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

28th March 2022

Dear Colleagues

**Vaccination as a Condition of Deployment [VCOD]: Update and further guidance**

I am writing to all practices to update colleagues on the current VCOD arrangements. The VCOD Regulations have been withdrawn, and were formally revoked in Parliament on 15th March, following a review announced on 31st January and a brief public consultation in February.

The LMC realises that the preparation for VCOD created significant pressure on affected GP practices and was very unsettling for NHS colleagues, both for those who, if unvaccinated and ‘in scope’ of the Regulations, faced dismissal, as in many cases redeployment was unfeasible, but also for colleagues who, whilst supporting vaccination, did not support if being mandatory.

Social Care staff are included in this decision, although this was some months after the introduction of these Regulations in Care/Residential Homes on 11th November 2021. Clearly, many of the thousands of staff obliged to leave their posts are unlikely to return.

I enclose an NHS FAQ following this decision, which although primarily directed at Trusts also includes helpful information for practices in terms of HR procedures.

The LMC is also circulating a Risk Assessment guidance which may be helpful for practices in developing vaccination policies. Please contact Sarah Parsons [sarah.parsons@sslmcs.co.uk] with any queries regarding this.

Colleagues will know that current NHS England/UK Health Security Agency Infection Protection and Control guidance is that all patients, staff and visitors [unless medically exempt] should wear masks or equivalent face coverings in health and care settings, and other prevention measures, such as triage and social distancing, should continue to apply. I appreciate that, following the phased withdrawal of all Covid related legal restrictions, some patients may challenge this but they should be reminded this will apply to all healthcare facilities they may attend, and that refusal to wear a mask can affect the nature of the care that may be offered, including timing, location and available personnel.

Current IPC guidance is due to be reviewed again in April.

On a completely separate note, but because the LMC has received a number of queries, June 2nd and June 3rd are confirmed UK Bank Holidays and GP practices will not be expected to open on those days, as the GMS/PMS Contract excludes declared Bank Holidays from “core hours”. There has been no suggestion that the Government is planning emergency rules to change this. The Covid Vaccination Enhanced Service does provide for CVP services to be delivered on Bank Holidays and therefore if planned for NHSE may require this.

With best wishes



Dr Julius Parker

Chief Executive