

KEY MESSAGES AND SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT PERSONAL ASSISTANTS ELIGIBLE FOR VACCINATION AS PART OF NATIONAL PRIORITY GROUP TWO - FRONTLINE ADULT SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

These headline messages and questions and answers are based on queries received by [Skills for Care](#), [Think Local, Act Personal](#), [In-control](#), and [Disability North](#), and have been developed with support from [ADASS](#), the [LGA](#), and individual councils. This has been produced at pace, so please report any inaccuracies to liz.greer@local.gov.uk

1. Skills for Care estimate there are around 140,000 Personal Assistants (PAs) employed by 70,000 individual employers. Many of these will be providing care to people, both adults and children, who are [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) to COVID -19
2. To be eligible for vaccination in the national [priority group two](#), PAs need to be caring for someone who is [clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19](#), and/or has a defined [underlying health condition](#) leading to greater risk of disease or mortality from COVID-19, and/or is of advanced age (85+); this is set out in detail in the [Standard Operating Procedure](#) (SOP) published on the 14 January 2021
3. All PAs who meet this definition are eligible for vaccination now, regardless of whether they are self-employed, employed privately, through a social care direct payment (DP), a personal health budget (PHB), or through a broker or payroll provider
4. Councils are asked to ensure that all eligible PAs, whether known to them or not, are included in the vaccination programme for [this national priority group](#), and for confirming, in writing, eligibility for vaccination with individual employers and self-employed PAs; an example letter is at **Appendix Two**
5. Individual employers, and self-employed PAs are therefore asked to provide their local council with details of those eligible for vaccination through a [single point of contact](#) in their local council – **see Appendix One**
6. Vaccination sites are asked to check eligibility when PAs arrive for their appointment, so it's important a PA has all the necessary information with them which should include:
 - their notification of eligibility from the council or CCG, or if using the national booking service without this (see 7. below), a signed employer's letter confirming their eligibility and place of work
 - [their consent to vaccination form](#)
 - their [NHS number](#)
 - photo ID as proof of identity eg an ID badge, passport or driving licence
 - where any PA is refused vaccination, this should be raised immediately with the [local council single point of contact](#)
7. because the option of an employer's letter instead of a letter from the council has just been introduced, we don't know how well this will work locally, so a letter of eligibility from the council remains the best way of ensuring a PAs can get their vaccination; this will be particularly important if a PA does not have any photo ID
8. If an individual employer or self-employed PA has not already been contacted about vaccination, for **2 weeks from 11 February 2021**, PAs can book an appointment direct with the [National Booking Service](#) or by phone: 119; in order to speed up vaccinations, a signed employer's letter confirming a PAs frontline care role and place of work, can replace the eligibility letter from their council. Detailed information about this is [published here](#).
9. Individual employers and self-employed PAs are asked to ensure they have key information about vaccination prior to their appointment, including the [covering letter](#) to go with the [consent form](#), notice of eligibility from the council (or a signed employers letter) and information for [women of childbearing age](#)

10. Government have published [other information about vaccination](#) (including in different languages) which may be helpful, along with [additional resources to help those with concerns about vaccination](#)
11. A key worker letter, or being registered as a carer with a GP, may not guarantee vaccination which is why the written eligibility notification from the council, or an employer's letter, is essential to ensure PAs are vaccinated
12. If the person (or people) the PA cares for is not within the definition at 2. above, then the PA will be vaccinated when their turn comes in the [national priority list, based on their age, and any relevant clinical factors](#)
13. Anyone unsuccessful in making contact with their council can notify covidvaccineASC@dhsc.gov.uk

Question	Answer
Eligibility and the process for getting vaccinated	
Do we, as employer, tell the council that we have a PA who needs to be considered for COVID vaccination? Do we contact the council direct or via our social worker/care manager?	Yes; if you've not already been contacted by your local council for this information, or received anything about your PAs eligibility for vaccination, you should let the council know about your PAs; your council has a single point of contact for providing this information
Who do PAs need to be registered with and by whom?	Individual employers, and self-employed PAs, need to let their local council's single point of contact know about PAs eligible for vaccination; the council will then confirm their eligibility, and how to arrange their vaccination Some councils or CCGs may have contacted PAs already to offer vaccination, but PA employers should also be aware this offer has been made and so they can be assured that vaccination has been taken up
Does this process apply to those in receipt of NHS CHC funding?	Yes; PAs funded through a personal health budget (PHB) or continuing healthcare (CHC) are eligible for vaccination; unless the local CCG has already been in touch about vaccination for PAs funded through a PHB or CHC, this should be co-ordinated by the local council through their single point of contact . Many councils are working in partnership with their CCGs to ensure they reach all eligible PAs.
I have both a direct payment and a personal health budget; does this guidance apply to both?	Yes; if you are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19, then your PA will be eligible for vaccination, however they are paid for
The focus seems to be on employers of large numbers of care workers, not individual employers like me; when I tried to register on the NHS portal, I was asked for a CQC number; what should I do?	The individual employer (or self-employed PA) should let their local council know that they have a PA eligible for vaccination; the council will then notify them of their PAs eligibility and tell them how to arrange their vaccination; vaccination is on offer to all PAs who provide care to people (adults or

	children) who are clinically vulnerable to COVID -19 regardless of whether they are self-employed, employed privately, through a direct payment, a personal health budget, or through a broker or payroll provider
What information will be provided to us by the council, and who do we need to inform about our PA, who do we contact with queries?	All eligible PAs should receive a letter (from either the council or the CCG) confirming their eligibility and how they can get vaccinated - this could be through a hospital hub, GP practice, community pharmacy, or a vaccination centre. Individual employers and self-employed PAs should also tell the council or CCG about any preferences for the location of their vaccination. If you've not already been contacted by the council for your PA information, this should be provided through the local council's single point of contact
One of my PAs rang their GP about their eligibility for the vaccine and was told the request should come from their company or a social worker. I've tried contacting our social services direct payment manager but not had a reply. How can we improve council and GP responses?	Councils are tasked with identifying and notifying all PAs eligible for vaccination, and confirming the local arrangements to get the vaccination; we've heard that not all GP practices and vaccination centres are aware of this yet, which is why it's important that the PA ensures they have the correct documentation with them when they go for their appointment. If you've not already been contacted by the council for your PA information, this should be provided through your local council's single point of contact
Should PAs contact their own GPs?	Although it's important that PAs are registered with a GP, and know their NHS number in order to get the vaccine, they need written notification that they are eligible, which can be shown when they attend for their vaccination; some PAs may have letters identifying them as key workers but not all centres may accept this PAs should have with them : their notification of eligibility from the council or CCG, or if using the national booking service, an employer's letter confirming their eligibility and place of work, plus their consent to vaccination form, their NHS number, and some photo ID as proof of identity eg an ID badge, passport or driving licence; without this information, PAs could be turned away from the vaccination appointment
We have a direct payment but have not heard anything from our council. What would the first step be for me? Would it be to contact our family support worker? Who in the council do we let know about our PAs? Would it be a social worker, care broker, financial team or advisor?	Each local council has provided a single point of contact for providing information about PAs eligible for vaccination

Who is the 'local authority'? I was told to tell my GP that I am a PA, but they referred me back to my employer	The local authority, or council, are required to collect information on all frontline care staff eligible for vaccination, including PAs, whatever the basis on which they are employed. The individual employer, or self-employed PA, needs to let the council in the area where they live, or are based, know that they have a PA eligible for vaccination, using the single point of contact . They will then be notified of their eligibility in writing by the council, and told how to book their vaccination
Can I assume, that 'someone knows' that there is a PA in the household, as my employers were sent PPE for me?	It's probably best not to assume this; if you've not already been contacted by the council for your information, this should be provided to the local council through their single point of contact
Will only PAs that support those classed as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' list be eligible for vaccination in this group? Or are all PAs of DP recipients eligible?	Yes; only PAs supporting those clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 are eligible for vaccination in this group; see 2. above for more detail
My sister pays privately for PAs -will they be able to have the vaccine?	If your sister is clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 , her PAs are eligible and she should contact her local council with the necessary information through their single point of single point of contact
Does PA eligibility apply only to paid PAs, as I am registered as a carer with my GP?	Yes, eligibility in priority group two means social care workers, including PAs, who provide paid care to those clinically vulnerable to COVID-19; unpaid carers who've not been vaccinated as part of an earlier priority group, will be vaccinated as part of priority group six
The GP surgery says the vaccine is for registered carers which I am not, although this has been my PA job for 16 years	Being a registered carer with a GP is not the same as eligibility for the vaccine in priority group two. All PAs providing care to people clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 are eligible for vaccination in priority group two; if you've not already been contacted by the council for your information, this should be provided through your council's single point of contact
Is a 40-year-old with a severe learning disability in a clinically vulnerable group?	Younger people with a learning disability are not classed as clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 unless they have Downs Syndrome, or an underlying health condition such as diabetes, obesity, respiratory or heart problems which increases vulnerability to serious illness or mortality arising from COVID-19. People and PAs not vaccinated in priority group two, will be vaccinated when their turn comes in the national priority list based on age, and any relevant clinical factors.
I have some health funding for my son and the CCG has just written to me to invite the PAs to register with them, but what about the people who only have social care funding?	People who are wholly or part-funded by a social care direct payment from the council, or who fund their own care, need to let the council know about their PAs so that they can be included in the vaccination rollout for this priority

	group; if PAs have already been vaccinated through another route, please let the local council know through their single point of contact so they can update their records
It sounds like PAs are only eligible for a vaccine as part of priority group 2 if they are caring for somebody who is 'clinically vulnerable'. Please could you define this? We support somebody who has complex mental health/autism needs but is not physically clinically vulnerable to severe Covid Will only PAs that support those on 'extremely clinically vulnerable' list be included? Or all PAs of DP recipients?	Only PAs providing care to someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) to COVID-19 is eligible for vaccination in priority group two; CEV is defined as clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19, and/or has a defined underlying health condition leading to greater risk of disease or mortality from COVID-19, and/or is of advanced age (85+). People with a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia are included in the group regarded as clinically vulnerable to COVID-19, as are those with Downs Syndrome; at present those with autism and/or complex challenging behaviour are not included in the clinically extremely vulnerable group; PAs and people not vaccinated in priority group two will be vaccinated when their turn comes in the national priority list based on age, and any relevant clinical factors.
My employer is a private family consisting of two children with complex disabilities and a single mother who is at a loss of what to do. The mother of the children I care for contacted Social Services who said that organising the vaccine was nothing to do with them and that I was to contact my GP My two disabled sons have a 24/7 care package through Direct Payments, and we employ 10 PAs. How do we access the Covid Vaccine for their care team? There appears to be a gap in access for people in our situation	PAs caring for children up to age 16 who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19, or have an underlying health condition leading to greater risk of disease or mortality, are eligible for vaccination in priority group two.
I have contacted my local council and GP about eligibility for regular testing and vaccination. It appears that despite the fact that there are a huge number of DP PAs and other social care workers in the country, supporting many vulnerable adults and children, we are not classified as Frontline workers, so will have to wait for our vaccines until Group 6. I feel this is completely wrong and undermines the importance of these workers. I understand vaccination is only rolled out to CQC registered social care employers.	<u>All</u> PAs providing care to people clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 are eligible for vaccination in priority group two, regardless of whether they are self-employed, employed privately, through a social care direct payment (DP), a personal health budget (PHB), or through a broker or payroll provider; you do not have to be employed by a CQC-registered provider to be eligible for vaccination in priority group two; if you or your individual employer have not been contacted about vaccination, then you should contact your local council as soon as possible with your information through their single point of contact

How will you identify self-employed personal assistants in the social care sector for eligibility to the Covid vaccine?	If you or your individual employer have not yet been contacted about vaccination, then you should contact the local council as soon as possible through their single point of contact with this information
What is the current time scale for the vaccine to be administered to PAs?	The Government's intention is that all eligible PAs should be offered their first vaccination appointment by 15 February 2021
I am employed as a PA by someone who receives direct payments. Can you tell me whether he and I should fall into one of the priority Covid vaccine groups and if so, who I should contact, please?	People are being offered vaccinations in priority order based on age and any relevant clinical factors, so a PAs employer will be invited for vaccination by the NHS when it's their turn in the priority list; it's possible therefore, that a PA could be vaccinated before the person they care for
I'm a mum with a daughter that needs home care through a DP. I employ five PAs plus family that help out including myself. I have looked on the .Gov site & it states that the Carers (Social Care) are classed as Frontline Workers & I'm having trouble getting them vaccinated for Covid. I feel that because I'm not a Care home association all my Carers are not getting recognised as frontline staff. Can you help?	If your daughter is clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19, then her PAs will be eligible for vaccination regardless of how they are employed; you or your daughter should contact the local council about this if you've not heard from them already through their single point of contact
Any news on a letter to identify who is a PA so they have evidence to obtain both testing and vaccine from GP? A few DP employers have been advised by GP that this is all they need	All eligible PAs should receive a letter (from either the council or in some cases the CCG) confirming their eligibility for vaccination, and how they can get vaccinated - this will be at a hospital hub, GP practice, community pharmacy, or a vaccination centre. Without this notification letter, their consent form, an NHS number and photo ID as proof of identity, PAs may be turned away when they attend for vaccination.
GPs are asking for evidence of their health or social care employer	For <u>2 weeks from 11 February 2021</u> , PAs can book an appointment direct with the National Booking Service or by phone:119; in order to speed up vaccinations, an employer's letter confirming a PAs frontline care role and place of work, can replace the eligibility letter from the councils
I spoke with LA yesterday who have agreed to supply us with a cover letter that my PA is a provider of personal care funded by LA which we will be able to distribute	
Can I be vaccinated at the same time as the person I care for if they are CEV?	Some GP practices and vaccination centres may agree to this if you are both registered with the same GP, and are known as the person's paid carer, however we advise you check when any appointments for vaccination are being booked as this may not be feasible; if as a PA you are offered the vaccination, then you should not delay taking this offer up
Data sharing	
If the council or CCG is asking individual employers to provide their PAs details, how can ensure we don't breach data protection as we are the ones who employ the PA, not	Only basic information is required from individual employers to confirm eligibility for vaccination (see Appendix One , below). If self-employed, PAs can contact the council direct with this information. PAs can make their own

the council. Can we refuse to give PAs details but insist that the PAs make contact directly with the council? If PAs agree their employers can provide details, how can we be sure that the council will only use the information for vaccine only?	vaccination bookings, it doesn't have to be arranged by the individual employer, though they will be asked to provide some personal data at the point of booking. If using the National Booking Service , an employer's letter confirming a PAs frontline care role, and place of work, can replace the eligibility letter from the councils
Employment-related questions	
Can I insist that my PA has the vaccination? What if they refuse?	The Government have been clear that in the UK, vaccination is by consent and it has no plans to compel anyone to be vaccinated; some people are hesitant about the vaccine which is why providing them with reliable, accurate information is so important. We strongly recommend taking employment law advice from your insurance provider before taking any action against a PA who is reluctant to be vaccinated. DHSC have published a helpful list of additional resources to help those with concerns about vaccination
Could I be taken to an employment tribunal for being too slow to offer my PAs a vaccination?	Individual employers are expected to ensure PAs are aware they are entitled to a vaccination in priority group two if you are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19; if you have any concerns about your liabilities in relation to this, we advise you to speak to your insurance provider
What if as a PA I want my employer to have the vaccine in order to continue working for them?	People are being offered vaccinations in priority order , so a PAs employer will be invited for vaccination by the NHS when it's their turn; this could be after their PA is vaccinated, depending on their age and other relevant clinical factors. The Government have been clear that vaccination is by consent in the UK, and it has no plans to compel anyone to be vaccinated
Our PAs are all self-employed and paid from my Husband's personal health budget. One PA doesn't seem to be as careful as the others (ie non-essential shopping etc). Can I ask her to leave?	We strongly recommend taking employment law advice from your insurance provider before taking any action against your PA
Can I compel my PA to attend an information event about the COVID vaccine, with information from a health care professional, if they refuse?	It's not a requirement that a PA attends an information event in order to be vaccinated, although it may be very useful; as long as they have been provided with the required vaccination information by the council, and yourself as employer (see 9.above), then they can get the vaccination; there may be good reasons why they are not keen to join an information event, and we advise taking employment advice from your insurance provider before taking any action against your PA for not attending an information session
Could job adverts for PAs specify that the applicant should be vaccinated?	We strongly recommend taking employment law advice from your insurance provider before taking this step, as the Government have been very clear that

	in the UK, vaccination is by consent and it has no plans to compel anyone to be vaccinated
Unpaid Carers	
What is the position of "informal unpaid carers" who provide the same care as paid carers?	Unpaid carers and family members, who've not been vaccinated as part of an earlier priority group, will be vaccinated as part of priority group 6
We are very short staffed and from next week we will have one PA to cover our extremely vulnerable daughter's 24/7 care. I have to stand in regularly to support my daughter who lives in her own home. I am 73 and have health issues. I am not a PA but must cover while recruitment is so difficult. My GP Surgery has said that I am not a key worker	Someone who is 73, and an unpaid carer, will be vaccinated as part of priority group four
Vaccinations for people being cared for by a PA	
My main carer is my husband, so I would like to know if he can be prioritised.	Unpaid carers will be vaccinated as part of priority group six; if your husband is aged 65 or over, he will be vaccinated in priority group five
Do we just wait for a vaccine appointment for our cared-for son who is on the vulnerable list?	Yes; people will be contacted by the NHS when it's their turn to be vaccinated; you can check the priority list to see when this should happen
Our GP has been unable to help with vaccination for myself (as a parent-carer), or my disabled daughter, or our PAs? She says we need to wait for the 'system' to invite us -but how does the 'system' know about us?	Only PAs caring for children clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 because of underlying health conditions will be vaccinated in this group; you, and your daughter, will be contacted by the NHS when it's your turn to be vaccinated; you can check the priority list to see when this should happen

Appendix One- minimum information required by councils as set out in the [Standard Operating Procedure](#) (SOP) published on the 14 January 2021

1. Name of individual employer or PA name if self-employed
2. Named contact, including email address and telephone number-provide an address if no email
3. Overall number of eligible staff/PAs
4. Number of staff who are high risk (high risk means at high risk of acquiring infection, and/or at high individual risk of developing serious disease and/or risk transmitting infection to multiple vulnerable persons or other staff if not vaccinated)
5. Preferred location (eg postcode) for any vaccination and preferred booking arrangements eg self-booking
6. Any other support arrangements needed to take up the vaccination offer

Appendix Two-example council eligibility letter reproduced by kind permission of Lincolnshire County Council

County Offices, Newland,
Lincoln, LN1 1YU
www.lincolnshire.gov.uk



NAME OF PA HERE
ADDRESS OF PA HERE

Glen Garrod
Executive Director of Adult Social
Services
Lincolnshire County Council
January 2021

Notice of COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility – Personal Assistants

You are in receipt of this letter as you have been identified as a Personal Assistant providing care in Lincolnshire. The Government has identified frontline social care workers as a priority for vaccination due to the critically important work you are doing within your community.

Lincolnshire County Council and the local NHS vaccination programme have been working to identify where you can access vaccination services in your area. The attached information sheet gives more detail about these locations and how to book an appointment.

You must take this notice of eligibility letter and your work identification badge (or some other form of identification). Staff at the vaccination centre must see physical copies of these to confirm your eligibility and without both of these you will not be able to be vaccinated. You must also be able to provide your NHS number to book an appointment.

If you have any queries relating to this letter please contact your employer in the first instance, who can get in touch with us via www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/comments-feedback/contact-us

Thank you for consenting to have the vaccination. By having the vaccination you will be playing your part by protecting yourself and helping to protect people who need our services and your colleagues from catching and spreading COVID-19.

Thank you for playing this vital role

Yours sincerely,

Glen Garrod
Executive Director of Adult Care and Community Wellbeing