



Department
of Health &
Social Care

CARE

To:

Local authority chief executives
Directors of adult social services
Care home providers
Care home managers

39 Victoria Street
Westminster
London
SW1H 0EU

15 09 2021

Dear care colleagues

Temporary medical exemptions for COVID-19 vaccination of people working / deployed in care homes

Regulations were approved by Parliament on 22 July 2021 to make vaccination a condition of deployment for staff working in CQC-regulated care homes in England, unless they have a medical exemption. A 16-week grace period was put in place to ensure staff who haven't been vaccinated could take up the vaccine before the regulations come into force on 11 November 2021.

Thanks to the incredible efforts of people across the care sector to encourage and reassure colleagues about vaccination, as of 9 September, 90.4% of care home workers have now had a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with 82.2% of care home staff now fully vaccinated.

The Department of Health and Social Care has been working as quickly as possible to ensure that people who are not able to get the vaccine for medical reasons are not disadvantaged.

On a temporary basis, from today, people working or volunteering in care homes who have a medical reason why they are unable to have a COVID-19 vaccine will be able to self-certify that they meet the medical exemption criteria, using the forms attached to this letter.

Care home workers who are exempt will need to sign the form attached to this letter and give this to their employer as proof of their temporary exemption status. This temporary self-certification process has been introduced for a short period prior to the launch of the new NHS COVID Pass system which will go live imminently.

Once the NHS COVID Pass system is launched, care home workers will need to apply for a formal medical exemption through that process. This temporary self-certification will expire 12 weeks after the NHS COVID Pass system is launched.

Who is exempt:

While this list is not exhaustive, examples of medical exemptions from COVID-19 vaccination could include individuals:

- Receiving end of life care where vaccination is not in the individual's interests.
- With learning disabilities or autistic individuals, or with a combination of impairments which result in the same distress, who find vaccination and testing distressing because of their

condition and cannot be achieved through reasonable adjustments such as provision of an accessible environment.

- With medical contraindications to the vaccines such as severe allergy to all COVID-19 vaccines or their constituents.
- Who have had adverse reactions to the first dose (e.g. myocarditis).

Time-limited exemptions will also be available for those with short-term medical conditions (e.g. people receiving hospital care or receiving medication which may interact with the vaccination). A time-limited exemption is also available for pregnant women should they choose to take it.

Exemptions for conditions listed in section 4.4 (special warnings and precautions for use) in the Summary of Product Characteristics for each of the approved COVID-19 vaccines ([Pfizer](#), [AstraZeneca](#) and [Moderna](#)) may also be considered.

Individuals that have received a COVID-19 vaccination abroad can also self-certify as medically exempt. This is because it is not clinically appropriate for them to be vaccinated in the UK if they have already received a partial or full course of vaccination overseas.

We have attached the forms needed for someone to self-certify as exempt. We will update the [operational guidance](#) we have already published in the coming days to reflect the temporary exemption system outlined in this letter.

Yours faithfully,

Claire Armstrong
Director of Adult Social Care Delivery