

VACCINATION UPDATE

Health and Wellbeing Board

Office of the Director of Public Health



Introduction

The UK routine vaccination schedule consists of 15 vaccines protecting against 21 diseases. In England, vaccine services are commissioned by the NHS England Vaccination and Screening Team (VaST) with input from the Integrated Care Board (ICB). This commissioning role will move in coming years, so the ICB are currently shadowing to prepare for the transition. The provision of vaccination services is undertaken by NHS providers, including the vaccine outreach team.

Roles and responsibilities

Whilst Plymouth City Council does not commission or deliver vaccination programmes, we provide insight into the Plymouth population and support commissioners and providers to engage with our communities. A summary of stakeholder organisations and their roles are shown in the table below.

Organisation	Role	Description
NHS England Vaccination and Screening Team (VaST)	Commissioning	Commissions vaccination services
Integrated Care Board (ICB) NHS Devon	Commissioning	Supports commissioning at a regional level and is shadowing for future commissioning role. NHS Devon also commission a Vaccination Optimisation team
GP Practices	Delivery partner	Deliver much of routine vaccination schedule, maintaining patient records, managing invites and clinical oversight
Vaccine Outreach Team	Delivery partner	Provide additional, flexible community-based delivery of seasonal and maternity vaccinations for harder-to-reach groups

School-Aged Immunisation Service (Kernow Health)	Delivery partner	Contracted to deliver school-aged vaccination programmes, including educational sessions in schools
Community Pharmacies	Delivery partner	NHS commissioned pharmacies provide influenza and Covid vaccines
Plymouth City Council	Facilitation and support	Liaison with commissioners and delivery partners to provide community insight and wraparound support to vaccination providers
VCSE Organisations	Facilitator	Charities, community groups and other partner organisations support vaccination providers through vaccination messaging, hosting community provision, and instilling trust in NHS-led services

Seasonal Vaccination

In 2025, Plymouth City Council launched 'Plymouth Protects', a multi-media communications campaign to improve vaccination uptake across the city. This campaign aim was to improve uptake of vaccinations, including seasonal vaccines, such as influenza, particularly amongst vulnerable groups.

Branded posters and digital assets were produced (see Annex), carrying key messaging to encourage vaccination, including materials for specific vaccines. Digital media assets were promoted across PCC social media channels, including Facebook, X, and LinkedIn. Posters and leaflets were provided in libraries, wellbeing hubs, family hubs and welcome spaces, and provided to stakeholder organisations. Posters were also displayed on bus shelters and in the Drakes Circus shopping mall on digital boards.

All information materials linked users, via a QR code or URL, to a PCC hosted webpage with information. This information page attracted over 5,300 views between October and February and accounted for over 30% of views to PCC webpages.

A Plymouth Chronicle article, featuring the Director of Public Health reinforced vaccine messaging for residents and was distributed to 92,000 homes. (See Annex).

The Public Health team also amplified vaccination messaging for carers through targeted advertising for anyone in the Plymouth area who searched online for information relating to carers. This targeted advertising ran throughout November 2025 and generated 12,983 interactions and 9,537 clicks to access further information on vaccinations.

To support PCC staff, four clinics were provided by the vaccine outreach team across PCC locations, with 135 employees vaccinated against influenza.

As of 18th January 2026, the city-wide uptake amongst eligible individuals was 59% for flu (England: 53%) and 64% for Covid (England: 57%).

Health and social care staff

To increase uptake amongst Adult Social Care staff, Plymouth City Council worked with care home managers forum, using the Vaccine Outreach Team to provide tailored education sessions to care home managers. A similar offer was delivered to domiciliary care workers.

University Hospital Plymouth (UHP) conducted staff vaccination activities with an aim of increasing uptake for flu vaccines across their staff group. As of January 2026, staff uptake for the influenza vaccine was 57%, a considerable improvement on 46% in the previous year.

Childhood Vaccinations

From 1st January 2026, the childhood immunisation schedule changed to combine a new Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine with the MMR vaccine; the new MMRV. The timings for this vaccination schedule were also updated to 12 months for the first dose with a follow-up at 18 months. This schedule change may mean that the vaccination record, “red book”, may not be accurate, with parents advised to respond to invitations from the child’s GP surgery if they are unsure.

Information on the childhood vaccination schedule has been shared on PCC social media channels and shared with Family hubs, and through the Early Years and Childcare Bulletin. Infographics and other resources from the UKHSA advising of the changes were also distributed to the Family hubs.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is the cause of a range of cancers, affecting both males and females, and increasing vaccine uptake is critical to ensure cervical cancer elimination for Plymouth residents. Data for 2025 shows a disparity in uptake for children in Year 10 with 72.8% for boys (England: 71.2%) and 79.5% for girls (England: 76.7%). Uptake is also lower in schools in areas with higher levels of deprivation and amongst children who are electively home educated.

The public health team have engaged with the school-aged immunisation provider to explore options to improve information provision to schools, parents and pupils, including plans to co-produce suitable digital communications with the Youth Parliament.

Work has also begun to improve data sharing between schools and the immunisation provider to identify unvaccinated children so that they can be followed up. We are also identifying links to improve support for children who are electively home educated.

Vaccines for Older Adults

Three key vaccines are offered to older adults: shingles, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and PPV (pneumococcal). These vaccines are offered year-round to older adults but each vaccine has different eligibility criteria.

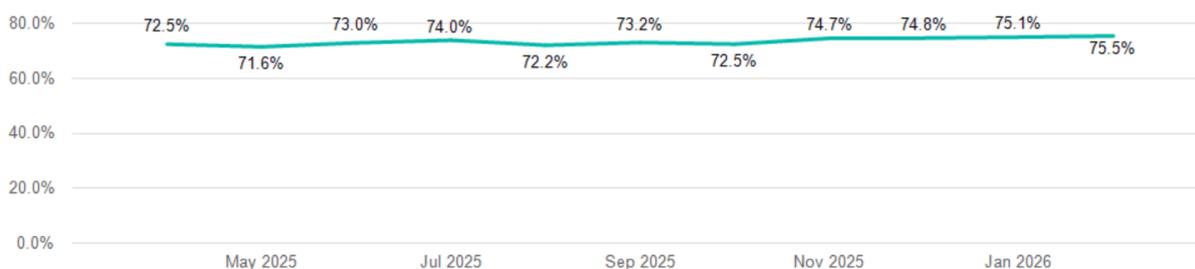
Plymouth Protects communications materials promoting vaccine uptake for these three vaccines are being expanded to include new posters and digital assets, emphasising year-round eligibility and highlighting complications such as pneumonia to improve understanding around the importance of the vaccines.

This plan has been presented to stakeholders at the Ageing Well Collective to engage them in targeting communications materials and gain their support to amplify vaccine messaging for older adults. Posters will be distributed to wellbeing hubs, libraries, care settings, religious spaces and VCSE organisations, while the digital assets will be promoted via PCC social media channels.

Children in Care

A specialist NHS team collects data for children who have a current looked after period of care, based on the child’s last immunisation check during their regular health assessment. This indicates that looked after children show relatively high rates of vaccine uptake of 71.6% to 75.5%, likely due to their structured engagement in regular health checks. This overall figure may, however, mask lower uptake for specific vaccines, and looked after children are also likely to experience some of the vaccine inequalities noted elsewhere.

Monthly trend (since beginning of year)



Apr 2025	May 2025	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Now
72.5% (of 375) (103 not)	71.6% (of 373) (106 not)	73.0% (of 367) (99 not)	74.0% (of 373) (97 not)	72.2% (of 535) (149 not)	73.2% (of 529) (142 not)	72.5% (of 528) (145 not)	74.7% (of 521) (132 not)	74.8% (of 523) (132 not)	75.1% (of 522) (130 not)	75.5% (of 523) (128 not)

We continue to engage with specialist services to ensure access and support for all looked after children with regard to vaccination.

Other Vaccines

Pregnant individuals are offered vaccines for pertussis, RSV and the seasonal influenza virus. PCC has met with UHP midwifery teams and other stakeholders to explore opportunities to support increased uptake of maternity vaccines.

Conclusion

In summary, PCC have undertaken a range of activities throughout the winter to promote the uptake of seasonal vaccines with data suggesting that this has had a positive impact. The focus of this work will now shift to the year-round vaccine offers for older adults and improving the uptake of the HPV vaccine in school-aged children.

Annexes

I. Selection of Plymouth Protects materials





2. The Plymouth Chronicle article

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Vaccines: your questions answered

Vaccines are one of the most important ways to protect ourselves and others from serious diseases. But with so much information out there, it's easy to feel confused. Plymouth's Director of Public Health, Professor Steve Maddern, answers some common questions here.

What is a vaccine?
A vaccine is a medicine that helps your body build protection against diseases. It trains your immune system to recognise and fight off harmful viruses or bacteria without making you seriously ill. This means if you come into contact with the disease later, your body is ready to defend itself.

Why are vaccines important?
Vaccines save lives. They've helped reduce and even eliminate deadly diseases like polio, measles, and smallpox. When enough people are vaccinated, it also protects those who can't have vaccines – like babies or people with certain health conditions – by stopping diseases from spreading. This is called 'herd immunity'.

Are vaccines safe?
Yes. All vaccines used in the UK go through strict testing before they are approved. They are checked for safety, quality, and effectiveness. Once a vaccine is in use, it is constantly monitored by health experts. Like any medicine, vaccines can have side effects, but these are usually mild, like a sore arm or feeling tired for a day or two.

What vaccines can pregnant women have?
Pregnant women are offered vaccines which protect themselves and their babies – these are safe to have during pregnancy. The whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine is especially important as whooping cough can cause very serious illness in babies. Flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccines are also recommended to help prevent babies becoming severely unwell in their first months of life.

What vaccines do children and teenagers need?
Children and teenagers in the UK are offered vaccines to protect them from serious diseases like measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), whooping cough, and meningitis. The MMR vaccine is especially important, with measles cases on the rise in the UK – uptake in Plymouth is slightly below the 95% level needed to stop outbreaks.
An important vaccine for teenagers is the HPV vaccine, which helps prevent cervical and other cancers. Keeping up to date with these vaccines is the best way to keep young people protected as they grow.

Why is the flu vaccine important every year?
The flu virus changes each year, so the vaccine is updated to match the most common types expected to spread. Getting the flu jab every year is the best way to protect yourself and those around you from serious illness.

Who should get winter vaccines?
Winter vaccines include the flu jab and, for some people, the COVID-19 booster. These are offered for free to those most at risk from serious illness, including older adults, people with certain health conditions, children and pregnant women.

Why should health and care workers get vaccinated?
People working in health and social care frequently encounter people who are unwell or vulnerable. Getting the flu vaccine helps protect both the worker and those they work with from becoming seriously ill. If you care for a friend or relative, you are also eligible for a flu vaccine, to protect you both.

How do I get the vaccines that I am eligible for?
If you're unsure about which vaccines you or your family need, check the NHS website or speak to a health professional – many vaccines will be available from your GP practice.
Flu jabs are also available from many pharmacies across the city, at drop-in clinics run by the NHS, or sometimes through your workplace.

Why should I get vaccinated?
Vaccines are a simple but powerful way to protect you and your loved ones. Staying up to date with vaccinations helps protect everyone in Plymouth, keeping us all safe and healthy.
For more information about vaccines, visit www.plymouth.gov.uk/vaccinations.

