

Councillor Joanna Baker-Rogers – Cabinet Member for Adult

Social Care and Health

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25th September 2024

Councillor Adam Carter
Elected Member

Via email: adam.carter@rotherham.gov.uk

Dear Cllr Carter

Question at Council Meeting – 11th September 2024

Thank you for your supplementary question raised at Council on 11th September 2024. You expressed concerns regarding the Council's existing approaches to encouraging vaccination uptake and queried whether the Council knows which groups are hardest to reach and whether it would be undertaking any outreach work to target those hard-to-reach groups more effectively.

I can advise that the national vaccination programmes are the responsibility of the NHS, with commissioning responsibility for programmes sitting with NHS England's Regional Screening and Immunisation Teams. The NHS is currently planning to delegate these responsibilities to Integrated Care Boards from April 2026, subject to final Secretary of State approval.

Rotherham Council has no direct responsibility for immunisation services, and a fuller answer with regard to the actions being taken to increase vaccination uptake could be provided by NHS England's Screening and Immunisation Team.

As was set out in a previous response, Rotherham has a comparatively high overall uptake rate for childhood vaccinations and has successfully maintained its performance despite the disruptions of the recent pandemic restrictions, which will have impacted the current data for children aged 5 (which it should be noted is a small cohort for any individual GP practice, meaning uptake figures fluctuate significantly at practice level).

There is a strong evidence base with respect to the population groups at risk of low uptake, and the actions that can be taken to increase this, and we learnt a lot from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that the groups that are hardest to reach for encouraging vaccination uptake include:

- Those with English as a second language.
- Transient and migrant workers.
- People who are homeless.
- People who are not registered with GPs.
- People living in less accessible geographical areas.
- People from Traveller communities.

More broadly we know that we can expect lower vaccine uptake in areas of higher socio-economic deprivation, which is largely borne out by our GP-level uptake data.

Through Rotherham's Health Protection Committee we work closely with the Screening and Immunisation Team to ensure that partners are supporting the efforts to improve vaccination uptake. Currently there are work programmes in place to support immunisation catch up for those impacted by access to services during the pandemic, with the Schools Aged Immunisation Service provider (IntraHealth) working within schools to pick up those children reaching 5 school age without a complete vaccine history.

One of the initiatives that is currently being delivered in Rotherham is to encourage GP practices to offer missing preschool boosters during flu clinics for the eligible 3 year olds (as long as they are over 3 years and 4 months of age).

Alongside this, IntraHealth is running reports for missing childhood immunisations, and is being asked to offer them as required from the age of 3 years and 10 months. This can either be in school alongside flu sessions/other planned immunisation sessions throughout the year or in community clinics.

As a Council we are promoting these programmes through our Family Hubs, and amplifying NHS communications to ensure that local parents are being reached.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Joanna Baker-Rogers
Rawmarsh West Ward
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health