

Expansion of the vaccination programme to healthy 5 to 11s

On Wednesday, 16 February, the government [announced that all 5 to 11 year olds will be offered the COVID-19 vaccination](#).

This follows a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) that all 5- to 11-year-olds should be offered two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech paediatric vaccine. The two doses should be given with an interval of at least 12 weeks between doses.

Although this age group is generally at very low risk of serious illness from the virus, a very small number of children who get infected do develop severe disease. Latest evidence suggests that offering the vaccine ahead of another potential wave will protect this very small number of children from serious illness and hospitalisation – and will also provide some short-term protection against mild infection across the age group.

The recommendation should not displace the delivery of other non-COVID-19 childhood vaccinations, or any other part of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. For example, uptake of some non-COVID-19 childhood vaccination programmes, such as MMR and HPV vaccinations, have been affected by the pandemic. The committee has advised that the addition of a COVID-19 vaccine rollout to this age group should not impact the recovery of these programmes.

This is not yet live, and there will be further national announcements of when this vaccination will be offered. Parents are urged not to contact their GP practice to ask about these vaccinations; more information will be shared soon.

In Sussex we have been discussing the potential for this age group to be offered the vaccination and have been working to develop plans for delivery. We would like to hear from families with children in this age group to hear where you would prefer to take your child for their vaccination. Please let us know by answering the question that can be found by clicking the link below:

[Expansion of the vaccination programme to health 5-11 year olds](#)