

Information

for adult social care providers

CORONAVIRUS
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YOURSELF
& OTHERS**



Bulletin 103 – 24 August 2021

Mandatory care home vaccination resource edition

Dear Colleagues,

This adult social care provider bulletin focusses almost exclusively on the new two-dose COVID-19 vaccination regulation for care homes, and the available support to prepare your home and staff.

An additional article at the end of this issue describes how the new self-isolation rules relate to visiting people in care homes.

What is the requirement?

As you are aware, new government regulations requiring staff in care homes to have two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, unless they are medically exempt, come into effect on Thursday 11 November 2021.

To ensure that your workers are fully vaccinated by this date, they need to have had their first jab by Thursday 16 September 2021 to allow the minimum eight-week gap between doses.



The new mandatory vaccination requirement not only applies to care home staff, but to agency workers and also to those who enter the home to undertake work and/or to deliver services.

Please note that care homes which decide to apply earlier deadlines may experience difficulties relating to availability of visiting services, such as health professionals and contractors, which are all working to the implementation deadline of 11 November. We therefore advise that you maintain 11 November as the effective date, and do not attempt to bring the date forward for your home.

Results of 'readiness' survey

Thank you for completing the survey questionnaire and for speaking to the County Council's officers to discuss your home's readiness for mandatory staff vaccination, and any risks presented. This has enabled us to allocate a risk rating to each care home which will allow us to effectively target support.

Out of the circa 170 operational care homes in Leicestershire, we have identified that approximately one-quarter require monitoring and additional help ahead of the deadline.

All homes have identified what they feel are the barriers to staff wanting the vaccination, and work is being done to provide the support requested. Details are contained within this bulletin and include healthy conversations, resources with information for staff, support for staff and information about how to access a vaccination as well as recruitment support if this is needed.

We will continue to work with you to establish progress and to review the risk assessment levels.

Building vaccine confidence – and help from the Health Protection Team

As part of the Council's wider offer to care homes, the Health Protection Team wants to support care homes to retain its staff by growing vaccine confidence. Doing so may be more cost-effective than recruiting and will preserve existing staff expertise and experience. The Health Protection Team is keen to discuss your requirements and there are several opportunities to seek additional help:

- Healthy Conversations Tool and resources - a tool to help engage staff in healthy conversations around vaccine confidence has been developed. The web page also has information and resources on the vaccine.
<https://www.healthyconversationskills.co.uk/vaccineconfidence>
- There are various ways for staff to access the vaccine – please see <https://www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/my-health/coronavirus-advice/coronavirus-vaccine/big-vaccination-weekend/> and let us know if your workers have any difficulties in booking appointments at a convenient time and location.

To speak to the Health Protection Team call 0116 305 0740 or email healthprotection@leics.gov.uk

Recruitment support available from Inspired to Care

The Inspired to Care team are on hand to support providers that may be experiencing any recruitment challenges and will offer access to

- a list of agencies who can support short term, with agreed and pre-negotiated terms of business
- candidate CVs and leads for you to contact

- One-to-one consultation to support with establishment reviews, attraction methods and on-boarding processes

If you could benefit from this additional support, please do not hesitate to contact the Inspired to Care team on

- Email: inspiredtocare@leics.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0116 305 1313
- Website: Register at <https://www.inspiredtocare.co.uk/registration>

Support to care homes from GPs and PCNs

Local GPs and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) want to help care home managers build vaccine confidence amongst their workers.

Please encourage your staff who have questions or concerns about the vaccine to contact their own GP practice for a one-to-one conversation.

GP practices and PCNs are contacting their local care homes to provide information, advice and guidance on the vaccine.

Care home contractors or visiting professionals

You will already have begun to assess implications for your contractors and visiting professionals, but a checklist of actions to consider are:

- Make a list of contractors and professionals who need to enter your home to deliver services
- Communicate early with them about the requirement and your expectations. To assist you in notifying contractors or professional visitors to your home of the new requirement, we have created template wording which you can use or adapt for communication with the relevant organisations, which was released with bulletin 102:
<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/resource/files/field/pdf/2021/8/19/Vaccination-for-care-home-contractors-template.docx>
- Stay in touch with them and seek evidence that they will be able to deploy fully vaccinated workers only
- Consider in good time how you can source the service from an organisation who is able to send fully vaccinated workers if your existing suppliers cannot provide you with assurances.

Agency workers must also be fully vaccinated in line with the regulations.

Only vaccinated workers from Leicestershire County Council and health partners will be deployed to care homes.

Medical exemption

We understand that work is underway nationally on a process for determining and registering medical exemption from vaccination. We will ensure that we communicate further details to you as soon as they are available.

Updating business continuity plans

Please make sure you have updated your business continuity plan to include contingency measures for reduced staff numbers, if staff are unable to work as a result of not being fully vaccinated by the deadline.

We have updated the Business Continuity Plan template which will be emailed to you following this bulletin. There is a detailed section on areas to consider in the case of reduced staff numbers.

If agency staff are part of your workforce or contingency, you must check their vaccination status and make sure that it is included in the agency staff profile.

Please also consider matters which may arise from essential service providers not being able to enter your premises as a result of being unable to deploy vaccinated workers, and seek to address these issues ahead of time.

You may wish to review your plan again after 16 September when you can be clear whether any of your staff will not be able to have both vaccine doses in time for 11 November, and can better assess the impact on workforce for your home. We will remain in contact with you to determine any changes to risk.

You will want to seek your own HR and legal advice about personnel related considerations and how best to support workers with the new obligation.

Mental health and wellbeing support

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a very stressful time for adult social care workers, and that the next few months will present their own challenges and worries in addition to operational pressures for managers and individual workers.

Managers and staff can access mental health support by calling the LLR Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub on 0333 230 0139 – see <https://llracademy.org/mental-health-and-wellbeing-hub/>

Other news: self-isolation and visitors to care homes

You will recall that in bulletin 102 we presented the change in guidance regarding isolation for close contacts of positive cases.

Visitors to care homes are advised against visiting for 10 days if they have been identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19, or if they have visited an amber list country, unless absolutely necessary (for example, for an end of life visit). This includes visitors who are fully vaccinated. Where visits do occur, visitors should have received a negative PCR result, and a negative LFD result on the day of their visit.

Yours sincerely,

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The archive of all previous COVID-19 provider bulletins released since March 2020 can be found at resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/provider-bulletin