Department of Health & Social Care

NHS

COVID-19 Therapeutic Alert

CEM/CMO/2022/011 04 July 2022

This alert updates and replaces the previous alert CEM/CMO/2022/003 issued on 28 January 2022.

Commencement of a Palivizumab Passive Immunisation Programme Against Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in At Risk Infants in England, Scotland and Wales

Summary

Palivizumab is a humanised monoclonal antibody. It offers a form of passive immunisation, effectively providing short-term protection against respiratory syncytial virus **(**RSV) and reducing the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation and death.

Noting the atypical recent seasonal presentation of RSV an expert working group, which includes representation from Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), has been carefully monitoring rates of RSV infection. As a sustained rise in rates of infection has now been observed, it has recommended the immediate commencement of a palivizumab passive immunisation programme.

Infants in England, Scotland and Wales at high risk of complications from RSV infection, as defined in chapter 27a of the green book, should now be offered monthly intramuscular doses of palivizumab at a dose of 15mg/kg of body weight, for a period of up to 7 months.

Please note that the length of the programme may be amended, and / or also introduced in Northern Ireland, as further data become available.

Action

NHS acute trusts / health boards in England, Scotland and Wales are asked to:

- Immediately commence provision of a palivizumab passive immunisation programme, offering monthly intramuscular doses (at a dose of 15mg/kg of body weight) for a period of up to 7 months to at risk infants falling within the cohorts recommended in chapter 27a of the green book.

Trusts in Northern Ireland are asked to:

- Be ready to administer palivizumab over the summer months in line with the start date advised by the Department of Health.

Distribution

NHS Trusts in England and NHS boards in Scotland and Wales - Trust/Hospital Medical Directors to circulate to medical and nursing staff managing front line clinical services and paediatric critical care teams
Ambulance Service Providers
Primary Care Teams including NHS 111 Service Providers
Regional Medical Directors
Regional Chief Pharmacists
Lead/Senior Pharmacists and Regional Procurement Pharmacy Leads