.

Firstly, we would like to express our view that pharmacists across all sectors of practice are considered key stakeholders in the planning and delivery of immunisation services in Scotland. The RPS represents a wide network of pharmacists who are integral to the healthcare system, and our contribution to that development by Public Health Scotland would support a comprehensive and effective approach to immunisation. It is also crucial that independent contractors, such as community pharmacists, are involved from the beginning of strategy development and are considered key stakeholders in creating the delivery plan. Their frontline experience and insights are invaluable in shaping a practical and effective immunisation strategy.



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The foreword to the strategy describes it “is for everyone working within immunisation”. We are disappointed to note the lack of acknowledgment of the vital role that community pharmacists have played, and continue to play, in the delivery of vaccinations in Scotland. The COVID-19 vaccination programme highlighted the capacity and capability of community pharmacists to deliver large-scale immunisation services efficiently and safely. Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and support staff play vital roles in Health Boards to support the procurement, storage and pharmacologistics of vaccines, ensuring they are available in the locations they are required, while maintaining the cold chain and minimising waste. It is essential that their contributions are recognised and integrated into future strategies to leverage their expertise and accessibility.

Additionally, we are concerned that the only mention of pharmacy in the current draft of the strategy and delivery plan is in the context of supporting confident conversations about vaccines with the public. While this is an important role, pharmacists and their teams can contribute much more. Beyond educating the public on medicines, pharmacists are well-positioned to administer vaccines and manage vaccination programmes, given their accessibility and trust within communities. Introducing vaccination administration training for pharmacy technicians and other qualified support staff will allow pharmacists to better manage their patient-facing and clinical supervision responsibilities, thereby increasing overall capacity.

By inclusion in the Scottish Vaccination and Immunisation Strategy, pharmacists can be empowered to utilise the skills within their teams to provide an additional avenue for patients to access vaccination alongside the immunisation hub offerings. We consider community pharmacy teams to be “vaccination champions” (page 18) and investment in training for pharmacy staff to identify under-vaccinated populations and funding to offer accessible vaccination services for those citizens who miss out on the structured programmes would expand the reach of this essential public health service. Examples of the opportunities might be young adults who have missed the HPV or meningitis offer.

Integration of the vaccination programme within the wider health and care system is important. The RPS is campaigning for pharmacists to have read and write access to the integrated health and social care record; the end-to-end digital solution which will provide a Once-For-Scotland vaccination record must integrate with any future platform. Currently, community pharmacists record NHS vaccinations in the TURAS vaccine management tool, however, these records do not appear on the Emergency Care Summary and are not accessible in secondary care. Future integration of the record is essential and the ability for community pharmacy teams to record additional vaccinations is desirable e.g. travel vaccines.



Furthermore, we are concerned about the absence of consideration for the proposed National Care Service and its potential impact on health and care infrastructure over the next five years. The integration of health and social care services is a critical factor that must be addressed to ensure the success of the vaccination and immunisation strategy. We urge the inclusion of detailed plans on how the National Care Service will be aligned with immunisation efforts to provide cohesive and effective healthcare delivery.

We noticed typographical errors in the infographic in Section 4.1 on page 12. In the table on page 25, where describing the provision of information in alternative formats, we suggest the inclusion of materials which are neuroinclusive.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our feedback and look forward to engaging further in the development of this strategy. Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information or to discuss our response in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Jonathan Burton', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Burton MBE FRPharmS
Chair
Scottish Pharmacy Board

