



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  
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11 October 2021

Dear colleagues

**Clinically reviewed medical exemptions for COVID-19 vaccination of people deployed in care homes**

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

The Department of Health and Social Care has been working to ensure that people working or volunteering in care homes who are unable to get vaccinated for medical reasons can continue to be deployed in care homes.

**Self-certification medical exemption (temporary existing process)**

A small proportion of people working or volunteering in care homes are unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons.

On 15 September we introduced a temporary process for people working or volunteering in care homes to self-certify as exempt if they believe they meet the medical exemption criteria.

As confirmed on 15 September, self-certification forms are only valid for up to 12 weeks after the launch of the clinical review system.

More information on this existing temporary process can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

**Clinically reviewed medical exemption (new process)**

Since 1 October, individuals working or volunteering in care homes can apply for a formal COVID-19 medical exemption by calling 119 and requesting an NHS COVID Pass medical exemption application form, as set out [in this guidance](#). The possible reasons for exemptions are identical to the ones for the existing temporary process (see details below). Each application will be clinically reviewed by a doctor, specialist clinician or midwife. Individuals applying for a medical exemption will automatically get the results of their application by post 2 to 3 weeks after applying. This notification letter can be used by an individual to prove their exemption status, pregnant women can also use MAT B1 certificates.

The launch of this new system means that anyone who has self-certified as exempt on medical grounds will have to obtain confirmation of this exemption through the formal process above (or use a MAT B1 certificate if pregnant) no later than Friday 24 December.

By 24 December, anyone working or volunteering in a care home (even if they have previously self-certified as exempt on medical grounds) will need to be able to prove one of the following:

- That they have obtained a clinically reviewed medical exemption (or they can use a MAT B1 certificate if pregnant)
- That they are fully vaccinated
- That they have self-certified as exempt because they have been vaccinated overseas (see below for more details).

### **Who is exempt?**

The possible reasons for exemptions are limited. Examples that might be reasons for a medical exemption include:

- People receiving end of life care where vaccination is not in the person's best interests
- People with learning disabilities or autistic individuals, or people with a combination of impairments where vaccination cannot be provided through reasonable adjustments
- A person with severe allergies to all currently available vaccines
- Those who have had an adverse reaction to the first dose (for example, myocarditis)

Other medical conditions could also allow an individual to get a medical exemption.

Time-limited exemptions will also be available for those with short-term medical conditions and as an option that some pregnant women may choose to take.

Pregnant women can alternatively use MAT B1 certificates as an alternative applying for a medical exemption. This can be used until 16 weeks post-partum.

### **Exemptions for people who have received a vaccination overseas**

Individuals who have been vaccinated abroad should continue to use the self-certification process. The self-certification process for people vaccinated abroad will not expire after 12 weeks.

### **Additional funding to help adult social care this winter**

On 30 September the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid, announced an additional £388.3 million to prevent the spread of infection in social care settings, including £25 million to support care workers to access COVID-19 and flu vaccines over the winter months.

This will ensure social care staff who need to take time out of work to receive their COVID-19 or flu vaccinations are paid their usual wages to do so. It can also be used to support them with the cost of travelling to a vaccination site. The full announcement can be found [here](#).

With thanks

Claire Armstrong

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