

Coronavirus – international students will be included in vaccination programme

International students are to be included in the national Covid-19 vaccination programme.

Health Secretary, Humza Yousaf, has confirmed this will take place in line with guidelines from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) for the coming academic year (2021-22).

The move will both protect incoming students during their studies and prevent possible further transmission.

Mr Yousaf said: “There is a huge amount of work going on to ensure that everyone is able to get vaccinated. This is crucial to the success of the programme and our efforts to bring the virus under control.

“Based on the latest data, we estimate there could be around 65,000 international students studying in Scotland in the next academic year. I am pleased to confirm they will be included in our national vaccination programme.

“Of course many will be from countries where there is a mature vaccination system and they will already be fully or partially vaccinated. However, some may not yet have been vaccinated or may still require a second dose and we are currently working with the Universities and Colleges Scotland as well as local health boards to firm up plans for these students.

“We continue to urge everyone to take up their appointment for

a vaccine when it is offered and remember the second dose offers greater and longer protection against the virus.”

Universities Scotland Director Alastair Sim said: “International students are an integral part of Scotland’s university community. As a part of that community, it’s absolutely vital that they have the same entitlement to a COVID-19 vaccination as other students and we welcome the clarity for international students that the Scottish Government has provided.

“Vaccination is the best route back to normality. For international students arriving in Scotland over the coming months, it is crucial that they know that they will receive all the help they require to stay safe during these uncertain times. Being eligible for a vaccine is an important part of that sense of security and wellbeing.”

Colleges Scotland Chief Executive Shona Struthers said: “We’re pleased to see the expansion of the vaccination programme to international students.

“Colleges welcome international students from around the world every year – we want them to feel safe and protected while they live and study in Scotland, and the community around them to be confident that students have had the opportunity to be vaccinated while they are in Scotland.”