



COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

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Document summary

This policy sets out our organisation's stance on employees being vaccinated and how the vaccination programme impacts our workforce.

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About this document:

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Key points

- The County Council encourages all employees to take up the offer of a vaccine when they are offered it.
- Staff should ensure they are fully informed on the benefits of vaccination before making individual choices.
- Staff who receive the vaccine must continue to follow government rules on managing COVID-19 and COVID-19 secure workplace procedures as they could potentially transmit the virus to unvaccinated people.
- Vaccinations are included as a control measure within the COVID-19 Individual Risk Assessment.
- Staff without a vaccination for medical reasons should ensure that all other control measures are adhered to and discuss any concerns with their manager as part of their risk assessment.

1. Covid-19 Vaccination Programme

- 1.1. Vaccinations are free of charge on the NHS. They are being administered according to a priority list at vaccination centres, including some hospitals, sports stadiums, conference centres and GP surgeries. We encourage employees who are not registered with a GP to do so as soon as they can. Guidance on how to register with a GP surgery is available on the NHS website.

2. Individual's decision

- 2.1. We ask that, when a coronavirus vaccination becomes available, employees take the opportunity to be vaccinated. We understand that this is ultimately each individual's choice, but we encourage our workforce to make an informed decision by:
 - reading up about COVID-19 vaccinations via official sources such as the NHS website;
 - paying attention to the information the NHS provides when offering a vaccine, and;
 - being wary of misinformation around COVID-19 vaccinations put out by unreliable sources.

3. Staff working in health and social care settings

- 3.1. Many County Council staff work directly with the most vulnerable people in our society. These staff are encouraged to help protect themselves and our clients by accepting the vaccination when offered.

4. Staff working in a CQC registered residential settings for residents requiring nursing or personal care

- 4.1. From 11 November 2021 staff who need to enter a CQC registered residential settings for residents requiring nursing or personal care in order to do work are legally required to have a full course of a COVID-19 vaccine unless they have a medical exemption or are under 18. This includes staff working in the setting but not providing personal care and staff, agency workers, volunteers or contractors who are required to enter the building to undertake any non-emergency work there.
- 4.2. Staff whose work base is the CQC registered residential care home will be required to evidence that they have a full course of an approved COVID-19 vaccine or that they have a medical exemption prior to the date it becomes a legal requirement or during the recruitment process for newly appointed staff.
- 4.3. Staff whose role may require them to undertake work in a CQC registered care home as part of their duties will be asked to evidence their vaccine status at the point they seek to enter the CQC registered residential care home, every time they enter the care home.
- 4.4. Anyone who cannot evidence their vaccine status or medical exemption will be refused entry to the building.
- 4.5. Appointment cards cannot be accepted as evidence of vaccine status. Vaccine status, including medical exemption, can be evidenced via:
 - [The NHS App](#)
 - [The NHS website – NHS.uk](#)
 - The NHS COVID Pass letter (obtained by calling 119 to request it is posted)
- 4.6. The person checking the vaccine status will not take a copy of the vaccine status but they will record that the persons vaccine status has been checked before allowing the person access to the building. A record that the vaccine status has been checked is a requirement of the CQC and will be checked during inspection.
- 4.7. In certain urgent and emergency situations vaccination status of staff, agency workers and contractors will not need to be checked. Appendix 1 outlines example situations where vaccine status will not be checked.
- 4.8. If service delivery to the CQC care home is impacted by low vaccination take up advice from HR Advisory services should be sought.

5. Risk Assessments

- 5.1. The COVID-19 Individual Risk Assessment includes vaccination as a control measure.
- 5.2. Staff with concerns about the vaccination are encouraged to read the government resources on vaccination for guidance.
- 5.3. Health and social care staff working directly with service users will be asked by their manager to confirm if they have had the vaccine. This will form part of the

individual risk assessment with the purpose of determining which control measures are in place.

- 5.4. Medical information that an employee has received a vaccination will constitute special category data and as such records will be kept in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. If vaccine status is checked a copy of the vaccine status proof will not be retained.
- 5.5. In settings where being vaccinated is not mandatory, if a front line member of staff does not wish to confirm their vaccination status or confirms they are medically exempt from having the vaccine, managers should consider whether any additional control measures can be put in place as part of the risk assessment.
- 5.6. In settings where being vaccinated is mandatory, if a member of staff confirms they are medically exempt from having the vaccine, managers should consider whether any additional control measures can be put in place as part of the risk assessment.

6. Time off for vaccination appointments

- 6.1. Where possible, staff should attend COVID-19 vaccination appointments outside of their normal working hours. In the event that this is not possible, staff can take paid time off to attend under the County Council's policy on time off for medical appointments.
- 6.2. Employees should obtain approval from their line manager in advance of taking time off to attend a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. They should give their line manager as much notice as possible. Line managers may, at their discretion, ask employees to produce evidence of their appointment, for example an appointment card or email/text inviting them to a COVID-19 vaccination appointment.

7. Return to work following vaccination appointments

- 7.1. Following a vaccination, employees should be able to resume their normal activities, including working, as long as they feel well. This means that employees should return to work as soon as they can after their vaccination appointment. If it is not practical for the employee to return to work immediately after their appointment, for example, if it is towards the end of their working day, this should be discussed and agreed with their line manager.
- 7.2. Employees who are unwell after receiving a coronavirus vaccination and unable to attend work should record their sickness absence in the usual way. This should be notified as soon as reasonably practicable, preferably before they are due to start work and in any event no later than one hour after they are due to begin work.

8. Treating colleagues with respect

- 8.1. We recognise that the subject of the COVID-19 vaccination programme can be divisive and lead to the expression of strong opinions. However, employees must remain responsible and respectful when communicating with their colleagues about COVID-19 vaccinations.
- 8.2. Employees must not act against colleagues in a way that could amount to bullying or harassment as a consequence of anything relating to the individual right to decide on whether to have a COVID-19 vaccination or any related matter. In line

with the Council's existing policies, the harassment or intimidation of colleagues because of their views or individual circumstances may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Any employee who is offended by, or concerned about, a colleague's behaviour in this regard should raise the matter with management in the first instance and can subsequently raise a formal complaint via the grievance procedure, if the matter remains unresolved.

Situations where vaccine status will not be checked upon entering a CQC registered residential care setting.

The registered manager is ultimately responsible for making decisions about whether it is appropriate that a person enters the registered setting without their vaccine status being checked, however the registered manager or their delegates will be able to seek advice from senior managers to ensure they have access to the appropriate support and guidance on specific circumstances.

In an emergency situation

It is the registered person's responsibility to use their professional judgement to determine whether a situation is an emergency. Registered persons will be expected to keep a log of all emergency situations, including details of the circumstances, during which people entered the home without showing proof of vaccination or exemption. An emergency situation could include (but is not limited to):

- Members of the public assisting in the event of flood or fire
- Social workers responding to immediate safe-guarding concerns
- Emergency services staff attending the care home in the execution of their duties are exempt from the requirement. This includes:
 - Members of the fire and rescue services attending the care home to execute their duties
 - Members of the police service attending the care home to execute their duties.
 - Members of the health service deployed for emergency response

To undertake urgent maintenance work

It is the manager's responsibility to use their professional judgement to determine whether a situation requires urgent maintenance work. Managers will be expected to keep a log of all urgent maintenance work during which people entered the home without showing proof of vaccination or medical exemption, and a short description of the incident for record keeping purposes

If urgent maintenance work is required in the event of a risk to life or continuity of care, workers are exempt from these requirements. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply
- Dangerous electrical fault
- Serious damage caused by fire, flood, storm or explosion
- Burst water service
- Serious roof leak
- Gas leak
- Any fault or damage in the care home that makes the care home unsafe or insecure
- A serious fault in a lift or staircase