

RCCP COVID19 Vaccine Statement

With news of the first COVID-19 vaccine being approved for use in the UK, plans are underway for a mass vaccination programme to cover the four countries of the UK commencing on 8th December 2020.

Assisting with the vaccination programme

RCCP Registrants may be asked to play a supportive role in the roll out of any approved COVID19 vaccine. However, it is important that Registrants involved in this work receive the advice and support they need to assist in the delivery of the vaccination safely and effectively. Vaccines are prescription-only medicines, so there are certain legal controls on who can and cannot prescribe, supply and administer these. RCCP Registrants, including those with dual RCCP and HCPC registration (typically Clinical Scientists and Hearing Aid Dispensers) cannot, by law, administer vaccinations.

The UK Government is however looking at national protocols, which could allow non statutory registered healthcare professionals to administer the vaccine. We will issue more advice to Registrants about this if these are approved for use.

It is important you check if you are legally entitled to administer the vaccine before undertaking this work.

Priority Groups for Vaccination

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise the Government on which vaccine/s the UK should use and provide advice on who should be offered the vaccination first.

JCVI published [advice](#) in December 2020 on the groups that should be prioritised for vaccination. This is a risk-based model based on clinical risk. The groups are (in order of priority):

- Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
- All those 75 years of age and over
- All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
- All those 65 years of age and over
- All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
- All those 60 years of age and over
- All those 55 years of age and over

- All those 50 years of age and over

RCCP Registrants should therefore be vaccinated as part of the second group.

Receiving the Vaccine

Whilst the RCCP accept there is no fundamental duty for Registrants to be vaccinated against any particular disease, there is a potential risk of inadvertently spreading the coronavirus to vulnerable patients. This risk therefore weighs in favour of Registrants being vaccinated, unless there are good reasons why it isn't appropriate to do so, such as individuals with certain underlying health conditions. We therefore recognise that in some cases, there may be other appropriate options for managing any risk to patients and colleagues.

Registrants therefore need to be confident that there are measures in place in the workplace to adequately manage any risk of transmission to patients in order to prioritise patient safety, when a decision is made to not be vaccinated.

Vaccine Safety

For a vaccine to be approved for use in the UK, it is the responsibility of the medicines regulator the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to ensure that medicines work and are acceptably safe. The MRHA do this by ensuring that robust standards of quality, safety, and effectiveness have been met. The MHRA approved the first UK COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer/BioNTech on 2nd December 2020.

Public Health England has published [clinical guidance](#) on the vaccine rollout and it is expected that the health services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will produce similar information.