



Immunisation Annual Report 2024/25

Public Health and Health Policy

Summary

This report summarises progress in delivering key immunisation programmes within Lothian.

Overall preschool children's flu and routine preschool childhood immunisation uptake exceeds or equals the Scottish national average for uptake within these programmes.

Within young people's vaccinations (which includes HPV, Meningococcal ACWY and the Teenage Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio) uptake is below the Scottish national average.

Adult immunisation uptake for all programmes (Flu, COVID-19, Shingles, Pneumococcal, Respiratory Syncytial Virus) exceeds the Scottish national average.

Inequalities are evident across all programmes and present a complex issue. Lower uptake for vaccinations is associated with various factors including income, geographic location and ethnicity. We have worked and continue to work with our Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) and wider partners to understand these inequalities and continue to take steps to address them.

Our goal is to ensure all immunisation programmes are high quality and delivered safely. The evidence is overwhelming that immunisation programmes save lives and are an important part of preventing ill health now and in the future. We encourage everyone who is invited to accept the offer of immunisation. More information on the vaccinations offered across Lothian are on our [website](#).

We hope this report highlights the continued importance of vaccinations and immunisation in protecting people in Lothian against vaccine-preventable diseases. We look forward to working with our partners in the year ahead to deliver quality immunisation programmes across all population groups.

Public Health and Health Policy

The Public Health and Health Policy Directorate consists of over 170 people working in 4 main divisions. We work to improve and protect the health of the people of Lothian.

Our underpinning principles for our work:

- **Work** in partnership locally to reduce health inequalities and improve population health.
- **Ensure** that prevention is prioritised with a focus on strengthening communities.
- **Ensure** public health practice is evidence informed with resources and activity deployed proportionate to population need.
- **Recognise** the climate emergency as a public health priority and embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals/Scottish Climate Plan in public health activity.
- **Nurture and support** well-trained and motivated staff.
- **Embed** equality and human rights into our work, including trauma informed practice, The Promise and the UNCRC.
- **Set and maintain** a culture of continuous evidence-based improvement.

The Public Health Immunisation Team are part of the Health Care Public Health Division of the Directorate of Public Health and Health Policy. The Healthcare Public Health Division works to maximise the population benefits of health care while reducing inequalities.

Introduction and context

As a public health measure, immunisation is the most cost-effective intervention for saving lives and improving the health of the population.

Vaccination and immunisation programmes help protect the population against vaccine preventable disease, including influenza, COVID-19, measles and pneumonia.

Across Edinburgh and the Lothians, vaccinations, e.g. routine childhood vaccines and seasonal programmes, are delivered by NHS Lothian and the four local HSCPs.

The Public Health Immunisation team work with HSCPs, local authorities and community and voluntary sector organisations.

Our work to improve uptake and reduce inequalities is informed by evidence and engagement with the different communities NHS Lothian serves. This is achieved by listening to their views,

acknowledging their needs and understanding experiences.

Our work follows immunisation policy set by the Scottish Government Health Directorate who take advice from the UK Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Our work also aligns with the Public Health Scotland "[Vaccination and Immunisation Strategy \(2024-2028\)](#)."

Data in this report cover 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Equalities and Human Rights

Who we support

Lothian immunisation programmes include all routine childhood, adolescent, and adult vaccines.

Selective immunisation programmes are also available to populations who are vulnerable to or at an increased risk of vaccine preventable disease. These include pregnant women, older people, prisoners, men who have sex with men and people in clinical risk groups.

We focus on removing discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

There is ongoing work through the HSCPs, the Immunisation Oversight Board, Immunisation Delivery Group and Children's Delivery Group on addressing inequalities in immunisation across all vaccination programmes and at all ages.

- We worked with **Minority Ethnic Health Inclusion Service (MEHIS) & Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project (MECOPP)** to reach minority ethnic communities to increase uptake and access of our vaccination programmes. This work includes ongoing training of link workers on vaccine programme eligibility and key messaging, vaccination outreach in partnership with HSCP vaccination teams in religious and community settings.
- We worked with partners to complete qualitative research with **pregnant women and parents/carers of 0–5-year-olds** in under-served communities to explore experiences, barriers and enablers to immunisations. Report findings have been shared widely and insights discussed with partners to develop solutions to overcome barriers.

Future Plans 2025-26:

- Ongoing collaboration with MEHIS and MECOPP and other community and voluntary sector partners to ensure our vaccination programmes are inclusive & accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of our population.
- Ongoing vaccination information and outreach in faith and community settings to support access and reach into communities

Improve uptake of childhood immunisation

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that at least 95% of children are immunised against diseases preventable by immunisation and targeted for elimination or control.

Children from more deprived areas are less likely to be vaccinated than children in less deprived areas. Work to explore uptake is underway in collaboration with the 0-5 children's vaccination teams.

Our progress this year:

- Approximately 82,000 childhood immunisation appointments (excluding Flu) have been offered in a range of settings
- We have launched a Vaccine Confidence training course for Health Visitors/Family Nurses
- We have developed an Assurance Framework for Childhood & School-based Immunisations (0-18 years) to offer assurance that all immunisation programmes are delivered in a high quality, safe, effective, person-centred and inclusive way
- We have completed research with parents/carers and pregnant women to understand their experiences, barriers and enablers to vaccination with an action plan developed to implement the findings.

- **Vaccines given at 12 months**

Lothian uptake of all immunisations reported at 12 months, 24 months and 5 years exceeds or equals the national average, with the exception of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) primary course. Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) primary course uptake was 94.5% in Lothian, compared to 95.1% in Scotland. The uptake of the 6-in-1 primary course by 12 months in Lothian met the WHO target of 95%.

Uptake by 12 months year ending 31 December 2024

Immunisation	Scotland	NHS Lothian	WHO target
6-in-1 primary course	94.4%	95.0%	95%
PCV primary course	95.1%	94.5%	95%
Rotavirus primary course	92.2%	92.2%	95%
MenB primary course	93.7%	93.8%	95%

Source: [Childhood immunisation statistics Scotland](#)

- **Vaccines given at 24 months**

Uptake by 24 months of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR1) (93.6%), Hib/Meningitis C (93.1%), PCV Booster (93.4%) and MenB Booster (92.7%) are all above the Scottish national average in Lothian, but uptake remains below the WHO target of 95%.

Uptake by 24 months year ending 31 December 2024

Immunisation	Scotland	NHS Lothian	WHO target
MMR1 (first dose of MMR)	92.8%	93.6%	95%
Hib/MenC	92.9%	93.1%	95%
PCV Booster	92.7%	93.4%	95%
MenB Booster	92.3%	92.7%	95%

Source: [Childhood immunisation statistics Scotland](#)

- **Vaccines given at 5 years.**

Uptake of the 4-in-1 booster vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio) is 90.4% and uptake for second dose of MMR is 90.0%. Lothian remain above the Scottish national average, but uptake remains below the WHO 95% target.

Uptake by 5 years year ending 31 December 2024

Immunisation	Scotland	NHS Lothian	WHO target
4-in-1 (Booster)	89.3%	90.4%	95%
MMR2 (second dose of MMR)	88.7%	90.0%	95%

Source: [Childhood immunisation statistics Scotland](#)

Future Plans 2025-26:

- Summer vaccination clinics for children and young people P1-P7 with missed [MMR](#) vaccines
- Childhood schedule changes - planning for changes in 2025/26 and completion of an Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment
- Development of a resource for staff to support conversations with parents/carers on signs and symptoms of measles
- Development of family-friendly vaccination clinics to improve accessibility and support for families.
- Project with Wester Hailes GP Practice providing cervical screening within childhood immunisation clinics to reduce barriers to access

Improve uptake rates of adolescent immunisation

The adolescent programme includes Human Papillomavirus (HPV) programme for S1 pupils and for S3 pupils the DTP vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus and polio) and Meningitis ACWY (MenACWY) vaccine which protects against meningitis associated complications, such as septicaemia (blood poisoning).

Our progress this year:

- Approximately 24,000 routine vaccinations administered in schools and 77,000 for flu.
- In 2024, NHS Lothian was the only Health Board in Scotland to achieve an increase in HPV coverage, but we are still below the Scottish average.
- Partnership working with Napier University and Bio Quarter to deliver HPV awareness workshops to students as part of the school curriculum.
- Link worker school teams continue to work closely with school staff and parents/carers to improve consent form return and support self-consent on the day of vaccination.

- **Vaccines given at S1 (with catch ups in later years)**

Coverage of HPV for S1 pupils at the end of the last academic year 2023/24 was 70.5%. This is a slight increase from 2022/23 (68.1%) and we are just below the national average (71.5%).

HPV Vaccination Coverage Data period: by end of school year 2023/24

Immunisation	Scotland	NHS Lothian
% coverage for both sexes in S1	71.5%	70.5%
% coverage for both sexes in S2	79.0%	75.8%
% coverage for both sexes in S3	81.6%	79.5%
% coverage for both sexes in S4	86.3%	84.1%

Source: [HPV immunisation statistics Scotland](#)

- **Vaccines given at S3 (with catch ups in later years)**

Coverage of Teen Booster vaccine (DTP) for S3 pupils was 64.7% (66.6% in 2022/23) and coverage of MenACWY vaccine was 65.1% (67.1% in 2022/23), reflecting slight decreases from 2022/23.

Teenage Booster (DPT) and MenACWY Vaccination Coverage

Data period: by end of school year 2023/24

Immunisation	Scotland	NHS Lothian
% coverage – S3 – DTP	68.9%	64.7%
% coverage – S3 MenACWY	68.9%	65.1%
% Coverage – S4 – DTP	75.5%	72.8%
% coverage – S4 MenACWY	75.6%	73.3%

[Teenage booster immunisation statistics Scotland](#)

Future Plans 2025-26:

- Social media Snapchat campaign focused on HPV, Teenage DTP and MenACWY targeting young people aged 13-18 years
- MMR vaccination offer to S1 pupils in the school setting and catch ups offered to older pupils if required
- S1-S6 students will continue to be offered MMR vaccination in community clinics over the summer holidays
- Support school vaccination teams with targeted work to address inequalities in uptake

Improve uptake of the Spring COVID-19 booster

The Spring COVID-19 vaccination campaign began from 1 April 2024 and concluded on 30 June 2024. Those eligible for vaccination were:

- Adults aged 75 years and over
- Residents in a care home for older adults
- Individuals aged 6 months with a weakened immune system

Our progress this year:

- Lothian total uptake rate for the spring campaign was 68.1%, which exceeds the national average (65.2%)

Vaccination uptake of Spring Booster 2024

Cohort	Scotland	NHS Lothian
Spring COVID-19 overall uptake	65.2%	68.1%
Older Adult Care Home Residents	81.6%	83.8%
Adults Aged 75 Years and Over	72.4%	76.3%
Patients with a weakened Immune System	38.1%	40.8%

Source: PHS Discovery performance uptake report up to 14 July 2024

Future Plans 2025-26:

The Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations published recommendations for COVID-19 spring 2025 and spring 2026 on 14 November 2024. Those eligible for vaccination in 2026 are the same groups offered in 2025

- adults aged 75 years and over,
- residents in a care home for older adults,
- individuals aged 6 months and over who have a weakened immune system.

Improve uptake of Flu and COVID-19 Autumn/Winter vaccination

The winter flu vaccination campaign started on 16 September 2024 for those only eligible for flu, with flu and COVID-19 vaccination co-administration appointments available from 30 September 2024.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advised for winter 2024-25 the following groups should be offered **flu vaccination**:

Adult programme:

- Those living in long-stay residential care homes or other long-stay care facilities
- All those aged 65 and over
- All those aged 18 to under 65 years in defined risk groups. This includes:
 - those in clinical at-risk groups set out in [Green Book Chapter 19](#)
 - those experiencing homelessness
 - those experiencing substance misuse
 - asylum seekers living in Home Office hotel or B&B accommodation
 - all prisoners within the Scottish prison estate
 - pregnant women
- Frontline health and social care workers
- Non-frontline NHS workers
- Poultry workers
- Unpaid carers and young carers
- Household contacts of those with immunosuppression

Eligibility for winter COVID-19 vaccination:

- Residents in care homes for older adults
- All adults aged 65 years and over
- Individuals aged 6 months and over who are in a clinical at-risk group, including pregnant women

Compared to the previous autumn campaigns, household contacts of the immunosuppressed, and frontline health and social care workers are no longer included in the eligible cohort for COVID-19 vaccine. This is because the protection against mild and asymptomatic illness appears to be limited and short in duration, particularly with the highly transmissible Omicron variants.

As in previous years, NHS Lothian offered flu vaccination to all employees.

Our progress this year:

- All eligible citizens could 'drop-in' for winter vaccination from late November 2024
- Lothian exceeded the national average for flu vaccination uptake rates, with the exception of secondary school pupils, and also exceeded the national average for COVID-19 vaccination, with the exception of those aged 12-17 years.
- We carried out patient feedback surveys to understand reasons and barriers to non-attendance which will inform future programme planning.
- We held a winter vaccination campaign debrief event 14 February 2024 attended by teams supporting delivery of the winter vaccination campaign.

- **Vaccines for COVID-19**

There was no national target set for uptake of COVID-19, but a national aspiration of 75% uptake. This was not achieved in any health board in Scotland.

COVID-19 Winter 2024/2025 uptake

Cohort	Scotland	NHS Lothian
COVID-19 winter 2024/25 overall uptake	47.4%	48.0%
COVID-19 spring 2024/25 overall uptake	65.2%	68.1%

Source: PHS Discovery performance uptake report up to 30 March 2025

- **Vaccines for Flu**

There was no national target set for uptake, but a national aspiration of 65% for flu. Although the national aspiration of 65% was not achieved, Lothian exceeded the national rates for all cohorts.

Adult flu Winter 2024/2025 uptake

Cohort	Scotland	NHS Lothian
Overall uptake	53.2%	54.2%

Source: PHS Discovery performance uptake report up to 30 March 2025

Future Plans 2025-26:

- The Scottish national guidance for Winter 2025-26 COVID-19 vaccination are due imminently and these recommendations will be worked through at a local level. Recommendations for Flu have been published.
- Implement staff winter vaccination campaign to improve uptake rates among our health and social care workers.

Improve uptake of Pneumococcal and Shingles Vaccination

From 1 September 2023, these groups became eligible for a [shingles](#) vaccination in Scotland:

- People aged 50 or over, about to start immunosuppressive therapy.
- People aged 50 or over, with a severely weakened immune system.
- People aged 71 - 79 who have not previously been vaccinated.
- People aged 18 or over who have received a stem cell transplant.
- People aged 18 or over who have had CAR-T therapy (type of cancer treatment)

People are eligible for a single [pneumococcal](#) vaccine if they are aged:

- 65 years old or over
- 64 years old or younger with certain health conditions

Repeat immunisation is recommended every 5 years for people with asplenia, splenic dysfunction or chronic renal disease.

From January 2024, there was a change to the recommended shingles vaccination to be administered - all citizens should now receive 2 shingles vaccine doses, resulting in a requirement for additional appointment capacity. This programme will be on-going throughout 2024-25.

Invites for pneumococcal and shingles vaccinations re-commenced from January 2024.

Our progress this year:

- **Pneumococcal and Shingles uptake up to 31 December 2024**

Vaccine	Scotland	NHS Lothian
Pneumococcal	71.2%	76.7%
Shingles	70.8%	77.8%

Source: [PHS vaccination surveillance dashboard](#)

Future Plans 2025-26:

- Continue to adapt service delivery of shingles and pneumococcal in accordance with national policy. Prioritise populations where vaccine uptake is lower.

Community Pharmacy Support for the Winter Campaign

Community pharmacies have continued to play a significant public health role in supporting the COVID-19 and Flu winter programme by helping to increase vaccination uptake and accessibility, especially for older people.

As part of the NHS Winter Vaccination programme, 16 Community Pharmacies across Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) participated in the co-administration of COVID-19 booster and seasonal flu vaccination.

The programme commenced on 7 October 2024 and continued for five weeks until 9 November 2024.

It was agreed that only those aged 75 years and over could access vaccinations within the Community Pharmacy setting. This approach was employed to improve access for this age group and reduce inequalities.

Our progress this year:

- **16 pharmacies took part** for 5-weeks from 7 October – 9 November 2024.
- **6,114** Covid booster and flu appointments were made in a Community Pharmacy. A total of 12,243 vaccinations (COVID-19 and Flu) were administered during the programme.

Future Plans 2025-26:

- The Community Pharmacy programme will continue in Edinburgh HSCP for the 2025/26 winter programme

Meningococcal B vaccine

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation recommended that meningococcal B (4CMenB) vaccination will be offered to certain patient groups for protection against gonorrhoea, starting August 2025. This is in response to the increased resistance to antibiotics used to treat gonococcal infection. A Chief Medical Officer (CMO) letter was issued on 24 June 2025 providing guidance. Vaccination will be undertaken by the NHS Lothian Sexual Health team.

People eligible for MenB vaccine are:

- Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) if they attend a sexual health clinic in Scotland and are assessed as being at increased risk of coming into contact with gonorrhoea
- Those involved in selling or exchanging sex without condoms
- Those who sexual health clinics assess as being at high risk of infection

Future Plans 2025-26:

- Vaccination will commence from 4 August 2025

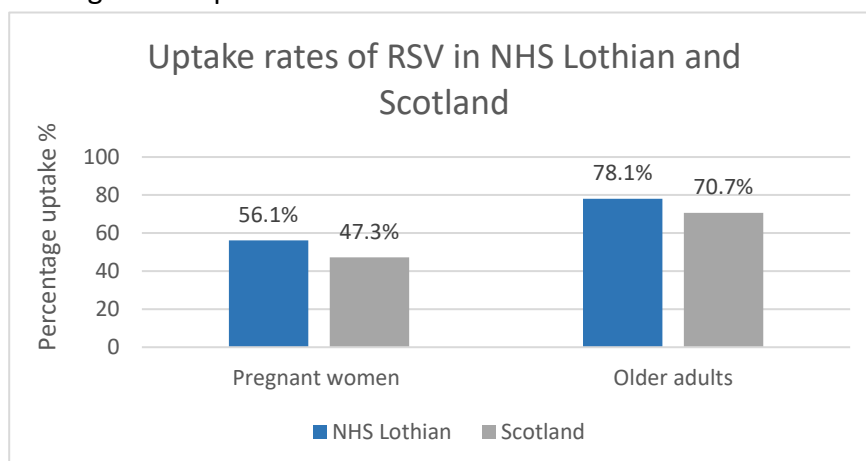
Respiratory Syncytial Virus vaccine (RSV)

The RSV vaccination programme for older adults and pregnant people in Lothian commenced in August 2024. RSV is the leading cause of hospital admissions in infants. Pregnant people are offered the RSV vaccine to protect their newborn baby. The vaccine is also offered to older adults to protect against severe RSV illness and hospital admissions.

Our progress this year:

- From 1 August 2024 to 8 June 2025, 32,502 older adults received an RSV vaccine with an uptake of 78.1% and 8,344 pregnant women received an RSV vaccine with an uptake of 56.1%. NHS Lothian uptake of RSV exceeds the national average in both older adult (70.7%) and pregnant cohorts (47.3%).

Figure 1. Uptake rates of RSV in NHS Lothian and Scotland



- We have carried out research with pregnant women across Lothian on vaccination experiences, including views on the RSV vaccine. Our research found most of the participants were planning to have the RSV vaccine.

Early data shows significant success of the vaccine for both groups. Research from PHS showed a 62% reduction in RSV-related hospitalisation amongst older adults who had received the RSV vaccine. Further early data has found that, by May 2025, 228 fewer babies under the age of 3 were admitted to hospital with serious RSV infections during the peak of the virus' season. It is hoped uptake will increase as the vaccine becomes routine during pregnancy. This will result in more babies being protected, avoiding serious illness, hospital admission and the associated negative health outcomes.

Future Plans 2025-26:

Continue with delivery of programmes and increase uptake through promotion.