



Department
of Health &
Social Care

CARE

To:

Local authority chief executives
Directors of adult social services
Care home providers
Care home managers
Social care providers

39 Victoria Street
Westminster
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Dear care colleagues

Consultation response on making COVID-19 vaccination a condition of deployment

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who took the time to respond to our consultation on making COVID-19 vaccination a condition of deployment in care homes for older adults.

We received over 13,500 responses and have carefully considered all feedback. I am writing to inform you about the outcome of the consultation and next steps.

1. Response to the consultation on vaccination in care homes

Vaccines are the best way to protect people from coronavirus and have saved thousands of lives. Vaccinated people are less likely to be seriously unwell with COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it. There is also growing evidence that vaccinated people are less likely to pass the virus onto others.

Thanks to the incredible efforts of people across the sector, over 1.2 million social care workers in England have now been vaccinated. This is a fantastic achievement, and an important step for staff to protect themselves, their loved ones, and the people they care for, from becoming seriously ill or dying from COVID-19.

While the majority of care home workers have been vaccinated, only 65% of older adult care homes in England are currently meeting the minimum level of staff uptake needed to reduce the risk of outbreaks in these high-risk care settings - falling to 44% of care homes in London. Sustaining high levels of staff vaccination now and in the future as people enter the workforce is important to minimise the risk of outbreaks.

[In response to the consultation](#), the Government will be bringing forward regulations to make vaccination a condition for any individual working in a CQC-regulated care home, in England, which provides its residents with nursing or personal care, subject to certain exemptions.

Around a third (31%) of registered deaths from COVID-19 in England were among care home residents, as of 2nd April 2021. This requirement will help ensure that residents at high risk from

COVID-19 either because of their age, underlying health conditions, or disability are better protected against the virus.

Care home workers have a duty of care to protect the people they look after and have done a phenomenal job throughout the pandemic to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in these settings. Vaccination is a crucial part of this.

The regulations will require care home providers to deploy only those staff and volunteers who have received a complete course of their COVID-19 vaccination, unless they are medically exempt. Any professionals visiting a care home, such as healthcare workers, tradespeople, hairdressers and beauticians, and CQC inspectors will also be required to show they have been vaccinated before entering the home, unless they have a medical exemption.

The requirement will not apply to residents in the home, to family and friends visiting a care home resident including essential care givers; any person providing emergency assistance; undertaking urgent maintenance work; or to any person under the age of 18. Visits from family and friends are vital to ensuring people living in care homes have a good quality of life and maintain their wellbeing.

Regulations will be laid before Parliament at the earliest opportunity. Once approved by Parliament, there will be a 16-week grace period from when the regulations are made to when they come into force to enable staff who have not been vaccinated to take up the vaccine.

Vaccines are a safe and effective way of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Making vaccination a condition of working in a care home will help protect staff and will provide residents and their families with the knowledge that their health is the number one priority.

Further details of how this will be implemented will be outlined in guidance, which we will provide in due course.

2. Consultation on vaccination in health and social care settings

While residents in care homes are most at risk from COVID-19, the responses to this consultation made a clear case for extending this policy beyond care homes to other settings where people vulnerable to COVID-19 may also receive care.

The Government will therefore launch a further public consultation on whether or not to make COVID-19 vaccination a condition of deployment in healthcare and the wider social care sector, to help protect patients and the people they care for from becoming seriously ill or dying from the virus.

This is a complex and important issue which must be considered as part of a new consultation. The proposals need to be looked at carefully to take account of potential differences between certain health and social care settings, which is why we want to gather a wide range of perspectives from across both sectors about whether such a requirement should be introduced and how it could be implemented.

The consultation will also explore whether flu vaccination should be a condition of deployment in health and social care settings. Flu is a serious illness for vulnerable cared for people who may suffer serious complications from infection, including death. Outbreaks of flu in care settings are common most winters and it is important we explore this option to protect those at risk.

We will share details of how you can take part in the consultation in the coming weeks. I would like to encourage everyone to put forward their views on the proposed policy when the consultation is live.

Yours faithfully,

Stuart Miller
Director of Adult Social Care Delivery