

31 January 2021

URGENT clarification on teacher access to Covid-19 vaccine

For attention of all schools across Kent and Medway to circulate to all staff.

Dear school leadership teams

It has come to our attention that a link for booking Covid-19 vaccinations for health and care staff has been inappropriately shared with a wide range of school staff.

To clarify, this service **is not open to teachers and other school staff** unless they also meet one of the following criteria:

1. aged over 70
2. clinically extremely vulnerable as defined by the national guidance
3. teachers and staff at special schools **working directly** with children with complex health needs; and therefore defined as frontline carers (school staff not providing direct care to vulnerable children are not included)

There was some wording on the website that could have been clearer about the need to be within one of the current priority groups for the vaccine. We have updated this and we are cancelling appointments that we can identify as from teachers. Those in the groups above will need to rebook.

Please urgently update all staff that this vaccination service is not available to general school staff at this point in time. We are aware that the link is circulating within school staff Whatsapp groups and other forums. We would be grateful if you could message all staff about this even if you have not directly shared the link. Suggested wording for a message to all staff is provided at the end of this letter.

Everyone will be vaccinated. If Government policy changes to include specific professions such as teachers or other key workers in the priority groups there will be clear national messaging on this.

At this time, anyone outside the top four priority groups who uses this link to get a vaccination is depriving someone else more at risk from death or serious illness of the opportunity to be protected. This is unacceptable. Please help us to protect the most vulnerable by clarifying with all your staff that the link has been shared in error and must not be used unless someone is absolutely within the three categories listed above.

Many thanks for your support.

Dr Navin Kumta
Clinical Chair
NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group

Suggested text for update to all staff:

Dear colleagues

It has been brought to our attention that a link to a Covid-19 vaccination service, which has been circulated within schools and via education social media forums, was shared in error.

Please do not try to use this link to book a vaccine unless you are definitely also in one of the following categories:

1. *aged over 70*
2. *clinically extremely vulnerable as defined by the national guidance (see below)*
3. *teachers and staff at special schools **working directly** with children with complex health needs; and therefore defined as frontline carers (school staff not providing direct care to vulnerable children are not included)*

Anyone who has already booked appointments through this link can expect to be contacted about the booking being cancelled. If you are in one of the groups above you will need to rebook. If you have booked and are not contacted please also do not go to the booked appointment. People will be asked for a copy of their Clinically Extremely Vulnerable/shielded person letter (which will have been received earlier in the pandemic if it applies to you) or photo ID with proof of age and will be turned away if they cannot show this.

The NHS is vaccinating people in priority order of those most at risk of death and serious illness from Covid-19. Age and underlying health conditions are the biggest risk factors. Healthy younger people are less at risk and will need to wait to be vaccinated.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable – definitions

People who are defined as clinically extremely vulnerable are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. There are 2 ways you may be identified as clinically extremely vulnerable:

- *You have one or more of conditions listed below, or*
- *Your clinician or GP has added you to the Shielded Patient List previously because, based on their clinical judgement, they deem to you be at higher risk of serious illness if you catch the virus.*

Conditions

- *solid organ transplant recipients*
- *people with specific cancers:*
- *people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy*
- *people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy*
- *people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment*
- *people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer*
- *people having other targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors*

- *people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs*
- *people with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)*
- *people with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell disease)*
- *people on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection*
- *problems with your spleen, for example splenectomy (having your spleen removed)*
- *adults with Down's syndrome*
- *adults on dialysis or with chronic kidney disease (stage 5)*
- *women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired*
- *other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decisions*