

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for care home staff

Key questions

What do I do if my staff won't don't want to take the vaccine?

We would suggest talking to staff about their fears and share the information when it comes available. You might want to do this as a group and give people an opportunity to discuss individually. Do share the information in this FAQ with staff

There are some resources from Public Health England that you may find helpful:

- General vaccine fact sheets, which can be downloaded [here](#)
- Download a zip file which has short videos (designed for social media) about the JvCI, what vaccines are, and the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine [here](#)
- Video about the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine can be viewed [here](#)
- Covid-19 vaccination [patient leaflet](#)
- COVID-19 vaccine [health and social care worker leaflet](#)
- Leaflet on what to expect [after your COVID-19 vaccinations](#)

Why are care homes and care home staff going first?

The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advises that the first priorities for any COVID-19 vaccine should be prevention of people dying and the protection of health and social care staff. Older people living in care homes have been affected by COVID-19 more than other groups, therefore the JCVI has recommended that they are the highest priority.

Does the vaccine contain a microchip?

The vaccine **does not** contain a microchip

Does the vaccine alter your DNA?

The vaccine **does not** alter your DNA

Was the vaccine tested in Africa?

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine trials were carried out in the United States, Europe, Turkey, South Africa, and South America. Participants included 9.6% black/African, 26.1% Hispanic/Latino and 3.4% Asian

The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine trials were carried out in Brazil, South Africa and the UK. 10.1% of trial recipients were Black and 3.5% Asian

Does the vaccine contain animal products?

The vaccine **does not** contain any animal products

Does the vaccine contain any blood products?

The Pfizer/Biotech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine does not contain any blood products. If, and when, further vaccines are approved we will publish information about known allergens or ingredients that are important for certain faiths, cultures and beliefs.

Is the vaccine safe?

The vaccine has been approved as safe by the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency). The vaccine has been through 3 phases of clinical trials. In the third phase it was given to more than 21,000 volunteers with no serious safety concerns. As with any medicine, vaccines are highly regulated products. There are checks at every stage in the development and manufacturing process.

At your vaccine appointment you will speak to a clinician who will check that you are suitable to receive the vaccine and can answer any questions that you might have.

How was the vaccine approved?

The NHS will offer a COVID-19 vaccination **only** when it has been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the official UK regulator, like all other medicines and devices.

The vaccines went through all the normal stages of **development and approval**. It happened more quickly because of several reasons including:

- There had been vaccine work on other coronaviruses
- There was no waiting for funding
- Development stages were run in parallel

This video explains how COVID-19 vaccines were developed quickly:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddDiyIKUP0M&app=desktop>

You can also find a video from the MHRA here: <https://youtu.be/3HPpWelo1ro>

How can we reduce fears when they are scared that the vaccine is new and has been developed quickly?

You may find this video useful to explain how the vaccine trial moved so quickly:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddDiyIKUP0M>

How does the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine work?

The vaccine is a messenger RNA (mRNA) which stands for messenger ribonucleic acid

Scientists take part of the virus' genetic code or RNA, that tells the cells what to build, and coats them in a lipid so that they can enter the cells of the body

This is what is in the injection that the person receives

Once injected the vaccine is translated into a viral protein which our immune system detects

This prompts the immune system to produce anti-bodies and T-cells

If the person encounters coronavirus the anti-bodies and T-cells are triggered to fight it

How does the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine work?

Instructions on how to make the protein are found on the surface of the COVID-19 virus

The instructions are added to a safe virus to make the vaccine

Once injected the vaccine stimulates your immune system to produce virus fighters called anti-bodies and T-Cells

If you come into contact with COVID-19. The virus fighters (anti-bodies and T-Cells) can fight it

You can find a video about the Oxford vaccine here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUTRaOOblI8&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>

Why should you have the vaccine?

The NHS is offering all care home staff, other social care staff and healthcare staff the vaccine.

Having the vaccine offers immunity, to protect you from COVID-19. The more people that have the vaccine, the more it will help to protect those most vulnerable in our communities such as care home residents.

The JCVI advice states that the infection rates are higher in residential care home staff, than in those providing domiciliary care or in health care workers. Therefore, care home workers are considered a very high priority for the vaccine. You can find the JCVI report [here](#)

What are the side effects?

Most side effects are mild or moderate and go away within a few days of appearing. If side effects such as pain and/or fever are troublesome, they can be treated by medicines for pain and fever such as paracetamol. The common side effects are: pain at injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain and fever. Side effects are listed in the information leaflets:

- Public Health England COVID-19 vaccination [patient leaflet](#)
- Public Health England COVID-19 vaccine [health and social care worker leaflet](#)
- Leaflet on what to expect [after your COVID-19 vaccinations](#)

Can staff who are pregnant receive the vaccine?

Vaccination with either vaccine in pregnancy should be considered where the risk of exposure COVID-19 infection is high and cannot be avoided, or where the woman has underlying conditions that place her at very high risk of serious complications of COVID-19. The risks and benefits of vaccination should be discussed. Those who are trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination, and breastfeeding women may be offered vaccination with either vaccine following consideration of the woman's clinical need for immunisation against COVID-19.

Are people going to get vaccine passports? So they can go to sporting events and travel abroad?

The Government have said that there are no plans to introduce a vaccine passport to give people access to places such as pubs and restaurants.

Will agency staff get the vaccine?

Yes, agency staff are included as social care workers. Please do include agency staff in your local vaccine discussions.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information, and we hope it was useful.

If you have any feedback of ideas for future communication please contact us at: england.londonehchprogramme@nhs.net