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34900B

8th September 2020

Dear Head of A&E and Chief Pharmacist,

**Re: Rabies vaccine provision for post-exposure treatment**

As part of the Rabies and Immunoglobulin Service we are again seeing an increasing number of patients attending A&E departments around the country following either a bat bite in the UK or animal bite whilst abroad. For many of these patients, the start of treatment has been delayed because vaccine is not available locally. Although PHE will arrange delivery of rabies vaccine during normal working hours (Mon-Fri), the first dose of vaccine should ideally be given within 24 hours. Vaccine had been available for pick-up from Colindale, but as Colindale no longer has a wholesale dealers licence from September 1<sup>st</sup> this will no longer be possible. Please can you ensure that your trust is able to hold a small number of doses (up to 4 per site) of rabies vaccine or that you can access rabies vaccine through your pharmaceutical emergency service process within 24 hours.

We would also expect the vaccine to be available to issue to local GPs and walk-in centres to commence treatment whilst procuring further stock from PHE. Sites will need to consider the most suitable route for making such supplies should the need arise based on local circumstances.

Any NHS rabies vaccine that is used as per PHE guidance/advice for rabies post-exposure treatment will be replaced with stock from PHE free of charge, by contacting the Rabies and Immunoglobulin Service (0300-128 1020) with full details the next working day.

On working days, PHE will continue to issue human rabies immunoglobulin and the remaining doses required to the appropriate health care provider using a next day delivery service via Immform.



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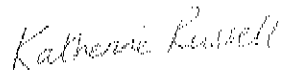
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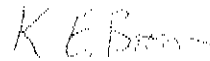
The Rabies and Immunoglobulin Service and out of hours duty doctor service will continue to provide risk assessment advice between 9am and 5:30 pm each day. Further information about the service can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunoglobulin-when-to-use/rabies-and-immunoglobulin-service-rigs>

Yours faithfully



**Dr Katherine Russell**  
Consultant Epidemiologist  
Emerging Infections and Zoonoses team



**Dr Kevin E Brown**  
Consultant Virologist  
Rabies and Immunoglobulin Service