



# Information

## for adult social care providers

CORONAVIRUS  
**PROTECT  
YOURSELF  
& OTHERS**



### **Bulletin 105 – 9 September 2021**

Dear Colleague,

Please find attached the latest COVID-19 updates for your operations and forward planning, as we approach a very important date for mandatory care home vaccinations.

#### **Important reminder of imminent care home worker vaccination deadline**

Care home providers will be aware that next Thursday, 16 September, is the deadline for workers in care homes to receive their first dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine, to allow enough time to be fully vaccinated by the final deadline of Thursday 11 November. Full details of the mandatory worker vaccination requirement and resources can be viewed in bulletin 103 at <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/resource/files/field/pdf/2021/8/24/information-for-adult-social-care-providers-issue-103.pdf>

A new Easy Read version of the government requirements can be found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1015178/covid-19-vaccination-of-people-working-or-volunteering-in-care-homes-easy-read.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015178/covid-19-vaccination-of-people-working-or-volunteering-in-care-homes-easy-read.pdf)

You will be doing everything that you can in these final few days to continue to build vaccine confidence in your workforce and ensure that organisations which come into your home can provide you with assurances that their workers will also be double vaccinated.

Those being vaccinated will join the 91.5% of Leicestershire care home workers and 75% of home care workers who have had at least one dose to date.

#### **How to book your jab – it's not too late!**

A central booking phone line is available to any adult social staff who still need to book their appointments.

The call centre number is: 0116 497 5700. The line will be open at the following times:

- Mon – Fri 08.00 – 20.00
- Sat 09.00 – 17.00
- Sun 10.00 – 18.00

For details of walk-in vaccination clinics visit the local [NHS website](#).

## **Medical exemptions from vaccinations**

There are very few individuals who cannot receive the Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines. Where there is doubt, rather than withholding vaccination, appropriate advice should be sought from the relevant specialist.

There are some circumstances in which an exemption may be granted which will reflect the [Green Book on Immunisation against infectious disease, chapter 14a](#) and clinical advice from the Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

The following have been highlighted in the Green Book as having relative contraindications to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine:

- Individuals with a previous systemic allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine. These individuals can be offered an alternative age-appropriate vaccine to the first
- Individuals with a prior allergic reaction to any component (excipient) of the COVID-19 vaccine e.g. polyethylene glycol. Anyone with a history of allergic reaction to an excipient in the COVID-19 vaccine should not receive that vaccine (except with expert advice), but those with any other allergies (such as a food allergy) – including those with prior anaphylaxis – can have the vaccine.

Minor illnesses without fever or systemic upset are not valid reasons to postpone immunisation. There is no evidence of any safety concerns from vaccinating individuals with a past history of COVID-19 infection, or with detectable COVID-19 antibody. Having prolonged COVID-19 symptoms is not a contraindication to receiving COVID-19 vaccine but if the patient is seriously debilitated, still under active investigation, or has evidence of recent deterioration, deferral of vaccination may be considered to avoid incorrect attribution of any change in the person's underlying condition to the vaccine.

Full details can be found at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1015203/Greenbook\\_chapter\\_14a\\_3Sept21.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015203/Greenbook_chapter_14a_3Sept21.pdf)

Care home workers who believe themselves to be medically exempt must discuss this with their GP within the next few working days, as if they are not exempt they have limited time to receive their first dose before the initial 16 September deadline.

It is unlikely that exemptions from vaccinations for the purposes of working in a care home will be self-declared. Those that are exempt will be able to seek a clinically approved exemption from this requirement. We are awaiting further guidance and will update you when it is available.

## **Individuals vaccinated outside the UK**

We are aware some individuals will have been vaccinated outside of the UK. We are working on a solution to this and will provide further guidance on this as soon as possible.

## **Fertility, pregnancy, and COVID-19: why getting vaccinated is so important**

Health, pregnancy and fertility experts in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) have filmed a short video which answers the most frequently asked questions about pregnancy and vaccines.

Recent data has determined that 98% of pregnant women admitted to hospital with COVID-19 had not been vaccinated. The video is part of a desperate plea to highlight the need for all pregnant women, new mums and those hoping to become pregnant to get vaccinated in order to minimise the risk of contracting the virus.

In the video, the LLR local experts share useful facts and information about the importance of getting vaccinated and the benefits doing so has for both mum and baby. The video also addresses common misconceptions about the vaccines.

The video can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/jH5YRaJSYLU>

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccines and pregnancy and fertility, please visit: [www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/pregnancy-and-fertility/](http://www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/pregnancy-and-fertility/)

## **Support from Primary Care Network or GPs**

Care homes' local PCNs and GPs are keen to provide advice and information to workers ahead of the forthcoming deadlines. Please contact us on [enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk](mailto:enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk) if you would like to arrange for your home's GP to support your staff.

## **Care Provider Alliance hosted webinars and resources**

The Care Provider Alliance is running webinars relating to vaccination and visiting in care homes:

- [Mandatory vaccination and HR issues: webinar 16.00-17.00, 16 September 2021](#) A webinar for adult care home managers and HR leads will look at the HR and workforce management issues of implementing mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations as a condition of deployment in adult social care homes in England.
- [Visiting care homes, plus Essential Care Giver: webinar 9.30–11.00, 17 September 2021- CPA](#) A webinar for adult care home managers, staff, residents and relatives will look at good practice and how to overcome the barriers to rolling out the Essential Care Giver role and wider visiting arrangements for residential care settings.
- [Q&A from vaccination as condition of deployment webinar](#) Q&A and presentations from a webinar on the implications and implementation of COVID-19 vaccinations as a condition of deployment in care homes in England. The webinar, which included contributions from the Care Quality Commission and NHS England, was held on 26 August 2021.

## **Preparing for vaccinations in autumn / winter 2021**

Claire Armstrong, Director of Adult Social Care Delivery at DHSC has written to adult social care providers about preparing for vaccinations during autumn and winter. The letter can be found [here](#).

## **Extension to remote right to work checks**

The end date for the temporary adjusted right to work checks has now been deferred to 5 April 2022 (inclusive). Central government have made the decision to defer the

date following the positive feedback they have received about the ability to conduct checks remotely. They have also initiated a review of the availability of specialist technology to support a system of digital right to work checks in the future. The intention is to introduce a new digital solution to include many who are unable to use the Home Office online checking service, including UK and Irish citizens. This will enable checks to continue to be conducted remotely but with enhanced security.

Deferring the end date of the adjusted checks to 5 April 2022 ensures the Right to Work Scheme continues to operate in a manner which supports employers, whilst a long-term, post-pandemic solution is implemented. You can find out more by [clicking here](#).

### **Infection Control and Testing Fund**

For ICTF1, final reports were required by 12 July, and thanks to those that submitted their returns on time. Underspends will be deducted from subsequent payments or invoiced. An ICTF (testing) overspend payment will be made later this month.

For ICTF2, again, thanks to those providers that reported July expenditure as requested - that data has now been returned to the DHSC. A final report will be required at the end of the funding period in early October, detailing expenditure for July, August and September, by month. It will be this return which is used to determine any underspend or overspend.

Applications for support from the discretionary fund can now be made. An email was sent on Friday - more information and the online application form can be found at: <https://surveys.leics.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=160795259818>

Two applications can be made, one relating to testing and one relating to infection control. The priority is to support community providers that have not benefited from a 'direct' payment. Home care providers that cannot use their 'direct' payment to support testing costs and should therefore make an application to the testing part of the discretionary fund to cover those costs.

If you have any questions, please contact [dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk](mailto:dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk)

### **Residential care fee review**

The Council's approach to the residential fee uplift in April 2021 was governed by the fee review undertaken in 2018/19. It was agreed by the Cabinet that subsequent annual increases would be calculated using a formula based on the annual increase in the Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) services rate and the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

So, in April 2021 band rates were increased by 2.0%, which is a blended rate that took account of the CPI annual inflation rate of 0.3%, and the AWE services rate increase of 3.40%. Supplementary Needs Allowance payments were increased by 3.4%. Both CPI and AWE rates were those reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in December 2020.

The work to determine the approach to care home fees for 2022/23 is ongoing but undertaking a fundamental review to establish the rates for April 2022, three years after the last major review in 2018/19, is not being recommended at this time because:

- The care home market has not recovered from the impact of the pandemic.
- Covid-19 related costs, and Department of Health and Social Care funding to mitigate them, are still in the system.
- Delivery models that take account of new ways of working are yet to fully develop.

In such circumstances, reliable estimates of the cost of care, upon which fees will be based, are very difficult to make. It is being proposed therefore to delay the fundamental review until April 2023 and the current agreed mechanism will be used to uplift rates in April 2022.

### **Importance of updating workforce information on the Capacity Tracker**

National, regional and local teams regularly review workforce information to help inform their planning processes, as well as to provide more timely support to providers. Recently, local authorities and CCGs told the Capacity Tracker team that it is important providers keep updating the tracker, as the data is being used for the following purposes:

- Where providers are reporting a red or amber workforce status, local authorities are calling providers to understand the rationale for this rating and to put support in place for providers.
- Being used as early signals to monitor recruitment issues and possible spend on agency staffing.
- Support recruitment for providers who are flagging they have high absence rates.
- To assist with identification of risks around workforce within the system.

Please ensure that your workforce status RAG rating is updated and correct every day – guidance text can be found by hovering over each RAG status:

- Red – workforce level ratios breached, business continuity in place.
- Amber - operating within agreed staffing ratios however significant escalation risk in coming days.
- Green – operating within agreed staffing ratios with minimal risk identified in coming days.

### **Tips:**

- Absences recorded should be for sickness only (COVID-19 or other sickness reasons) – not absences for other reasons e.g. maternity leave, not on shift that day, on holiday, as these are not sicknesses / illnesses.
- Those listed as off sick should be included in the figures regardless of whether they are due on shift or not that day.
- Figures entered for workforce are actual headcount – not full-time equivalent numbers.
- Total number employed is all staff employed – not just those who are working that day.
- Definitions for "number absent today – COVID related" and "number absent today – non-COVID related" can be found by hovering over this text in the tracker.

- Definitions for type of workforce can be found by hovering over "registered nurses", "care providing staff" and "non-care providing staff".
- Ensure that no boxes are left blank – this will cause errors when saving the system.
- Number of directly employed staff absent today (COVID related and non-COVID related) should not exceed the figure for total number employed (directly employed staff) e.g. if you have a total of 10 staff, you cannot have 11 staff members absent.

### **New government plan for health and social care**

At the time of writing, information on the government's new plan for health and social care was being released. Further details will be publicised when the implications for Leicestershire are known.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Wilson  
Director of Adults and Communities

Mike Sandys  
Director of Public Health

The archive of all previous COVID-19 provider bulletins released since March 2020 can be found at <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/working-with-you-during-coronavirus>