



Media Release

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Local health professions experts explain rationale for offering single dose of COVID-19 vaccine to 12-15 year olds

A group of subject-matter experts was constituted to specifically examine whether Guernsey should offer a COVID-19 vaccine to 12 to 15 year olds.

The special-interest group considered a range of advice, including from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, the UK medicine regulator the MHRA, decisions made in other jurisdictions and the four Chief Medical Officers of the Devolved Administrations (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

It recommended to the Committee for Health & Social Care that Guernsey offer this cohort the option of being vaccinated, which the Committee agreed.

The below statement is from the members of this group, which included the Medical Officer of Health, Medical Director, Consultant Paediatricians, Vaccination Lead for Public Health, Chief Pharmacist, three GPs with a specialist interest in vaccination, representing Primary Care and the Incoming Director of Education. The team were supported in their discussions by a representative of the Health and Social Care Quality & Safety Team.

‘Our group was brought together to examine whether the benefits of offering a COVID-19 vaccine to 12 to 15 year old outweighed any potential concerns in a Bailiwick context. We were acutely aware of the potential for this to be an area of discussion amongst the community whether our recommendation had been supportive of offering the vaccine to this cohort or not. Many parents and young people had already expressed that they wanted the option to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and it is important that we consider all views across the community.

‘The group considered a wide range of information, as well as our local situation, and we concluded that it was right that we offered this cohort the option of having a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine

‘There has been a misunderstanding, or misreporting, of the JCVI advice on this cohort. The JCVI was not opposed to 12 to 15 year olds being offered the vaccine, in

fact it concluded there was an overall advantage for vaccination in this cohort. The JVIC's advice is that, while it did not meet their usual threshold for recommending population based vaccination solely on health grounds, it did not feel the risk of vaccination in this cohort was greater than the benefit. The MHRA also concluded that the Pfizer vaccine was safe for use within this age cohort.

'Had we advised against offering this cohort the opportunity of being vaccinated, which it must be stressed is voluntary, then Guernsey would have been the only jurisdiction in the British Isles that had taken that stance. Likewise, we would have been out of step with many countries around the world. While we understand the concerns of some in the community, including some colleagues in the medical profession, when examined in the round the evidence points to our recommendation being appropriate and proportionate.'