

Covid-19 Vaccination of Staff and Service Users in Care Homes Policy

Policy Statement

To fully protect staff and service users in this home from the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic, this home will comply fully with the Covid-19 vaccination programme for the UK.

In the vaccination roll-out care home residents and staff as frontline carers have been the highest priority group for vaccination across the whole of the UK. The home has been fully involved in the vaccination roll-out to date and will continue to ensure that its residents are offered the vaccine if they already have not been given it and will always support them practically and emotionally to receive it.

The Downes is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its residents and staff at all times. It will comply fully with the guidance on vaccination and ensure that all residents and staff are given the opportunity for safe access to the vaccine in any future developments.

Procedure

Vaccination of Residents

In this home:

- all service users will be encouraged and supported to access the Covid-19 vaccine where it is safe and appropriate for them to do so and where vaccination is recommended by GPs
- all service user vaccination will be based on compliance and informed choice and delivered as part of a person-centred plan of care
- service users and their families will be provided with full information about the vaccine and the vaccination process, including information relating to side-effects
- vaccine information will be provided in a format that the service user can best understand and discussed with them and their families so that they are able to make informed decisions about vaccination — staff should make every effort to address people's fears and worries about the vaccine and to provide information in an appropriate manner
- where necessary, in cases where a service user lacks capacity, the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 will be applied in compliance with care home procedures and policies on mental capacity

- the care plan of any resident who does not consent to have the vaccine or for whom it is not recommended on medical grounds will reflect any additional infection prevention measures that might be needed to ensure everyone's safety
- a range of Covid-19 vaccination resources — such as information leaflets and posters — will be provided and displayed
- records will be kept of all vaccines administered in compliance with the home's medicines policies — the home recognises that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine requires two doses given at least 21 days apart and usually some weeks apart
- vaccination may be temporarily deferred in some individuals, eg those who are acutely unwell or who are still within four weeks of onset of Covid-19 symptoms
- staff will monitor any service users who have had their vaccination for possible side-effects or reactions to the vaccine — any concerns should be reported immediately to the person in charge who will take appropriate action to obtain suitable medical support.

Organisational Issues (as applicable)

On delivery of vaccines to residents on-site, the home will liaise fully with the relevant vaccinating team and ensure that all appropriate facilities are provided. Safety of residents and staff will be a key consideration and all necessary Covid-19 mitigation and infection prevention measures will be taken. Care home staff who assist with the vaccination will be provided with appropriate training.

Chapter 14a of the Green Book states that there are very few individuals who cannot receive the Pfizer/BioNTech or AstraZeneca vaccines and that individuals with a history of anaphylaxis to food, an identified drug or vaccine, or an insect sting, can safely receive the vaccines, as long as they are not known to be allergic to any component parts of the vaccine.

The Green Book advises that, where there is doubt, rather than withholding vaccination, appropriate advice should be sought from the relevant specialist, or from the local immunisation or health protection team. Recipients should be monitored for 15 minutes after vaccination.

The MHRA also reminds providers that vaccination should only be carried out in facilities where resuscitation measures are available. All staff carrying out vaccinations should be trained in basic life support and in the management of anaphylaxis.

Recipients of the vaccine should be informed that protection against Covid-19 disease may not be fully effective until at least seven days after the second dose. However, in all cases vaccinated individuals should be advised to maintain all Covid-19 precautions, such as social distancing and enhanced hand hygiene.

Immunocompromised persons, including individuals receiving immunosuppressant therapy, should be informed that they may have a diminished immune response.

Staff who become involved in supporting the delivery of vaccines to service users will be expected to do so in full compliance with training and supervision provided.

Supporting Staff Vaccination

The care home manager will follow all official guidance to:

- ensure that staff are supported to access suitable Covid-19 vaccination services and advice — this will usually be achieved in collaboration with the local authority and with local NHS trusts, GP practices or vaccination provider services
- put together staff lists, including basic details (name, gender, date of birth, NHS number, GP details) for each staff member
- be ready to provide each staff member with a letter to take to their vaccination appointment confirming their employment in the care sector
- keep staff records of vaccinations and report via the Capacity Tracker (as with flu vaccination)
- consider the Covid-secure logistics of releasing staff to receive their vaccine, while maintaining staffing levels within their home
- ensure that staff give their consent to any arrangements made on their behalf by the care provider and to any sharing of personal data, which must be on a “need to know” basis
- liaise with local health protection teams where expert advice or support is required.

Implementation the Changes in the Care Regulations Making Staff Vaccination Mandatory

Changes have been made to the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 under Regulation 12 (Safe Care and Treatment) to which the care home will make every effort to comply. These changes will also be reflected in amendments to the Government’s Code of Practice on Infection Prevention and Control and the *Green Book* as it applies under the care regulations.

The home understands that as detailed in government announcements from 11 November 2021, registered providers of the regulated activity of providing accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care in a care home should ensure policies and procedures are in place with regard to Covid-19 vaccination.

People would only be able to enter a CQC-registered care home in England if they met one of the following requirements:

- the person is a service user of the regulated activity in the premises used by the registered person

- the person has provided the registered person with evidence that satisfies the registered person they have been vaccinated with the complete course of an authorised vaccine
- the person has provided the registered person with evidence that satisfies the registered person that for clinical reasons they should not be vaccinated
- it is reasonably necessary for the person to provide emergency assistance in the premises
- it is reasonably necessary for the person to provide urgent maintenance assistance to the premises
- the person is a member of the emergency services in execution of their duties
- that a person is a friend or relative of the service user visiting the service user
- the person is visiting a dying service user
- it is reasonably necessary for the person to provide comfort or support to a service user in relation to a service user's bereavement following the death of a relative or friend
- the person is under the age of 18.

From this the care home has noted the following.

1. The care provider will need to apply the above requirements to all persons wishing to enter the premises of the care home including health care professionals, CQC inspectors, tradespeople, hairdressers, beauticians, etc. Compliance with the regulations would amount to a reasonable excuse for not giving access to a CQC inspector.

2. If inspected, the provider will be able to demonstrate that:

- there is a record to confirm the evidence stated above has been provided. This record will be kept securely by the registered manager (or equivalent person) in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018
- the eligibility for immunisation of workers is regularly reviewed in line with Regulation 12
- there is appropriate support and education of workers in relation to the vaccine
- workers are provided with the appropriate support to access vaccination.

The care home understands that it will need to study and follow all statutory guidance on how the new regulation will be enforced by the CQC and any likely consequences including possible penalties and sanctions for non-compliance.

The care provider will make all strenuous efforts to ensure there is full compliance by the set date and afterwards, including the changes that will be required to its staff recruitment, and staff conditions and terms of service.

Training

All new staff should read this policy as part of their induction. Staff who will be involved in supporting the administration of the vaccine to residents will be required to access appropriate training and competency checks as required.

Review and Monitoring

Overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed rests with the care home manager.

This policy is subject to revision in the light of the changes made to the Government's vaccination strategy as its effectiveness is evaluated and Parliament's decision to approve the mandatory vaccination of staff in care homes with effect currently from November 2021.

The home is aware that guidance relating to Covid-19 care and prevention has sometimes changed rapidly during the pandemic. Any updates to the vaccination programme will be monitored and, where necessary, included in this policy.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Policy review date: _____

Reviewed 04/08/2021 by P Thomas