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| **Mandatory COVID Vaccinations in Healthcare****Draft policy for general practice** |

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has formally announced (9 November 2021) that individuals undertaking CQC regulated activities in England must be fully vaccinated against COVID no later than 1 April 2022 to protect patients, regardless of their employer, including secondary and primary care, private providers etc; the government regulations come into effect from 1 April 2022.

1. SCOPE

The COVID vaccination will be a condition of deployment from the 1 of April 2022 and apply to all workers employed, or otherwise deployed, in the provision of a CQC regulated activity. This condition applies to all staff employed or engaged by this practice who are required to have direct face-to-face with patients in order to fulfil their role; this includes all frontline clinical staff and non-clinical staff who have contact with patients (e.g. reception staff). The condition also applies to locums, agency workers, volunteers, trainees and students.

1. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Our practice is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and the principles of equality and diversity, providing personal, and diverse services across the organisation. We take responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 very seriously. We are committed to ensuring that no member of staff receives less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic e.g. (age, disability, gender, marital status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment), insofar as this is compatible with our obligations under care and health and safety legislation.

1. EXEMPTIONS

The mandatory vaccination rules will not apply if you satisfy one of the following criteria: ​

* no direct face-to-face contact with patients; ​
* under the age of 18; ​
* clinically exempt; ​
* participant in a clinical trial
* Is exempt due to a short-term medical condition (eg for pregnant women the exemption expires 16 weeks post-partum)
1. CLINICAL/MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS

If you believe that you exempt from these rules then you should write to your senior partner/practice manager/line manager *(delete as appropriate)* setting out the grounds for your exemption and any appropriate supporting evidence. You should submit your case no later than Friday 28 January to allow your practice time to consider your grounds before 3 February.

Your practice will consider your grounds for exemption and make a final decision; there will be no right of appeal against this decision.

1. RECRUITMENT

As a CQC provider of service from 1 April 2022 we will only employ and deploy those who are fully vaccinated in roles that require them to have face-to-face patient contact (unless they are medically exempt).

We will be clear to all applicants and new starters from now, that the mandatory vaccination will be part of their terms and conditions of employment (unless they are medically exempt)

New starters will be required to provide satisfactory evidence of their vaccination status as part of the pre-employment clearance process and before they can start work.

1. BANK & AGENCY STAFF

As a CQC provider of service, from 1 April 2022, we will only allow those who are fully vaccinated to undertake patient-facing shifts (unless they are medically exempt).

We will be clear to all locum and agency staff that the mandatory vaccination will be part of their terms and conditions of engagement (unless an exemption applies) and that evidence of their vaccination status must be presented before they can start work.

1. TRAINEES AND STUDENTS

As a CQC provider of service, from 1 April 2022, we can only offer placements to trainees and students who are fully vaccinated (unless they are medically exempt).

1. EXISTING STAFF

Any member of staff in scope (who is not medically exempt) who is not fully vaccinated by 1 April 2022 may have their employment terminated if redeployment is not possible. For existing staff in scope who do not wish to have the vaccine, they should be aware that there are limited/no redeployment opportunities *(delete as appropriate)* within our practice.

There may be members of staff who have advised of their intention to be fully vaccinated, but are then unable to meet the mandatory vaccination deadline (i.e. due to long-term ill health, maternity/adoption leave or being ill with COVID). You should alert your manager if there is likely to be a delay in getting your vaccinations and they will then discuss and agree next steps before any decisions about your future employment are made. It may be possible, but not guaranteed, that alternative and temporary arrangements can be put in place until you are vaccinated.

1. FALSIFICATION OF INFORMATION

Any member of staff who misrepresents information relating to their vaccination status or medical exemption may be subject to disciplinary action and/or dismissal without notice.

1. SUPPORT FOR STAFF

To find out more information about the vaccine, please speak to a member of the SMT/practice manager/your line manager *(delete as appropriate)* who will be able to support you with your queries and signpost you to the latest and most up to date vaccine information.

Please check the source of any information you read about the vaccine. Anti-vaccine stories are often spread online through social media; they may not be based on scientific evidence and could put you or your friends/family at risk of a serious illness.

1. VACCINATION DATA

Data on vaccination status is being collated, used and processed for the purposes of delivering services to patients, clinicians, the health services and adult social care services workforce and the public about and in connection with COVID, including the provision of information, fit notes and the provision of healthcare and adult social care services.

Vaccination status data is ‘health’ information and will be kept confidential, with access to it strictly controlled. It is also ‘special category’ data for the purposes of data protection legislation (the UK GDPR), which means that it must be used fairly, lawfully, supported by good reasons, and in compliance with other specific obligations under data protection law.

In accordance with our privacy notice for staff, we shall collate and hold information on your vaccination status securely and in compliance with our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation, the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and all other data protection legislation.