

Coronavirus – vaccine update

Following reports of some incidences of blood clots in people who have been vaccinated with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, The Scottish Government has issued a statement from Deputy Chief Medical Officer Nicola Steedman.

Dr Steedman said: “Following the statements by the MHRA and the JCVI we want to stress that the evidence shows that, overall, the benefits of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine outweigh the risks and it continues to be a safe and effective vaccine.

“However, The Scottish Government will follow the JCVI recommendation to offer alternative vaccines to adults under 30 without underlying health conditions.

“We have two other vaccines which have been authorised by the MHRA currently in use – Pfizer/BioNtech and Moderna – and others should become available in the future.

“We continue to urge anyone offered a vaccination to take up their appointment. Everyone who has received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine should receive their second dose as this gives greater and longer lasting protection against the virus. This is with the exception of the very few individuals who have had a blood clot with low platelet counts after their first injection, or an allergic reaction.

“The vaccination programme is one of three key ways we are

working to beat this virus, along with our expanded testing programme to identify cases and break chains of transmission and the important restrictions everyone in Scotland must follow. All these measures work to greatest effect to protect people when they work together.

“We are currently considering whether there may be any implications for the timescales for our national vaccination programme but at this stage we remain on track to offer first injections to all adults by the end of July.”

A UK Government spokesperson said: “The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is safe, effective and has already saved thousands of lives. “As the MHRA – the UK’s independent regulator – and the JCVI have said, the benefits of the vaccine far outweigh the risks for the vast majority of adults.

“Everybody who has already had a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine should receive a second dose of the same brand, irrespective of age, except for the very small number of people who experienced blood clots with low platelet counts from their first vaccination.

“The government will follow today’s updated advice, which sets out that, as a precaution, it is preferable for people under the age of 30 with no underlying health conditions to be offered an alternative vaccine where possible once they are eligible.

“When people are called forward, they should get their jab. Vaccines are the best way out of this pandemic and provide strong protection against Covid-19.

“We are very grateful for the work of our world-leading regulator and our expert advisors as they continue to address this issue.

“More than 37 million jabs overall have already been administered, and we are on track to offer jabs to all over

50s by 15 April and all adults by the end of July.”