

## Coronavirus - LMC Update January 21<sup>st</sup> 2021

### **Change in legislation to allow any GMC registered doctor to administer the COVID-vaccine in primary care settings**

The Government has announced that doctors who offer their support in delivering the Enhanced Service Specification COVID vaccination programme in primary care settings will be exempt from the requirement to be included on the England Medical Performers List. The [Regulations, which came into force on 14 January](#), remove previous barriers and mean that any GMC registered doctor will be able to administer the vaccine and any ancillary vaccine services under the enhanced service specifications in a primary care setting.

### **Covid-19 Vaccine Second Dose Interval**

NHSE/I has published a letter with an [Instruction on timing of second dose of COVID-19 vaccinations](#), which sets out that all vaccination sites ensure that all second dose appointments for both patients and health and care staff that have not already been rescheduled, must be rearranged to take place in the 12th week.

In response to concerns raised about the interval by the BMA, the GMC has responded stating: *'were a complaint to be received in the future where the sole concern was about a doctor having administered a vaccine in line with the recommendations of JCVI and the four CMOs it seems highly unlikely that this would raise any fitness to practise concerns about the individual'*. Read the GMC letter [here](#).

### **NHS Vaccination Webinar - Feedback**

Slides from the latest NHS England vaccination programme webinar can be found [here](#).

Feedback from the last session included:

- 96% of population is now within 10 miles of a vaccination site. General Practice are the backbone of this.
- No 15 minute observation wait is needed for Astra Zeneca vaccine – follow the Green Book
- £950/week additional funding is available per week to PCN groupings for admin support to help with record keeping and invitations (maximum of £2500 per PCN grouping)
- Guidance on vaccination in care homes with cases or outbreaks: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/12/C0993-Care-home-vaccination-guidance-31dec.pdf>
- Help with moving vaccine for home visits and small care homes - see p41 for info about movement of Astra Zeneca: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/12/C1038-COVID-19-Vaccine-Deployment-in-Community-Settings-LVS-SOP-v3.2-14-January-2021.pdf> and also this letter about moving Astra Zeneca vaccine: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-vaccine-oxford-astrazeneca-movement-vaccine/>

- Pinnacle issues – new sites are suffering but work is taking place to correct problems. All care home vaccinations need to be recorded to initiate payment
- It was reiterated that “appraisals can be declined” - If they go ahead the revised, shortened and supportive 2020 model should be used. Appraisers can offer appraisals but GPs do not need to accept.
- COVID Oximetry@home was promoted heavily. More detailed research and information is available from National Covid forum and learning network - [COVID Oximetry @home and COVID Virtual Ward models of care - National Deterioration Forum - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#) (sign in to FutureNHS required)
- A free 4 month supply of vitamin D is available to clinically extremely vulnerable patients – see [Get vitamin D supplements if you're at high risk from coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

### **Vaccination of Health and Social Care staff**

The vaccination programme is now beginning vaccinating all health and social care workers in the Humber Coast and Vale region.

This programme will include all health and social care staff employed by organisations, primary care independent contractors, privately employed carers and care assistants and other health and social care staff, for example, funeral directors, as set out in the [government's Green Book guidance](#).

In the main, vaccinations for health and social care staff will be delivered from the four hospital hubs: Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust, Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust and York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; as well as the large vaccination centre at York.

To help ensure a fair and transparent approach to vaccination the HCV ICS has agreed a [framework to support the scheduling of staff](#). This framework is in line with the JCVI and Green Book guidance and aims to support a consistent approach across the ICS.

### **Fit Notes (Med 3)**

GPs are reminded that they are still required to issue fit notes (med 3) as normal. There are specific scenarios relating to COVID-19 where patients can use the isolation note service, instead of seeing a GP, as outlined below. Please do not signpost patients to NHS 111 in order to get a fit note as they are not provided by the service. During the pandemic DWP is encouraging employers to use their discretion as to what medical evidence is required to support periods of sickness absence.

Previously advice was issued on issuing fit notes (med 3s) remotely during the pandemic, and remains in place until further notice. A properly signed and scanned fit note sent via email to the patient will be regarded as 'other evidence' and will be accepted by DWP for benefit purposes. Not signing fit notes can mean that they are rejected by employers and DWP, so GPs are asked to remember that fit notes must be signed. The original hard copy does not need to be retained if there is an electronic copy of the fit note in the medical record.

If the patient is unable to receive their fit note electronically, they will be required to collect a hard copy from the practice or it will be posted to them, at the practice's discretion.

The isolation service does not provide fit notes (med 3s). It is an automated service that can be used to provide evidence of the need to self-isolate by those who:

- Have symptoms of coronavirus
- live with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus

- are in a support bubble with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus
- have been told to self-isolate by a test and trace service

It can be used to cover continuing periods of isolation if patients still have symptoms or develop new symptoms following their initial isolation period.

### **First Aid for Primary Care Staff webinars**

There are a few places left on the last of our series of bitesize webinars which provide you with some practical and immediate help. It is free of charge, and open to anyone working in primary care. Visit our [events page](#) for online booking.

- **Practical ways to shift your thinking** - Thursday 28th January, 12:15-1:30pm

A reminder that there are many services and links to useful resources to support everyone working in primary care on our [Support page](#).

### **Save the Date – Freedom to Speak Up**

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, 13:00-14:00

The LMC is now offering the Freedom to Speak Up guardian service to anyone working in primary care in our four CCG areas who wishes to raise a concern. Any members of staff from GP practices can speak up about concerns they have which they feel are not being listened to by their own management reporting. This online event will formally launch our service and will include a speaker from the National Guardians Office. More details will be circulated soon.

### **NHSE/ Primary Care Bulletins**

All NHSEI bulletins, plus sign up link, can be found on the NHSE website [here](#). Recent editions and summary of contents:

- **19/01/2021**: people aged 70 and over and the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) to begin receiving invitations for vaccinations; Position statement around use of the COVID-19 vaccine AstraZeneca (AZ) to vaccinate housebound patients; Vaccinating frontline social care workers; Arrangements for returning GPs to support vaccine rollout; Guidance on return to work for people with long COVID; Suspected or diagnosed cancers and cervical screening; Lateral flow testing in primary care; NHS Discharge Medicines Service cross sector toolkit published; Faecal Immunochemical Test eligibility; Testing requirement for visiting professionals entering care homes;
- **14/01/2021**: Updates on vaccinations of care home staff and residents; Change in legislation to allow any GMC registered doctor to administer the COVID-vaccine in primary care settings; Access to National Workforce Supply Routes for PCN Groupings delivering the COVID-19 vaccine; Long COVID services; Pulse oximetry guidance update; Establishing COVID Virtual Wards; Later flow test orders; Supporting doctors throughout the second COVID-19 wave; Monitoring the COVID-19 vaccination programme; Reminder of PCR swab testing service in general practice