

E: CMO@gov.scot

Professor Wei Shen Lim  
Chair  
COVID-19 Subcommittee  
Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

27 July 2021

Dear Professor Lim,

I welcome the Joint Committee on Vaccination's recent advice on the vaccination of those under the age of 18 years. Beginning the targeted vaccination of this age cohort provides additional confidence in maximising protection in those who will benefit most from vaccination.

I am very aware that the advice you are asked to provide, by the Governments across the UK, frequently requires the making of challenging decisions, often based on newly emerging or limited clinical data.

The committee's current advice is to not routinely vaccinate all children and young people of 12 to 17 years of age who would be eligible under the MHRA's recent extension to the current UK approval of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. This approval has followed a rigorous review of the safety, quality and effectiveness of the vaccine in this age group by the MHRA and the Government's independent advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM).

I understand that following the contact from Professor Whitty on behalf of UK CMOs, the committee will meet on Thursday 29th July to consider further data to address the questions that we have raised within this communication. I want to associate myself strongly with the queries and remarks that CMO England has made and to emphasise the urgency of response from my perspective as CMO Scotland given the early return of schools in Scotland in mid-August. Establishing a clear position on these wider issues is imperative in advance of this.

I am also conscious of the comments on post-acute COVID-19 syndrome in the statement issued by JCVI earlier this month.

This is clearly an area where understanding is still developing and there is much debate on the nature and frequency of how this impacts on children and young people. Estimates of how common this is appear to be particularly problematic in international literature with wide variation quoted in studies. However, given the disproportionate impact that these enduring symptoms may have on children and young people's health, development and opportunity, I

hope that the JCVI will be able to say more about how these aspects have contributed to the consideration and formation of your advice at this next update. For children and young people, I think it is especially important that this morbidity is given appropriate concern in addition to severe disease and hospitalization.

Let me finish by re-iterating my thanks to the JCVI for their endeavours to date. I look forward to continuing to work closely with the committee and receiving the outcome of further deliberation on these issues with urgency following your meeting this week.

Yours sincerely,



**DR GREGOR SMITH**  
Chief Medical Officer