

## Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) Receipt of Vaccine Deliveries by Vaccination Centre Administration Staff

### Standard Operating Procedure.

|                               |   |              |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------|
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### Engagement & Consultation

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## **1 Introduction**

Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) is committed to the safe and secure handling and administration of medicines and vaccines to protect patients and staff.

It is mandatory for all staff members involved in managing vaccines to always follow this standard operating procedure.

The efficacy and safety of vaccines requiring controlled low temperature storage ultimately depends on the safe handling of vaccine and maintenance of temperatures within the manufacturers' recommended range, typically +2°C to +8°C. If the handling and storage recommendations are not followed, manufacturers can disclaim responsibility for any apparent failure of the product as they will no longer be within the terms of the marketing authorisation (product license).

Vaccines are biological substances that may lose their effectiveness rapidly if they become too hot or too cold at any time. Inadequate temperature control during storage and transport of vaccines or other fridge line pharmaceuticals can reduce the efficacy of the product. This is particularly important during transport and storage of vaccine as failure to provide the correct storage conditions can result in compromised attainment of a satisfactory level of immunity.

Vaccine failures caused by the administration of a reduced potency vaccine can affect a large number of people causing risk to patients, embarrassment to the organisation, expense and possible liability. Patient confidence in vaccine products and the vaccination process are diminished if repeat vaccination is required<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to the safe handling of vaccines and maintenance of storage temperatures, stock management Excel spreadsheets must be maintained to satisfy pharmaceutical regulatory requirements.

## **2. Objective**

- To ensure suitably trained and competent vaccination centre administration staff safely and securely receipt vaccine deliveries at PTHB Vaccination Centres (VCs), in accordance with pharmacy standards and legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> [7th revision vaccine handling and storage advice Sept 17.pdf](#)

- To ensure that individuals who handle vaccines are aware of the requirements to store the vaccine correctly and in line with the recommendations set out in Chapter 3 of the Green book [Green Book Chapter 3 v3 0W.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#). This will ensure the integrity of vaccine products and reduce the risk of compromising the quality, efficiency, and safety of the vaccination programme, whilst improving the service for patients.
- To clearly define record keeping requirements in line with pharmacy standards, legislation and Vaccination Programme Wales (VPW) expectations.
- To ensure that staff are aware of fridge / medicine cupboard key security arrangements.
- To ensure that staff understand the importance of fridge temperature monitoring and are competent to undertake this task.
- To understand the procedure for taking appropriate corrective and timely action in the event of a temperature excursion outside of the cold chain range of +2°C to +8°C.
- To ensure that staff understand the principles of stock rotation.
- To ensure that staff understand the importance of expiry date checks.
- To ensure that staff understand the principles around the safe handling of vaccines in accordance with the manufacturers Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPCs)

### 3. Definitions

- **Cold chain** – is the system of transporting and storing medicines within the recommended temperature range of +2°C to +8°C from the place of manufacturer to the point of administration to a patient.
- **HCSW** – Health Care Support Worker
- **GPhC** – The General Pharmaceutical Council are the regulatory body for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies in Great Britain.
- **Medicine** – a substance used for treating, preventing or diagnosing disease, for contraception, inducing anaesthesia or modifying normal physiological function.
- **PIL** – Patient Information Leaflet
- **PTHB** – Powys Teaching Health Board
- **Quarantine**-To separate/isolate affected stock from supply chain which must be clearly labelled with 'Quarantined – do not use' and dated.
- **SmPC** – Summary of Product Characteristics

- **Supply Chain**- Term used to describe the whole cold chain process from the point of receiving the medication into stock, transport, maintaining the medicines and the point of supplying medication.
- **Temperature deviation/excursion** – any incident where the recorded Labcold™ portable vaccine carrier temperature is outside of the recommended range of +2°C to +8°C.
- **Vaccine** – a suspension of attenuated or killed microorganisms (viruses, bacteria or rickettsia) or of antigenic proteins derived from them, administered for prevention, amelioration or treatment of infectious disease.
- **VPW** – Vaccination Programme Wales

#### 4. Role / Responsibilities

##### 4.1 Senior Pharmacy Technician, Vaccination/Immunisation & Pharmacy Stores (Senior Pharmacy Technician)

##### The senior pharmacy technician is responsible for:

- Ensuring that this SOP is kept up to date and informing staff of any changes.
- Ensuring clinical governance relating to vaccine stock management is maintained.
- Ensuring that VC admin staff are trained and competent to perform the duties required of them and that training meets the requirements of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC).
- Ensuring that all VC admin staff have received relevant training relating to receipting vaccine deliveries and are signed off as competent to undertake these duties with minimum supervision.
- Providing any training sessions required to ensure that all staff understand the principles of robust vaccine stock management, according to pharmaceutical standards and legislation.
- Ensure all staff are aware of actions to take and who to contact if there are any issues with the refrigerator / cold chain.
- To make sure that staff are aware that any vaccines subject to a breach in the cold chain are quarantined until expert advice is sought from the Medicines Management Team.
- Annual vaccine management audits.

## **4.2 Deputy Head of Service, Immunisation & Vaccination**

### **The Deputy Head of Service must:**

- Ensure all staff read and understand this procedure.
- Ensure that all staff are signed up to the training matrix (see Appendix A)

## **4.3 Clinical Nurse Leads, Vaccination Service**

- The clinical leads in collaboration with the senior pharmacy technician and Deputy Head of Service, are responsible for ensuring that administration staff are fully informed when they are required to take receipt of a vaccine delivery.
- The clinical leads are responsible for ensuring that WIS records are up to date following receipt of vaccine into the vaccination centre e.g., the delivery record, stock checks, temperature monitoring.

## **4.4 HCSW Immunisers**

- With support from the senior pharmacy technician/pharmacy stores pharmacy technician, HCSW Immunisers are responsible for providing training and support to VC admin staff in all aspects of vaccine delivery duties including fridge monitoring requirements (see Appendix A for details of training requirements)

**Note: only HCSWs accredited to level 2 in stock management can provide the final sign off of trainees as competent.**

## **4.5 Vaccination Centre Administration (Admin) Staff**

- Admin staff handling vaccine in VCs are responsible for completing all training documented in the training matrix (see Appendix A)
- Admin staff are responsible for reading and adhering to the duties outlined in this SOP.
- Admin staff are responsible for maintaining accurate delivery and stock management records e.g. WIS and stock management Excel spreadsheets (childhood/teenage vaccine logs / vaccine delivery logs) when receiving vaccine into stock.
- When receiving vaccine deliveries, admin staff are responsible for reporting suspected cold chain breaches

to the senior clinical lead/lead nurse/senior pharmacy technician.

- Admin staff are responsible for quarantining vaccines subject to a temperature breach until expert advice is sought from the Senior Pharmacy Technician or Pharmacy Store Pharmacy Technician.
- Admin staff must be aware of the importance and the need to quickly and efficiently transfer vaccine deliveries to the refrigerator as soon as they arrive on site, whilst adhering to the principles of stock rotation.

## **5. Training**

All staff involved with any aspect of cold chain management are responsible for undertaking training and maintaining competencies. Staff can access cold chain and vaccine storage training via ESR:

[070 Cold Chain Training –The safe and secure management of refrigerated medicine](#) (to be completed annually)

[000 Vaccine Storage](#) (one off training)

Admin staff supporting with receipt of vaccine deliveries must be trained in Good Distribution Practice (GDP)

GDP training is undertaken individually in the form of a PowerPoint presentation and is certificated 'in-house'. A GDP training refresher must be completed annually. For information on how to access this training contact Nikki Mathers via [info.medicinesmanagement.powys@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:info.medicinesmanagement.powys@wales.nhs.uk)

Also see Appendix A – Training Matrix

## **6. Keys and Security**

### **6.1 Overview**

Keys to the vaccine refrigerators and medicines cupboard must be kept in a secure location and access made available to authorised personnel only. These are:

- Medicines Management Pharmacy Technicians, Assistant Technical Officers (ATOs) and Pharmacists
- Senior Clinical Lead (and deputy) and Vaccination Centre Lead Nurses.
- Vaccination Centre Registrants and HCSW Immunisers.

- Approved vaccination Centre Admin staff

## **6.2 Refrigerator/Medicines Cupboard Keys**

- Vaccines are Prescription Only Medicines (POMs), and therefore, the fridge should always be locked when not in use or kept in a locked room.
- Keys must be locked in a key safe when the VC is closed.
- Only those admin staff trained and competent in receipting vaccine deliveries into the VC should have access to the key code and key safe.
- Where the vaccine storage area is unattended, the fridge door must remain locked.
- The fridge and medicines cupboard keys must be returned to the dedicated key safe following receipt of the vaccine delivery.
- **KEYS MUST NOT BE TAKEN OFF SITE**

## **7. Receipt of vaccine, Storage, Stock Checks, Fridge Temperature Monitoring & Record Keeping**

### **7.1 Receipt of Vaccine**

**Vaccine must be maintained at a temperature of between +2°C to +8°C for the entirety of the supply chain e.g., from product manufacture to administration to a patient.**

- Vaccine products will be delivered to VCs at a prearranged date and (where known, time) at a temperature of between +2°C to +8°C.
- Vaccine must be transferred immediately from +2°C to +8°C conditions to the VC refrigerator in order to maintain the cold chain. Ensure that the fridge temperature has been maintained between +2°C to +8°C (see section 8.4).
- Stock must be checked against the delivery note for accuracy (e.g., check that the vaccine type, brand, quantity, batch number and expiry match that of the delivery note).
- A signature, date and time must be recorded on the delivery note to acknowledge receipt of the vaccine delivery (this will be the VC copy, which must be scanned onto the system). The delivery driver may also request a further signature via a handheld device.
- Ensure the product received is in good condition e.g., intact, packs are not crushed.
- Stock that has not been stored correctly, e.g., if the cold chain has not been maintained during delivery, should be rejected,

and returned to the driver. Contact the senior pharmacy technician immediately for advice.

- On receipt, vaccines must be unpacked from the outer cardboard box or vaccine porter but must be kept in the original packaging and placed into the designated fridge immediately and not left at room temperature.
- When putting stock away ensure that stock is rotated e.g., shorter dated stock to the front of the fridge to be used first (see section 7.2)
- Receipt Covid/Flu/RSV vaccine on the Welsh Immunisation System (WIS). All other vaccine should be receipted via the stock management Excel spreadsheet (see section 7.5).
- Delivery notes must be scanned and saved in the relevant VC folder, located here:  
[https://nhs.wales365.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/POW\\_MVCPharmacyTeam/Shared%20Documents/General/Scanned%20Docs?csf=1&web=1&e=PN4hUH](https://nhs.wales365.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/POW_MVCPharmacyTeam/Shared%20Documents/General/Scanned%20Docs?csf=1&web=1&e=PN4hUH)
- Covid vaccine consumables will be delivered with the vaccine e.g., syringes, Patient Information Leaflets (PILs), ensure that these are safely stored (see section 8).

NB. Where vaccines are delivered from external suppliers in a temperature-controlled van (TCV), they may arrive in insulated or plain cardboard boxes rather than vaccine porters. Handle and process them as you would normally for vaccines delivered in a vaccine porter. Note: Some vaccine deliveries received from the PS may be packed in cardboard boxes (and will be clearly labelled 'Contains Refrigerated Items'), where a TCV is used for transportation.

**Tip:** If receiving a large vaccine delivery packed into insulated/plain cardboard boxes, ask a suitably trained colleague to assist with unpacking and checking. If fridge space allows, place unopened boxes directly into the fridge and remove them one at a time to unpack, check, and store the vaccine cartons. This will help maintain the cold chain.

## 7.2 Stock Rotation and Storage

- Rotate stock so that the oldest stock (shortest expiry) is at the front of the fridge to be used first. When checking the expiry date, in most cases the vaccine will expire on the last day of the month. i.e. 05/24 means the vaccine expires at 23:59 on the last day of May. There are some exceptions to this as vaccines such as the nasal influenza and **COVID-19** vaccines expire on a specific date in the month.

- Excessive stockpiling of vaccines must be avoided in case of fridge failure and to reduce potential waste.
- Ensure that different vaccines are separated in the fridge e.g., on different shelves.
- Refrigerators should not be over-filled. Sufficient space must be maintained within the fridge to permit adequate air circulation.
- Cool packs should be stored in a separate fridge from the vaccine.
- Food, drinks and clinical specimens must never be stored in the same refrigerator as medicinal products.

### 7.3 Stock Checks

- A stock check must be performed following delivery of vaccine. The stock check must include both the delivery of the new vaccine plus any vaccine already present in the fridge (for example if there are already 50 vials (5 boxes) of Spikevax in the fridge and you have received a delivery of 100 vials (10 boxes) of Spikevax, then the total number of vials in the fridge must be added to the WIS stock check i.e. 150 vials)
- When undertaking stock checks, aim to keep the fridge door open to an absolute minimum, for the shortest possible time. If the fridge temperature begins to rise, then close the fridge door, and wait until the temperature becomes stable again before continuing.

**NB. When performing a stock check, be aware that some boxes of vaccines already present in the fridge may be part boxes.** Part boxes will be marked with a cross on the lid to indicate that they have been opened and that vials have been removed.

- Where possible ask a colleague to perform a second check before submitting the final stock count (especially at times of high-volume stock).

### 7.4 Fridge Monitoring

- Vaccines must be stored safely and securely in a refrigerator between +2°C to +8°C to ensure that they are not compromised, and efficacy is maintained.
- Fridge temperature readings must be recorded on the Welsh Immunisation System (WIS) by vaccination teams twice daily (am and pm) **and additionally after a vaccine order has been receipted into stock.** The maximum, minimum and

actual temperature must be recorded, then the fridge temperature must be reset.

- In the event of a fridge failure or any other cold chain issue, immediate advice should be sought from the VC clinical lead nurse & senior pharmacy technician.

### **7.5 Welsh Immunisation System (WIS)**

**Note:** At present COVID-19 / RSV / Flu are the only vaccine products available on WIS. However, National vaccine monitoring systems are continually updated. Additional vaccines may be added to WIS as systems evolve.

- **Direct Deliveries from External Suppliers**

As of March 2026, COVID-19, Flu, and RSV vaccines delivered directly to Vaccination Centres (e.g., from ImmForm or IP5) **must be recorded as a delivery on WIS and immediately added to WIS stock.**

**Note:** Only vaccines delivered *directly* from an external supplier should be recorded as deliveries on WIS. There will be occasions when COVID-19, RSV or Flu vaccines will be transferred from pharmacy store stock and in these instances, only a stock check needs to be recorded on WIS.

- **Internal Transfers from Pharmacy Store**

All other vaccines e.g., for catch up vaccination programmes i.e. MMR, will usually be transferred from Pharmacy Store stock and delivered in a vaccine porter. These deliveries, including stock checks, **must be recorded using the stock management Excel spreadsheets** located on the VC Teams channel.

- **Internal Transfers within the Health Board**

For internal transfers between other sites within the organisation (e.g., one VC to another, School Nurse team to VC), the Pharmacy Store team will record the movement as a **transfer** on WIS.

Upon receipt at the Vaccination Centre, **do not record these as deliveries on WIS**, as they have already been receipted into the organisation.

The stock delivery and stock check **must be added to the VC stock management Excel spreadsheet** immediately on arrival.

### **8. Vaccine Consumables**

- COVID-19 vaccine consumables and Patient Information Leaflets (PILs) will be delivered to sites in quantities comparable to the vaccine supplied.
- Stocks of consumables should be stored in a suitably clean, dry environment, and in a manner that supports safe working and ease for access and stock checks.

- Stocks of consumables which are not actively in use should be stored in a single location within each VC wherever possible.
- If there are any discrepancies on receipt of a consumable order, immediately inform the senior pharmacy technician.

### **9. Vaccine Spillages**

- If spillage of vaccine occurs, gloves should be worn, and the spillage soaked up with paper towels immediately. These should all be put into a yellow clinical waste bag.
- Sharps should be put into a sharps bin for disposal.
- The area should then be cleaned according to the local Disinfection Policy.
- Spillage on the skin should be washed off thoroughly using soap and water.
- Splashes in the eyes should be irrigated with sterile 0.9% sodium chloride solution and medical advice sought immediately. Report via Datix and escalate to the lead nurse.

### **10. Monitoring Compliance / Audit / Review**

Compliance with this SOP will be audited during annual pharmacy audits in vaccination centres.

This SOP will be reviewed every three years or earlier should changes to legislation or to practice indicate otherwise.

### **11. References**

PTHB MMP 010 Safe and Secure Management of Refrigerated Medicines and Vaccines [Medicines Management - SOPs - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

All Wales Advisory Document on Ordering, Storage and Handling of Vaccines 7<sup>th</sup> Revision September 2027 [7th revision vaccine handling and storage advice Sept 17.pdf](#)

**Appendix A**

**\*\*PTHB Vaccination Centres – Admin Support (Receiving Vaccine Orders)**

**Training Matrix\*\* NAME:**

| Training / Competency Area                 | Description   | Required | Completed                | Date Completed | Trainer sign |
|--|---|----------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Cold Chain Training (ESR)                  | Mandatory training covering cold chain principles and safe handling of vaccines.  | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| Good Distribution Practice (GDP)           | PowerPoint module and quiz covering GDP requirements for vaccine handling and distribution.   | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| Vaccine Storage Training (ESR)             | One-off ESR module on correct storage conditions for vaccines.  | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| Signing for Deliveries & Document Handling | Competent in signing for deliveries (inc. batch number, expiry checks, correct quantity received), annotating and scanning delivery notes, saving documentation accurately. | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| Cold Chain Integrity Check                 | Ability to check condition of vaccine packaging and confirm cold chain has been maintained.   | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| Fridge Monitoring                          | Ability to manually check fridge temperatures (min/max/actual), reset fridge temperature  | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| WIS – Temperature Recording                | Competent in recording fridge temperatures in WIS   | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| WIS – Stock Checks                         | Competent in documenting stock checks in WIS.   | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| Stock Rotation                             | Understands and applies correct stock rotation principles (e.g., FEFO: First Expiry, First Out).  | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |
| Vaccine stock with no WIS functionality    | Understands the process for recording deliveries of vaccines not yet available on WIS   | ✓        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |              |



