

Freedom of Information request 12-21

Request

I'd be grateful for the information recording the discussions and decision-making around not vaccinating individuals in NHS Borders area who are transients within the health and social care system. I'd also like to see the risk assessment backing this decision, and information on how clinical risk to individuals was balanced against logistics concerns.

Response

Please find below an extract of the recorded notes taken from a meeting held on 7 January where it was agreed vulnerable patients within the Borders General Hospital including the Department of Medicine for the Elderly (DME), could be vaccinated prior to potential transfer.

- The Programme Board agreed patients in Melburn Lodge, Lindean and DME should be vaccinated this week as they are extremely vulnerable, many are over 80 and some of these patients could potentially be transferred into a care home or community hospital
- Borders Health Board follows the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) guidance on vaccination, based on the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#) (JCVI) advice, as strictly as possible.
- Borders Health Board started vaccinating people in JCVI group 1 and 2 (Residents in a care home for older adults, staff working in care homes for older adults, all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health & social care workers) on 8 December. Because we were using the Pfizer vaccine which had difficult storage and distribution constraints, we started with Care Home residents & staff and frontline workers. Since the over 80 group are mainly vaccinated by Primary Care staff, we did not start routinely vaccinating people over 80 until the AstraZeneca vaccine was available in General Practices. Vaccination for this group started after 8 January.
- There is no provision in the guidance for vaccinating hospital inpatients unless they are covered by one of the nine JCVI groups. A patient discharged from hospital in December or early January would only have been eligible for vaccination if they were over age 80. However, because of the constraints on moving single doses of Pfizer vaccine there was difficulty in vaccinating such patients on a hospital ward as this might have meant the wastage of vaccine - although there was some discussion of this on 7 January and arrangements subsequently were made.
- People admitted into a care home after the other clients and staff in that care home had been vaccinated would have been in a similar position to patients on a hospital ward (see above). The only way to vaccinate an individual would be to take a 6 dose vial for one client, which was not acceptable. Such a patient would, however, be eligible to receive an AstraZeneca vaccination from their GP, along with other patients of 80 and over in the community, at a time dependent on the arrangements made by the particular practice.

No specific risk assessment was completed in respect of vaccinating individuals in the NHS Borders area who are transients within the health and social care system, therefore under Section 17 of the FOI(S)A 2002 this information is not held.

Under Section 15 of the FOI(S)A 2002 Duty to provide advice and assistance we can confirm that NHS Borders District Nurses will be revisiting the Care Homes to vaccinate those patients who have been missed due to transition.

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **12-21** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.