

# Consultation on removing vaccination as a condition of deployment for health and social care staff

- Vaccination as a condition of deployment revisited as Omicron replaces Delta as dominant variant
- Legal requirement for health and social care staff to be double jabbed to be removed, subject to consultation and parliamentary approval
- Vast majority of health and care workers vaccinated but remainder are urged to Get Boosted Now as a professional responsibility

Regulations making vaccines a condition of deployment for health and social care staff are set to be revoked, subject to public consultation and parliamentary approval, the Health and Social Care Secretary has announced.

The government has been clear that it keeps all COVID-19 measures under review. When vaccination as a condition of deployment was introduced Delta was the dominant variant representing 99% of cases. Omicron has now replaced Delta as the dominant variant at 96% of cases.

Two vaccine doses against Omicron also become less effective over time, which is why the Get Boosted Now campaign was launched in December. The latest data from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows boosters are around 90% effective in preventing hospitalisation from Omicron soon after they are administered.

Over 31 million boosters in England alone, and over 37 million in the UK, have now been administered providing a good level of protection across the country. This, coupled with the lower levels of hospitalisation and mortality, suggests the population as a whole is now better protected, with the latest evidence suggesting that the risk of presentation to emergency care or hospital admission is approximately half of that for Delta.

As a result, the government has re-examined the policy as it considers how best to achieve public health and safety with the minimum number of restrictions or requirements on people's lives. The balance of opportunities and risks of the policy have now changed with the dominance of Omicron. The booster rollout has been successful, and workforce challenges remain.

While the legal requirement on deployment is set to be revoked, those working in health and social care still have a professional duty to get vaccinated and Get Boosted Now. The government will work closely with Royal Colleges and professional regulators to strengthen guidance, and consult on updates to the Department of Health and Social Care's Code of Practice for regulated providers to strengthen the requirements in relation to COVID-19, which applies to all CQC registered providers of all health and social care in England.

Since the consultation on health and wider social care staff was announced in September more than 127,000 NHS staff came forward for a vaccine and 95% have now had at least one dose.

After the consultation on vaccines as a condition of deployment was launched and regulations laid uptake among care home staff rose from 77% to 94.5%, helping to build a wall of protection.

These changes will be subject to a period of consultation, parliamentary approval and will require a change to the regulations already laid.

## **Background information**

A checked against delivery version of the Oral Statement by the Health and Social Care Secretary can be found [here](#)

[Latest UKHSA data](#) on vaccine effectiveness against Omicron shows:

- After a Pfizer booster (after either primary vaccination course), vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation started at around 90% dropping to around 75% after 10 to 14 weeks.
- After a Moderna booster (after either primary vaccination course), vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation was 90 to 95% up to 9 weeks after vaccination.
- Measures to encourage vaccination included prioritising health and social care workers for jabs, reimbursing social care workers' travel costs and covering wages when getting a jab as well as a series of media campaigns.