



Information for adult social care providers

Covid-19 and Flu

Bulletin 127 – 4 February 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Vaccination as a condition of deployment (VCOD)

In [bulletin 126](#) we presented the emerging position on vaccination as a condition of deployment (VCOD).

A letter was issued on 2 February 2022 by Michelle Dyson, Director General for Adult Social Care, DHSC, to providers of CQC-regulated adult social care services including care homes. The text of the letter is as follows:

As you will be aware, in December 2021, Parliament approved legislation requiring vaccination as a condition of deployment in health and wider social care. This was due to come into force from 1 April 2022.

On 31 January, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced the Government's intention to revoke the regulations making vaccination a condition of deployment (VCOD) in all health and social care settings (care homes and wider social care), subject to consultation and the will of Parliament. This decision was taken in the light of the latest scientific evidence, based on the now dominant variant Omicron.

Irrespective of this decision, we are clear that vaccination is the best way to protect ourselves against COVID-19. The vast majority of health and social care workers have been vaccinated, but we encourage everyone who is eligible to get their vaccinations and their booster.

In light of the announcement, we want to clarify how the 3 February deadline (for the first dose for those currently working in CQC-regulated wider social care settings) would be impacted by the Government's intention to revoke the regulations.

We are aware that, based on the guidance already issued, those who employ or engage staff working in wider social care settings will have begun to prepare for formal meetings with staff if they remain unvaccinated. The announcement on 31 January means our clear advice is that these employers do not serve notice of termination to employees in connection with the VCOD regulations.

The Secretary of State plans to lay a written ministerial statement on this before Parliament tomorrow (3 February 2022).

I want to acknowledge the incredible efforts of the sector to encourage tens of thousands of staff to receive their COVID-19 vaccination over the past year. These efforts have been very much appreciated.

As the Secretary of State said on Monday, we will press on with the consultation process as legally required and will continue to keep all those affected updated as this moves forward.

We will continue to provide you with the latest information on VCOD as we receive it.

Changes to testing regimes across adult social care

Routine testing regimes for staff have now changed. Staff are no longer required to perform routine weekly PCRs. Instead, this will be replaced by daily lateral flow testing which must be performed before the start of a shift.

PCR testing should still be used for the following:

- Monthly resident testing
- Outbreak testing – PCR testing on day 1 of an outbreak, and another test on day 4-7. The weekly staff PCR test during an outbreak is no longer needed.
- Symptomatic testing (staff and residents)
- Testing requirements if identified as a contact
- Testing requirements following travel abroad

These changes will apply across all adult social care staff including staff who access tests individually, such as Personal Assistants and those working for local authorities or charities etc.

Home care providers and wider extra care or supported living settings should switch from weekly PCR to daily lateral flow testing as soon as their staff have lateral flow test kits, given the change in testing offers substantial increases in protection compared to their current regime of weekly PCR only.

Easing of restrictions in care homes

Where possible, care home providers are expected and encouraged to facilitate visits, which should take place in a risk managed way.

There is no longer a limit on the number of visitors that a resident can receive, however visitors should continue to make arrangements with the care home in advance, to enable providers to manage the number of people attending at any one time.

The duration of visits should not be limited, provided safe practices can be maintained.

Visitors are still expected to receive a negative lateral flow before each visit.

Visits during outbreak

During an outbreak, providers should also continue to offer visits outdoors, in visiting pods or from behind windows – rooms should be left to ventilate with external doors and windows open between uses wherever possible, while aiming to maintain a comfortable temperature for residents and visitors.

During an outbreak, visiting professionals should normally be able to continue to visit, provided they adhere to all necessary IPC precautions.

They will also need to receive a negative lateral flow test before each visit.

Outbreak recovery testing should be undertaken when there have been 14 days with no new cases. If no new cases are found, outbreak restrictions can then be lifted.

High risk visits

Residents should isolate for a maximum of 10 days from other residents following an emergency stay in hospital (as they are higher risk than an elective admission) or other high-risk visit out as determined by the risk assessment.

During this period of isolation within the care home, residents may continue to undertake visits out of the care home, if:

- a risk assessment by the care provider shows they can avoid other residents
- they are not visiting another social care setting
- consideration is given to the vulnerability of those they will be visiting

Residents who are able to take lateral flow tests should be able to end isolation as outlined below. Residents who are:

- vaccinated (with their primary dose and any eligible booster dose) should take a lateral flow test on day 4, 5 and 6, following their return to the care home (day 0), and, if negative, can end isolation
- unvaccinated should take a lateral flow test on day 6, 7 and 8, and, if negative, can end isolation

Residents who are unable to test should isolate for 10 days.

Care home roving booster team

To facilitate easy access for care home workers and residents to COVID-19 boosters, CCG colleagues have arranged for each Leicestershire care home to have a visit from a roving vaccination team at a pre-arranged time. Please encourage your workers to make the most of this in-home opportunity.

In [this video](#), a worker in a care home explains why he decided to receive his booster jab and why he thinks all care colleagues should get theirs too.

Drive-through booster clinics

You can now have COVID-19 vaccines without having to get out of your vehicle, at a drive-through vaccine clinic.

The clinic is in the car park to the rear of Leicestershire County Hall, Leicester Road, Glenfield LE3 8RA and is open every Wednesday to Sunday, 11.00-19.00.

Vaccines are available to people aged 12 years and over and this includes first, second, third and booster doses.

Just turn up, no appointment is needed or you can [book a timed slot](#) in advance.

Pop-up vaccination clinics

Further pop-up vaccination clinics have been confirmed for the next few days:

Venue	Address	Date and time	Doses offered
MVU County Location - Loughborough University Shirley Pearce Square	Shirley Pearce Square, Epinal Way, Loughborough, LE11 3TU	04/02/2022 to 06/02/2022 09:00-16:00	Fri: 16+, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Booster Sat/Sun: 12+, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Booster
MVU City Location - Access Road near Maxi Grosik	Blackbird Rd, Leicester LE4 0FW	04/02/2022 to 06/02/2022 09:00-16:00	Fri: 16+, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Booster Sat/Sun: 12+, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Booster
Tesco, Blaby Road	South Wigston, Leicester LE18 4SE	11/02/2022 to 13/02/2022 09:00-16:00	Fri: 16+, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Booster Sat/Sun: 12+, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Booster
Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service	Aikman Avenue, New Parks, Leicester LE3 9PW	11/02/2022 to 13/02/2022 09:00-16:00	Fri: 16+, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Booster Sat/Sun: 12+, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Booster

COVID-19 guidance update: supported living

Updated [supported living guidance for providers](#) has been published setting out information to support local plans and preparations to manage risk, and support people in supported living settings throughout the coronavirus response.

COVID-19 guidance update: PPE portal

[Guidance on how to use the PPE \(personal protective equipment\) portal](#) has also been recently revised and includes a helpful video for those new to the service.

Free additional PPE available

The government has confirmed that from 1 April 2022 the Local Resilience Forum will no longer be required to provide free Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to services across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland.

As stock levels remain high, we would like to offer some of this supply to providers. This offer will not affect your supply from the national portal. It is hoped that you will want to take advantage of the PPE equipment on offer.

Currently items in stock available to order include:

- Protective gloves
- Aprons
- Type IIR masks
- Hand sanitiser
- Visors
- Waste sacks
- Non-sterile gowns
- Coveralls
- Tissues
- FFP3 masks

Distribution is likely to be via collection. To gauge demand please fill in the [online form](#) (green ‘order PPE now’ button towards the bottom of the web page) to indicate the quantities of the equipment you would like to request on a one-off basis. Please ignore the month’s supply note. If you are unable to collect please email us at A&CHub-emergency&bcpplanning@leics.gov.uk, explaining why you cannot collect. Delivery will only be in the most exceptional of circumstances.

Stock will be available on a first come first served basis, the intention being that all stock will have been distributed before 1 April.

Please contact LRF.PPESupport@leics.gov.uk with any queries.

Other news: Home Care for Leicestershire - locality meetings and provider forums

Locality meetings

New, locality-based virtual meetings will be used to discuss and address pertinent issues affecting and to support delivery in specific areas.

Providers will not be expected to attend all meetings but to make an informed decision based on where most of your work is or where you have matters you wish to discuss linked to a particular geographical area.

<i>Melton</i>	<i>Charnwood</i>	<i>Harborough</i>	<i>Coalville</i>	<i>Blaby, Oadby, Wigston</i>	<i>Hinckley</i>
15 February	16 February	17 February	22 February	23 February	24 February
10 May	11 May	4 May	17 May	18 May	5 May
17 August	18 August	9 August	24 August	25 August	10 August

Joining details for the calls will be issued soon.

COVID-19 home care provider forums

The COVID-19 focussed home care provider forums which have taken place regularly since early in the pandemic will continue for the foreseeable future, usually on the first Monday of the month. The future dates and dial in details are available [here](#).

Other news: medication and dressing for people discharged to care homes

UHL have confirmed that they will now be supplying two weeks of medications and dressings for all people being discharged from hospital into care homes.

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>