

Booster programme for older and more vulnerable now underway

Over 75s, immunosuppressed individuals and those living in care home are now able to receive an additional Covid-19 booster vaccination as part of its efforts to protect those at highest risk from Covid-19.

People in these groups will be invited as they become eligible from at least 24 weeks after their last booster, with the first groups receiving appointments from this week.

Jane McNulty, Director of Nursing for Primary and Community Care, NHS Lothian, said: "We are delighted to offer this further vaccination to the most vulnerable to people in our society.

"The degree of protection the vaccine offers wanes over time, which is why booster vaccination is needed to maintain the best protection against Covid-19 for those at highest risk of severe effects of the virus.

"The spring booster will improve your level of protection significantly and is the best way to protect your health and those around you."

NHS Lothian will also start offering vaccinations to all

children aged 5-11 in Lothian on Saturday 19 March, following its initial offering of the childhood vaccine to children most at risk from Covid-19 and children living with an immunosuppressed person.

Letters will be sent out to parents and carers in the coming weeks inviting them to bring their child to a child vaccination clinic in the Lothian area.

Paediatric vaccinators will be available at the clinics to answer any questions people may have about the Covid-19 childhood vaccine.

Parents and carers do not need to contact NHS Lothian proactively to arrange an appointment.

Ms McNulty added: "The primary aim of our vaccination programme continues to be the prevention of severe disease, hospitalisation and mortality, arising from Covid-19.

"I encourage anyone who is still to have any dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible."

Established vaccination clinics for over 12s will continue to operate separately from these clinics, with NHS Lothian still encouraging all over 12s to get any outstanding vaccinations.

Over 18s can receive their first, second and booster vaccinations at all drop-in clinics. Those aged 12-17 can also attend for their second dose if it has been at least 12 weeks since their first dose and they have not tested positive for Covid-19 in the past 12 weeks.

More information on the 5-11 vaccination programme is available on NHS Inform.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine/the-vaccines/vaccinating-children-aged-5-to-11-years/>

Information on clinic locations and opening times for over 12s is also available on NHS Lothian's website – <https://www.nhslothian.scot/Coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Drop-in-Clinics.aspx>