

FAQs on Seafarers and vaccination

Seafarers

Seafarers are a specialised international workforce vital to support National and International supply lines for critical items and general trade.

They can vary in number from a small crew of a handful, to a crew in the hundreds. Ships are unlike cars and lorries in that they cannot simply park up unattended for a few hours - they require 24-hour care and maintenance.

Vessels may travel long distances following complex routes over many months before returning to home ports. Others will be travelling repetitive trips over relatively short distances with crews living ashore.

It is therefore inappropriate to consider them as one single group which one solution will suit. This document describes a range of the Frequently Asked Questions which supports services providing vaccination to this group.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. The vaccinee is not a UK Citizen?

All seafarers, irrespective of nationality, can be vaccinated whilst in an English Port. This offers them protection and reduces the risks to others. It also contributes to protecting UK services and trade.

2. Can seafarers be vaccinated without an NHS Number?

You do not require an NHS number, or a permanent address, to be vaccinated. Giving the address and postcode of the Port is sufficient:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-migrant-health-guide>

and

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004576/PHE_COVID-19_vaccination_migrant_invitation_letter_English- FINAL_003_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004576/PHE_COVID-19_vaccination_migrant_invitation_letter_English-_FINAL_003_.pdf)

3. What vaccines can be given?

All age appropriate UK licensed vaccines can be offered at the time of writing. These include, Pfizer (Cominarty), AstraZeneca and Moderna.

4. What are the alternate 2nd doses when 1st vaccine has been issued overseas?

Not all vaccines are available in the UK. Alternate equivalents and processes to follow for giving a second dose are to be found in the Green Book Chapter 14a https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007737/Greenbook_chapter_14a_30July2021.pdf

5. Does it entitle me to a COVID Pass for international travel or UK entry?

Currently you would need to be double vaccinated to receive a UK COVID Pass using 2 vaccines provided by the UK vaccine services to obtain a pass, as a minimum first requirement. The position of those vaccinated partially, or wholly vaccinated overseas, and overseas citizens/seafarers is being actively explored. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-pass/get-your-covid-pass-letter/>

6. What is the position of the 8-week rule in such circumstances?

Eight weeks is currently the minimum vaccine interval recommended by JCVI to obtain best protection, but where there are specific circumstances that would prevent a second vaccine at that point, earlier vaccination within the limitations set by the Vaccine manufacturers would be possible. E.g. Only limited time in UK Port before leaving.

7. Do seafarers need to isolate if vaccinated?

The approach to vaccination and isolation continues to vary and may be subject to change. Currently as part of step 4 of unlocking, citizens will no longer be legally required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. If you become infected, then isolation will be required <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/self-isolation-to-be-eased-for-fully-vaccinated-adults-in-step-4>

8. Can we offer Influenza vaccine at the same time?

There are no reasons why if you would normally be eligible for a free influenza vaccine <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/> that could not be given at the same time as a COVID vaccine, subject to vaccine availability.

9. AZ or Pfizer can seafarers choose which vaccine to have?

You cannot usually choose which vaccine you have <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/> All the vaccines used in the UK are authorised for use by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

10. Is the Janssen one dose vaccine available in the UK?

Although authorised for use by the MHRA for COVID vaccination, it has yet to be deployed within the vaccine services.