

# **Departmental minute from the Department of Health and Social Care: notification of contingent liability - COVID-19 autumn 2025 vaccination programme**

Presented to Parliament by Ashley Dalton MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention by Command of His Majesty.

16 July 2025

Unnumbered command paper

1. It is normal practice, when a government department proposes to undertake a contingent liability in excess of £300,000 for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the minister concerned to present a departmental minute (DM) to Parliament, giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances; and to refrain from incurring the liability until 14 Parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the minute, except in cases of special urgency.
2. On 13 November 2024, the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published advice on the COVID-19 vaccination programme for spring 2025, autumn 2025 and spring 2026. On 26 June 2025 His Majesty's Government (HMG) accepted their advice that a COVID-19 vaccine should be offered in autumn 2025 to those in the population most vulnerable to serious outcomes from COVID-19 and who are therefore most likely to benefit from vaccination.
3. Vaccination will be offered in England in autumn 2025 to:
  - adults aged 75 years and over
  - residents in a care home for older adults
  - individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed, as defined in tables 3 and 4 of the COVID-19 chapter of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Green Book on Immunisation against infectious disease
4. The vaccines that will be supplied for the autumn 2025 programme are the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA (Comirnaty) vaccines.
5. As part of the contractual arrangements with COVID-19 vaccine producers for these vaccines, provision of an indemnity was required in order to enter into supply agreements. This only applies to vaccines purchased as part of the

pandemic emergency response. The agreement to provide indemnity increases the contingent liability of the COVID-19 vaccination programme with deployment of further doses of vaccines purchased as part of the emergency response.

6. Willingness to accept the need for appropriate indemnities to be given to vaccine suppliers helped to secure access to vaccines with the expected benefits to public health and the economy alike much sooner than may have been the case otherwise.
7. The adult Pfizer BioNTech mRNA (Comirnaty) doses to be used in autumn 2025 are the only remaining doses of COVID-19 vaccines purchased as part of the emergency response. This will therefore be the last increase in the overall contingent liability arising from an additional deployment of COVID-19 vaccines.
8. It is not possible to give details of this contingent liability with full transparency due to normal requirements of commercial sensitivity. If the contingent liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal supply procedure.
9. His Majesty's Treasury has approved the proposal in principle. If, during the period of 14 Parliamentary sitting days beginning on the date on which this DM was laid before Parliament, a member signifies an objection by giving notice of a Parliamentary question or by otherwise raising the matter in Parliament, final approval to proceed with incurring the liability will be withheld pending an examination of the objection.

Ashley Dalton MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention

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