



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Andrew Gwynne MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Public Health and Prevention*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

Your Ref: JU81942 Charles Smith

PO-1554179

The Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith KCB CBE MP
By email to: julian.smith.mp@parliament.uk

31 December 2024

Dear Sir Julian,

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 December about eligibility for the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine.

I appreciate your concerns.

The RSV programme for adults turning 75 began on 1 September in England, alongside a one-off catch-up programme to rapidly vaccinate all those aged 75 to 79.

I recognise that some people may be disappointed that they are not included in the age group to be offered an RSV vaccine this year. However, when a new vaccination programme is introduced, the Government must make difficult decisions about eligibility. These decisions are based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), including on the impact a vaccination has on different groups and on the capacity to deliver the programme alongside other healthcare priorities. Having received that advice for RSV vaccination, it was decided that the greatest benefit will be gained from vaccinating adults aged 75 to 79, as there is currently very limited available evidence of the vaccine's efficacy for people over 80.

Immunisation programmes can be adapted, and the JCVI will continue to review the data available. It was noted in the JCVI's June 2023 advice that an extension to the initial programme would be considered when there is more certainty about protection in the very elderly and the impact of the programme on 75-80-year-olds.

The JCVI statement on the introduction of the RSV vaccination programme can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/rsv-immunisation-programme-jcvi-advice-7-june-2023/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv-immunisation-programme-for-infants-and-older-adults-jcvi-full-statement-11-september-2023.

I appreciate this reply may be disappointing, but I hope it is helpful in clarifying the situation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Gwynne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ANDREW GWYNNE