



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

**CARE**

To  
Local Authority Chief Executives  
& Directors of Adult Social Services  
Care Providers

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**20<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Dear Care Colleague

### **COVID-19 vaccinations for community-based Social Care Workers**

I wrote to the sector last month when we began rolling out the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to care home workers. In the weeks since then, over four million people in the UK have received at least the first dose of their COVID-19 vaccine, including almost half of all care home residents in England. Thank you for all you have done to make this happen.

For every 20 care home residents vaccinated, one death is prevented. Vaccinations should happen in every care home, including those where there are COVID-19 cases. We have published guidance<sup>1</sup> on how to do this safely.

This month more vaccination services have come online across the country, with almost 1,200 locations available, including large-scale NHS vaccination centres. As the Prime Minister set out, we want to vaccinate everyone in the top four JCVI priority cohorts<sup>2</sup> by the middle of next month; a hugely ambitious target and one that wouldn't be possible without the huge effort of the NHS Vaccination Programme, and the sector as a whole.

Last week we published a Standard Operating Procedure<sup>3</sup> (SOP), which provides detail on how community-based social care workers in JCVI priority group 2 will receive a vaccine. We recognise the many and varied roles that social care workers do and have asked local authorities to work with providers and NHS vaccination services to identify and call them forward. I welcome the progress that many local authorities, NHS vaccination services and care providers have already made on the vaccination of community-based social care workers.

Where this has yet to happen, local authorities are expected to establish processes to identify, invite and vaccinate social care workers in the most appropriate way for them, the people they care for, and their employer. Community-based social care workers should be contacted by their employer or local authority and receive a letter detailing how they can receive their vaccine. Staff will then receive their vaccine through their local hospital hub, their GP, pharmacy, or local vaccination centre.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/12/C0993-Care-home-vaccination-guidance-31dec.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-december-2020#vaccine-priority-groups-advice-on-30-december-2020>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/01/C1037-COVID-vacc-deployment-SOP\\_community-based-care-workers-14-January-2021.pdf](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/01/C1037-COVID-vacc-deployment-SOP_community-based-care-workers-14-January-2021.pdf)



The published SOP provides the actions required of all parties. The following actions must be taken now, although these may vary locally.

#### Local authorities

Local authorities must work with CQC and NHS partners to:

- Identify providers of social care services and the number of eligible frontline social care workers they employ
- Establish a coordinator to work with providers and the Association of Directors of Children's Services on behalf of the local authority DASS
- Send employers of social care workers the appropriate national and local vaccination communications, including eligibility letters.

#### Providers

If you employ social care workers who have not already been offered a vaccine, you must:

- Put together a list of eligible staff so you can provide overall numbers to the local authority;
- Ensure each staff member receives the letter about consent from Public Health England and their letter of eligibility from your local authority;
- Support staff to make informed decisions about getting the vaccine;
- Support staff to have the vaccine, considering the COVID-secure logistics of releasing staff while maintaining appropriate care;
- Keep staff records of vaccinations to report on uptake (where appropriate via the Capacity Tracker as you do with flu vaccination).

At this time, we are not yet asking for unpaid carers to come forward, following the JCVI advice that they fall within priority group six. We will publish bespoke guidance for vaccinating this group shortly.

Clearly, there is a lot we must yet do and the challenges we are facing from coronavirus must not be underestimated. I know that you will all continue the vital conversations with your staff, colleagues, friends and families and encourage vaccination uptake where you can. Where there is hesitation or reluctance to take a vaccine, we must challenge misconceptions through dialogue, and education. We all must play our part.

I thank you all again for the huge amount of work being done, and for all that we will continue to do together.

For queries, we have set up a group mailbox - [covidvaccineASC@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:covidvaccineASC@dhsc.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely,



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**HELEN WHATELY**  
Minister for Social Care