

Training and preparation of clinical staff to deliver a quality Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccination service.

Introduction

Comprehensive training and competency assessment must be in place so that all vaccines are given safely and effectively to those who are eligible to receive them. Quality, reputation, and public confidence in new and established programmes are crucial to their success.

The UKHSA publishes the following guidelines¹:

- [National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Immunisation Training for Registered Healthcare Practitioners](#)
Note: the national template PGDs developed by UKHSA and the [Welsh medicines advice service](#) require staff using them to be trained in line with requirements outlined in this document
- [National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Immunisation Training of Healthcare Support Workers](#)).

It is not possible to provide specific guidance about the training that an *individual* staff member requires to be able to safely deliver any vaccination service. The recommended approach is to use these guidelines to determine what knowledge and skills they already have, to adapt and provide training to address any knowledge and skills gaps and to then assess their competence and confidence to provide all of the elements of the service that they are being asked to carry out.

The principles of delegation and accountability also apply. Once trained and assessed as competent, clinical governance requires that all staff providing the vaccination services have the necessary support and supervision, and that structures and routes of escalation are in place so that staff can safely carry out their role within both their scope of practice and assessed degree of knowledge and competence.



Delegation and roles

Careful consideration should be given regarding the most appropriate delegation and role of staff in delivering the RSV vaccination service. For example, due to its complex nature, delegation of the vaccinator role to healthcare support workers does not necessarily result in operational efficiencies. Healthcare support workers are not able to assess suitability for vaccination, or work to Patient Group Directions (PGDs) (instead, a Patient Specific Direction (PSD) or individual patient prescription, written by a prescriber who has undertaken an assessment of each intended recipient would be required).

There are some additional aspects to consider regarding the appropriateness of delegating RSV vaccination:

- this is a new programme so individuals may have a lot of questions or concerns
- there are specific (and different) eligibility, timing and co-administration requirements for each programme
- the mechanism for drawing up the dose is different to that of other vaccines.

Determining the training needs

It must not be assumed that having received training for and been signed-off as competent to deliver one vaccine product, staff of any grade are capable of administering another vaccine product to a different subset of the population. Anyone advising about, assessing suitability for or administering any vaccine must have received specific training for that vaccine and sufficient preparation that they are competent and confident to carry out their role.

The national minimum standards documents discuss tailoring training to suit the requirements of individuals who will be delivering only certain vaccines or specific elements of the national vaccination programmes.

When planning training, the likely training needs of staff should be reviewed. It is important to consider:

- whether or not they have professional registration
- their scope of practice
- whether they have had any previous immunisation experience and, if they have, the breadth and depth of their knowledge and experience and how recently they last advised about and/ or administered a vaccine
- any training and supervised practice that they have already received and how recent this was (an annual update is recommended and all staff with an ongoing role in immunisation also have a responsibility to remain up to date).

It is strongly recommended that a competency assessment is used to review the individuals prior knowledge and skills and will help to identify and then address any gaps, if required².

Training content and delivery

The training package should cover all the topics in the core curriculum that are listed in the national minimum standards documents but these can be made context and vaccine specific for staff who will only be involved in the delivery of the RSV programme(s).

In terms of theoretical training, it is always preferable to include an element of interactive learning (whether via an online meeting platform or in person). This is important for all immunisation programmes.

Summary

It is crucial that vaccinations are safely and effectively delivered to eligible people. This will require knowledgeable, confident, and competent vaccinators and advisors. It is vital that staff are given the time and opportunity to undertake the comprehensive training they need and that they are supervised and supported in practice as required.

Links to training and health professional resources are provided below to aid staff to locate the information that they require.

1. Review and revision of these documents is underway by UKHSA. It not expected that the principles outlined within them will change but that the vaccines that healthcare support workers can administer will no longer be specified. The publication date for the revised versions is not yet known.
2. An example of a competency assessment tool, which can be adapted according to the staff member's involvement in either one or more vaccination programmes is published by the UKHSA. See Appendix A of the [National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Immunisation Training for Registered Healthcare Practitioners](#). The RCN have also published *The immunisation knowledge and skills competency assessment tool* which is a competence framework to support the training and assessment of registered and non-registered health care workers who have a role in immunisations: [Royal College of Nursing - Immunisation knowledge and skills competence assessment tool](#).

RSV vaccination programme resources:

Public Health Wales - Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) - Information for health professionals page: [Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\) vaccination information - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

RSV training slides available here: [Immunisation training resources and events - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

- [RSV vaccination programme for older adults – slide set v2](#)
- [RSV vaccination of pregnant women for infant protection – slide set v2](#)

Two recorded slide sets were developed to provide detailed briefings about RSV and the RSV vaccination campaign:

- An Introduction to Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) - Recorded slide set (1) - Slide set [23/05/2024]
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) - Vaccination Campaign 2024 - Recorded slide set (2) - Slide set [10/07/2024]

These recorded slide sets can be viewed here: [Training \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

An RSV Q&A webinar was also hosted by the Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme on the 8th August the slide set and recording are available to view here: [Training \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Note: The slides and recordings on the [Training \(sharepoint.com\)](#) page are not training resources. These resources aim to provide detailed briefings to support Health Boards with local training.