

Mandatory vaccinations FAQs for GPs and practices

Given the impact the requirement for [COVID vaccinations as a condition of employment](#) in the health and social care sector will have for GPs and practices as contractors, providers and employers, GPC continue to develop a set of [FAQs](#) which, when completed, will address redeployment, termination and implications for practices and will include answers to:

- What does mandatory vaccination mean in reality for employed staff, partners as workers, and practices as employers?
- Who decides whether unvaccinated individuals are redeployed or terminated and how (for both employees and partners)?
- Are there legal obligations when going through redeployment (e.g. pay protection, changing terms and conditions)?
- Are there protections against termination for both salaried staff and partners?
- What happens if there are several staff in the practice who are vaccine hesitant – viability of practice, impact of service provision, impact on remaining workforce etc?

We anticipate the FAQs will be published this week and will sit alongside wider [BMA guidance](#) already published. Both sets of guidance should be read in conjunction with each other.

GPC will add to the guidance as more questions are asked and more information becomes available.

NHSE/I has also released [guidance for employers](#).

North East and Yorkshire Webinar FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS: Fertility, Pregnancy and Vaccination – your questions and concerns answered - Wednesday 26 January 2022 5:30pm – 6:30pm

NHSE are issuing a further offer to all Health & Social Care Workers across North East and Yorkshire to access information provided by leading professionals regarding covid vaccination prior to, during and after pregnancy.

The aim is to aid decision making regarding accessing the covid vaccination and to support choices based on factual, evidence based information. Based on prior attendees' feedback, this Webinar will focus the majority of its time on an interactive question and answer session.

This webinar is open to all North East and Yorkshire Health Care Workers including those working in Dental practices, GP surgeries, Opticians and Pharmacies.

<https://www.events.england.nhs.uk/events/fertility-pregnancy-and-vaccination---your-questions-and-concerns-answered-61e99768c6d97>

Extension of free PPE to the health and care sector

The [government has extended](#) the central, free provision of all items of COVID-19 PPE to the health and care sector, including primary care, by up to one year to March 2023 or until the infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance on PPE usage for COVID-19 is either withdrawn or significantly amended.

The recently updated [UK Health Security Agency guidance on infection control](#) states that “an FFP3 respirator (or equivalent), must be worn by staff when caring for patients with a suspected or confirmed infection spread by the airborne route (during the infectious period)”.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has advised in its [response to the consultation on provision of PPE to the health and social care sector](#), that practices can use the [DHSC PPE portal](#) to access PPE free of charge.

NHSE/I has confirmed that this includes FFP3 respirators, and that CCGs have been informed that where risk assessments have shown it to be necessary that fit-testing should also be provided by the CCG.

Face coverings in practice premises

On 19 January the Prime Minister announced that face masks will no longer be mandated, though people are still advised to wear coverings in enclosed or crowded spaces and when meeting strangers.

[IPC guidance for health settings](#) has not changed and states "Universal masking with face coverings or surgical masks (Type II or IIR) to prevent the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory infectious agents in health and care settings, as a source control measure, should continue to be applied for all staff, patients, and visitors"

Furthermore, [practices should carry out risk assessments](#) of their environments and assess what level of respiratory protective equipment should be worn by different groups in various settings. Health and Safety law makes it your responsibility to protect staff and other patients based upon these risk assessments, thus making mask wearing a legal requirement if your risk assessment suggests masks should be worn.

If challenged by patients not wanting to wear a mask you can advise them about the [IPC guidance](#) and your risk assessments and inform the patient that "the law imposes on me the duty to expect you to wear a mask, and on you the duty to wear one in these premises"

Download the GPC [poster about using face coverings in practices](#).

Access all GPC patient resources for practices on the [Support Your Surgery](#) page

Guidance on COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control for GP practices

GPC published [guidance for GP practices on COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control](#), to help practices reduce the risk and pressures on their staff. The guidance also includes a template letter to CCGs requesting support with getting RPE supply.

The BMA Occupational Medicine Committee is also drafting guidance for workplaces to advise that employers should carry out risk assessments and provide mitigations to reduce risk of contracting COVID. This guidance will be published in full shortly.

COVID-19 self-isolation can end after 5 full days following 2 negative LFD tests

From [Monday 17 January](#), people with COVID-19 in England can end their self-isolation after 5 days, as long as they test negative on day 5 and day 6 with LFD tests. The health service is experiencing disruption from widespread absences due to the rapid spread of Omicron but healthcare workers do not want to risk infecting colleagues and patients - many of whom are clinically vulnerable. So they can only return to work safely after a shorter period of isolation and two negative lateral flow tests if they have [access to high-grade masks](#), and many are finding that this is still not the case.

Read the [BMA statement](#)

Read the [NHSE/I guidance](#) on isolation for NHS staff

Vaccinating 12-17 year olds at risk

NHSE/I has published [operational guidance following JCVI advice on booster vaccination of eligible 12 - 17 year olds](#) and household contacts of immunosuppressed people. Vaccination sites can now invite eligible 12-17 year olds for their booster vaccinations.

Extending the post-thaw expiry date of specific batches of Comirnaty® (30 microgram/dose)

After discussions with Pfizer Inc. and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), certain post-thaw expiry dates of unpunctured and undamaged Comirnaty (30mcg/dose) vials in batches detailed in this [NHSE/I letter](#) may be extended from 31 days to 45 days.

Updated PGD and National Protocol for Spikevax (Moderna)

An updated [PGD and National Protocol for Spikevax](#) (formerly COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna) V05.00 has now been published.

Changes to MCCDs

Amended regulations (The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Regulations 2021 SI 2021 No. 1436) have been published which mean that even after the Coronavirus Act has been rescinded, there will still be no requirement (for the registrar) to report to the coroner patients seen within 28 days prior to (or after) death. This is instead of the 14-day rule that existed prior to the pandemic.

In addition, the amendments allow for MCCDs to continue to be sent electronically to registrars.

We will issue further information when it becomes available.

National Standards of Healthcare Cleanliness 2021

Members and practices have been asking if the implementation of the [National Standard of Healthcare Cleanliness](#) is mandatory in Primary Care. NHSEI have confirmed that, while contractors must have regard to NHSEI guidance, it is not a mandatory requirement.

CQC acknowledge in their advice on [Infection prevention and control in General Practice](#) that it will continue to regulate in line with its own regulations and the existing Code of Practice.

Medicines Supply Tool

The Department of Health and Social Care and NHSE/I have now launched an online [Medicines Supply Tool](#), which provides up to date information about medicine supply issues. To access the Medicines Supply Tool you will need to register with the [SPS \(Specialist Pharmacy Service\) website](#).

Global vaccine equity

The BMA is a leading voice calling for urgent action to ensure an equitable distribution of vaccines globally. This is not only a moral imperative – as we have seen all too clearly with the emergence of the Omicron variant, failure to achieve high levels of vaccine coverage anywhere puts lives at risk everywhere.

GPC have twice written to the Prime Minister urging the UK to lead by example and do more to help poorer countries vaccinate their populations and they published a [joint statement](#) with other unions and royal colleges in December expressing our deep concern at the ongoing inequity in access to COVID-19 vaccines globally.

GPC are also supporting the [#VaccinatetheWorld](#) campaign launched by a group of grassroots health care professionals, including one GPC member, Dr David Attwood, and senior leaders as a New Year's resolution for the UK. The campaign calls on doctors and the public to sign a [petition](#) and write a [letter](#) to their MPs (template provided). If you have a few moment, please consider supporting this important action.

CQC report into ethnic minority-led GP practices' experiences of CQC regulation

Responding to the publication of [the CQC's research into ethnic minority-led GP practices' experiences of CQC regulation](#), Dr Farah Jameel, GPCE Chair, said: "It is an important piece of work that underlines and recognises not only the poor experiences of, and challenges faced by, ethnic minority GPs during inspection processes, but also wider systemic factors that disproportionately impact this valuable group of doctors and their patients. These are all areas the BMA has been consistently raising for years."

National Primary Care Coaching - Looking After You - Comms Toolkit

NHSEI now include a new communications toolkit to support promotion of the Looking After You national primary care coaching service: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aS8-sTH1W9qv49d9Tq3hhwg9jJZZ5MFs>

Within the toolkit there are social media images, banners, bulletin copy, website copy and quotes from those who have used the service. NHSEI encourage you to share the materials on your websites, social media channels and in your networks and places of work.

What is the coaching?

NHSE recognise that frontline primary care colleagues involved in the delivery of primary care services, both clinical and non-clinical, continue to face many challenges. They have developed three coaching offers for the workforce:

- 1) Looking After You Too – coaching about you and your wellbeing
- 2) Looking After Your Team – coaching about you and your team
- 3) Looking After Your Career - coaching about you and your career

The NHSE coaches are highly skilled and experienced, and all coaching is free and confidential. The sessions are delivered virtually, preferably via a video platform, but telephone appointments are also available. Thousands of people have booked sessions and given positive feedback on their experience.

A landing page hosts all three offers: www.england.nhs.uk/lookingafteryou

National Conference: Male Domestic Abuse Tuesday 8th February 2022 (9.30am –13.00pm) & Wednesday 9th February 2022 (9.30am –13.00pm)

We have received details on a National Conference where you will have the opportunity to hear from a range of experts and survivors deliver insightful and thought provoking content.

For some men, Valentine's Day will not just be about flowers and chocolates.

The Festive Season saw some people get a real kick out of giving at Christmas whilst some people drank punch to be festive. Some men received both as an unwanted "gift" this Christmas.

On the 29th April 2021 the Domestic Abuse Act was signed into law. The Domestic Abuse Act is set to provide further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse, as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators. The Domestic Abuse Act adopts a gender inclusive approach.

One in every six men in Britain will suffer from domestic abuse in their lifetime and one in every three domestic abuse victims is male.

During 2020, 234,213 males reported (26% of all victims reporting) to the Police as being victims of domestic abuse (671,197 female) – This represents a 30% increase when compared to 2019 when 180,209 reported and a 113% increase when compared to 2014 when 1,813 men reported.

The Conference will contain a mixture of content including presentations, videos, and our insightful, thought provoking and hugely informative "An Audience with Survivors"

Here is the link to the event: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/163755385767>

GPC GP Bulletin, Sessional GP bulletin & Informal Messaging

Read the latest GP bulletin (England) [here](#)

Read GPC Chair twitter page: [Dr Farah Jameel \(@DrFJameel\) / Twitter](#)

Read BMA twitter page: [General Practice \(@BMA_GP\) / Twitter](#)

BMA COVID-19 guidance

Read the BMA [COVID-19 toolkit for GPs and practices](#), which provides comprehensive guidance for practices to manage contractual issues and service provision during the coronavirus pandemic. You can access all the BMA guidance on COVID-19, including ethical guidance, [here](#). There is also guidance on the following topics:

- [Model terms of engagement for a GP providing temporary COVID-19 services](#)
- [Terms and conditions for sessional GPs](#)
- [Risk assessments](#)

Mental health and wellbeing – looking after you and your practice team

Primary care coaching - communications toolkit

In these pressured times it is absolutely critical you look after yourself and your teams. NHSE/I have launched their new communications toolkit, supporting promotion of the NHS England and NHS Improvement Looking After You national coaching service: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aS8-sTH1W9qv49d9Tq3hhwg9jJZZ5MFs>

Within the toolkit you will find social media images, banners, bulletin copy, website copy and quotes from those who have used the free services. There has been some excellent feedback from those who have accessed coaching, but we are aware there are still many colleagues who are not aware of this available support. It remains a difficult time for the workforce, so we would appreciate any help you are able to give to share these offers.

A member of their team would also be happy to come to meetings or events within regions and systems to talk about the offers: england.lookingafteryou@nhs.net

A coaching landing page hosts all three offers: www.england.nhs.uk/lookingafteryou. Recognising that frontline primary care colleagues involved in the delivery of primary care services, both clinical and non-clinical, continue to face many challenges, NHSE have developed three coaching offers for the workforce:

- 4) Looking After You Too – coaching about you and your wellbeing
- 5) Looking After Your Team – coaching about you and your team
- 6) Looking After Your Career - coaching about you and your career

The coaches are highly skilled and experienced, and all coaching is free and confidential. The sessions are delivered virtually, preferably via a video platform, but telephone appointments are also available. Thousands of people have booked sessions and given positive feedback on their experience.

GP appraisal leads and GP tutors offer of telephone support conversations remain for any GP who feels they would like to talk through any aspect of their professional/personal life that has been affected by Covid. To organise a telephone support conversation, either with the appraisal lead or with a GP tutor, please contact the appraisal team, or email di.jelley@nhs.net

Crisis Coaching & Mentoring: [Coaching and mentoring sessions are available now](#) for all NHS and Health and Social Care leaders. Delivered by The Centre for Army Leadership and Meyler Campbell Coaching, these sessions are designed to support with the huge pressure on the ability of the NHS to deliver safe, high-quality care, sharpen focus on meeting the core needs of staff, ensuring wellbeing and sustained motivation to deal with this rapidly changing situation. The intervention will give leaders an understanding of crisis leadership that goes beyond what is necessary and focused on engagement and motivation through Covid19. Further information and how to register [see link here](#)

CLMC continue to offer [wellbeing services via Validium](#) for **ALL working in general practice within Tees** (including locums). We understand that a number of staff have accessed this confidential service and it has been well received.

The BMA's [report on the mental health and wellbeing of the medical workforce](#) which sets out ten recommendations to be addressed to protect staff during the pandemic and in the future. The BMA is here for you and offers supportive [wellbeing services](#) which include face-to-face counselling. You can access one-off support or, after triage, a structured course of up to six face-to-face counselling sessions. Call 0330 123 1245 today or [visit the website](#) for more information.

For all other support, speak to a BMA adviser on [0300 123 1233](tel:03001231233) or email support@bma.org.uk

[Read more about doctors' wellbeing during the pandemic](#) and on Twitter [@TheBMA](https://twitter.com/TheBMA)

There is also a wealth of [NHSE provided support](#) available to you and your team including a wellbeing support helpline, a 24/7 text alternative, [peer to peer, team and personal resilience support](#), free mindfulness apps and the [#LookingAfterYouToo coaching offer](#).

NHSEI have recently developed a new [communications toolkit](#) and resources to help promote their offers to the workforce. The toolkit has an overview of each offer, including bulletin, email and social media copy, and links to some case studies and posters. You can also follow this link [Primary Care Coaching – Link to Assets](#) to a range of resources, including social media assets, a video, PDF case studies and posters, website and email banners.