

**To: All Practices in Surrey and Sussex LMCs**

15 November 2021

Dear Colleagues

## **Making Vaccination a Condition of 'Frontline' Deployment within the NHS**

The Government undertook a Consultation between 9<sup>th</sup> September to 22<sup>nd</sup> October about the appropriateness of extending the mandatory vaccination requirements in place for deployed staff in CQC Registered Care/Residential Homes to wider health settings.

The vaccination requirement [unless medically exempt] for staff employed or engaged in Care/Residential Homes came into effect on 11<sup>th</sup> November.; assuming the legislation is approved, the requirement within the NHS, applying to 'front-line' clinical and non-clinical staff who have a direct 'face-to-face' contact with patients, whether involved in direct patient care or not will not come into effect until at least 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. It will apply in all NHS and private settings, with limited exceptions.

The majority (65%) of respondents to the Consultation did not support the proposal, however, the Government has decided to implement it, with a delay until April next year. The three policy decisions supporting this approach were:

- Building on what has been done to date: nationally by the end of October 93% of NHS workers had received at least one Covid-19 vaccination but this conceals significant variation between Trusts.
- The need to protect people receiving care.
- The need to protect our workforce, to ensure our health and social care sectors can continue to deliver services: colleagues may feel this is the most ironic of the policy aims, since it is inevitable, given the analogy with the Care/Residential Home programme, a proportion of staff will leave rather than be forced to be vaccinated. Conversely, colleagues will be aware of sickness absence related to Covid-19 infection or the requirement for self-isolation is having a significant on-going impact on workforce capacity, though much less than in the early stages of the pandemic last year. Many of the objections to the policy of compulsory vaccination cited the overall likely impact on workforce and also the differential effect this policy might have on pregnant women, women considering pregnancy, and people from particular ethnic minority backgrounds.

Local Medical Committees for  
Croydon, Kingston & Richmond, Surrey,  
East Sussex and West Sussex

The White House    **T:** 01372 389270  
18 Church Road    **F:** 01372 389271  
Leatherhead  
Surrey KT22 8BB    **www.sslmcs.co.uk**

There will be a number of exceptions to this policy, similar to those in Care/Residential Homes, being:

- Those under 18
- Those who have a Covid-19 medical exemption certificate
- Those who have or are currently taking part in a clinical trial for a Covid-19 vaccine
- Those who do not have a direct 'face-to-face contact with patients as part of their role
- Those providing care under a 'Shared Lives' agreement which involves long-term domiciliary arrangements.

Practice colleagues should be aware of this proposal although it has not yet been confirmed in law and will not come into effect until at least 1 April next year.

At present all GP practice staff and NHS workers generally should be encouraged to have a full Covid19 vaccination course, as defined by the JCVI [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation] including a Covid19 booster if they are eligible for one.

However, clearly in the New Year GP Practice Managers will need to take HR advice, which will be forthcoming given the scale of the implications of this policy and its likely impact on services. There should also be a clearer definition of "frontline" in order to decide who will be in scope. At that point practices will need to ensure they follow HR policies, including evidence of encouragement to vaccination without harassment, consideration of alternative roles, and any decision that may need to be made in terms of continuing employment/engagement.

The Government has said this policy will not apply to flu vaccination although this is being reviewed.

I realise there will be a range of views amongst all colleagues and it is important to remember this is a politically imposed policy.

With best wishes



**Dr Julius Parker**

Chief Executive