

Childhood vaccination programme - enhanced incident

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Information sheet for stakeholders

This information sheet aims to provide an overview of the ongoing enhanced incident in relation to the childhood vaccination programme. Agreed national lines have also been provided which can be used by professionals, with advice on where to direct specific queries when required.

Background

Throughout 2025/26 there have been a series of planned changes to the routine childhood immunisation schedule. These changes were being rolled out in two phases.

The changes being implemented as part of phase two (from 1 January 2026) included:

- Introduction of a two-dose programme (at 12 and 18 months of age) offering vaccination against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV). This replaces the current MMR vaccine.
- Introduction of a new 18-month appointment where an additional 6-in-1 (4th dose) vaccine will be offered.

- The second dose of MMR will be brought forward from the 3-year 4-month appointment to the new 18-month appointment and combined with varicella in the MMRV vaccine.

[See this helpful infographic which explains eligibility.](#)

Situation

Scheduling

There has been an issue with updating the Scottish Immunisation Recall System (SIRS) to support the changes to the routine childhood vaccination schedule from 1 January 2026.

This system automates the call and recall of children for scheduled immunisations and allows recording of vaccinations that have been given.

Unfortunately, the issue has impacted the scheduling of appointments for some children.

This means:

- Some appointments for children aged 12 months and for children aged 18 months which should have been scheduled to take place in January have not been – meaning children have not yet been invited for vaccination.
- Some letters for appointments at 12 months, 18 months and 3 years 4 months list an incorrect vaccine being offered:
 - On some letters it states a **measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine**, instead of the **measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccine**.
 - On some letters, inclusion of the MMRV or 4th dose of the **6-in-1 vaccine** has been missed.

It has also resulted in:

- Errors and omissions in the vaccinations listed in the paperwork produced by SIRS and used by staff in managing clinics affecting some appointments at 12 months, 18 months and 3 years 4 months.
- Discrepancies in the date of birth ranges of children being invited for an 18-month appointment by the system.

NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) is working with Public Health Scotland (PHS), NHS Boards and Scottish Government to resolve the issue as a matter of urgency. As part of this, corrective and preventative measures will be implemented to avoid future incidents of this nature.

This issue unfortunately means some children will experience a short delay in receiving their routine vaccinations due at 12 months, 18 months, or 3 years 4 months. The issue is currently being explored and will be resolved soon. We will be updating the web statement (see 'Communications' section below) as information about timescales are confirmed.

Recording

All NHS Boards are also affected by SIRS not yet being able to record completed MMRV and 4th 6-in-1 vaccinations. The developers have advised that this functionality should be available from Monday 26 January.

Service delivery mitigations

Since Monday 5 January, all NHS Boards have been delivering vaccination clinic appointments affected by the scheduling and recording issues.

Some NHS Boards have identified alternative processes and tools to schedule and invite children to appointments locally. This is not feasible for all NHS Boards and is not a requirement.

Child Health administrative staff in all NHS Boards are manually amending SIRS schedule outputs and paperwork as required to support vaccinators to offer and administer the correct vaccinations in full at each appointment, in accordance with the updated routine national programme. Vaccinators are explaining to parents and carers why the vaccinations being offered at the clinic may differ from those listed on their child's invitation letter.

All completed MMRV and 4th 6-in-1 vaccinations are being recorded on paper forms and/or electronically using systems other than SIRS (this data will be entered into SIRS later once this functionality is available).

Communications

A web statement will be published on the [NSS website](#) on Monday 12 January 2026. This will be updated on a regular basis, as further information becomes available. Please refer to this [NSS website](#) regularly for updates.

Notices will be placed on relevant pages on NHS inform, linking to this statement.

NSS's National Contact Centre has set up a helpline to answer queries that parents or carers may have. They will also be able to direct people to local health boards if necessary. This service will be available from Monday 12 January, once the web statement goes live.

National lines for responding to queries from the public

- This incident affects the 12-month, 18-month and 3 years 4 months appointments only. All other childhood vaccinations are being scheduled correctly and in accordance with the UK childhood immunisation programme. Adult immunisation programmes are also unaffected.
- If you have received a letter for your child's appointment, please attend this appointment. Vaccinators will ensure your child is offered all the correct vaccines they are eligible for and a discussion will take place prior to vaccination to ensure there is clarity and to agree consent.
- If your child turned 12 or 18 months old on or after 1 January 2026 and you haven't yet received an appointment letter, please wait for your letter to arrive. Every effort is being made to ensure any delay to your child getting vaccinated is kept to a minimum.
- If parents or carers have concerns, please call **0345 034 2460** (available Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)

Please note, this number is embargoed until Monday 12 January 2026 – and will go live when the public facing web statement is published on the [NSS website](#).

- For further information about the childhood immunisation programme, visit nhsinform.scot/vaccinesforchildren

Media enquiries

All media enquiries should be directed to either NSS or PHS depending on the nature of the query.

- For enquiries in relation to scheduling, invitation letters and recording – please direct to NSS communications (nss.communications@nhs.scot)
- For enquiries in relation to clinical or service delivery, or changes to the childhood vaccination schedule – please direct to PHS vaccine communications (phs.comms@phs.scot)