

Adopted: November 2021

VACCINATION POLICY & GUIDANCE

PURPOSE

Age UK Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is committed to providing a safe working environment for our employees, volunteers and service users whom we interact with regularly. The purpose of this policy is to set out our organisation's stance and expectations with respect to COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations and how this affects our workforce and the related rights of our employees.

As an employer, we have a duty to ensure the safety of our employees. In addition, the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires employers to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. We have taken extensive measures to ensure that our workplace and our working arrangements are, and continue to be, COVID secure. The vaccine provides a greater level of personal safety against serious illness.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers and other individuals employed or contracted to provide a service in any capacity to the organisation.

POLICY

Individual opinions on vaccines can vary greatly and we appreciate that having a vaccine is generally a personal choice, sometimes dictated by personal circumstances such as health or religion. While having the Covid vaccine remains a voluntary exercise for the general public, the Government has made the taking of the Covid vaccine mandatory for those working within Care Homes and the National Health Service. The flu vaccine uptake is also voluntary.

Our stance

It is the policy position of the organisation to strongly recommend and encourage all employees to become vaccinated against COVID-19 and

influenza, especially as a large proportion of staff and volunteers provide front-line support to older people.

We expect our employees to be treated with dignity and respect by their colleagues in relation to their decision over the vaccines. The organisation will not accept any bullying or harassment, or other unwanted behaviour, against an employee because of their decision.

Making an informed decision

Some of our employees may have concerns about having any vaccine. We encourage all of our workforce to make an informed decision by paying attention to official information sources such as Public Health or the NHS. We would ask our employees to check the source of any information they read about vaccines as we are aware that there is a certain amount of uncertified information available.

For some, with particular underlying health conditions, the vaccines are not suitable.

Having the COVID-19 vaccine and booster

The Government strategy for vaccinating the UK population was formulated on a priority basis according to age and vulnerability status, all employees will now have received an invitation to book a vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine is offered free of charge. It is currently administered in two doses, to be provided at separate appointments, followed by a booster vaccine 6 months later for certain priority groups. For the rest of the adult population, a booster may be offered, with the potential of further vaccines and boosters being offered in the future.

Employees should notify their line manager of their appointment time on each occasion, giving as much notice as possible if time off work is needed. Employees must provide written evidence of the appointment date and time to their manager.

Whilst the organisation will collect information on who has had the vaccine, no further medical information will be stored and copies of medical records will not be requested. Whether a member of staff chooses to have a vaccine or not will be noted on their individual personnel file for purposes relating to service requirements only and for sharing data anonymously with our commissioners.

Vaccine appointments are to be treated in the same way as other medical appointments so, where possible, employees should attempt to secure an appointment outside of their normal working hours, or as close to the start or the end of the working day as possible. Employees may be required to make up time taken off work to get the vaccine, where this exceeds a reasonable period of time, as agreed with the employee's manager.

Having the influenza vaccine

The flu vaccine is offered every year on the NHS to help protect people at risk of-becoming seriously ill from flu. The best time to have the flu vaccine is in the autumn or early winter. The flu vaccine is given free on the NHS to people who:

- Are aged 50 and over
- Have certain health conditions
- Are pregnant
- Receive carer's allowance, or are main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick.
- Live with someone who is more likely to get infections
- Frontline health or social care workers

If you fall into one of these categories please contact your GP surgery to make arrangements.

For those who are not eligible to receive the flu vaccine free of charge via the NHS, we would strongly encourage employees to make arrangements to have the vaccine privately. The organisation will reimburse employees up to the value of £10 to cover the costs incurred, this can be claimed via normal expense claims, a receipt must be provided.

Declining or unable to take a Covid or Influenza Vaccine

Should a staff member, or volunteer, choose, or are advised by clinicians, not to have the Covid or Influenza vaccine, the organisation reserves the right to amend work activities/patterns if there is a significant risk to the health of a service user/staff member or volunteer, in order to protect all individuals. This may involve increased Covid secure measures being implemented.

FURTHER INFORMATION

COVID-19 vaccine information

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccines - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[Information on COVID-19 vaccination: easy-read guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Flu vaccine information

[Flu vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

MONITORING

We will continue to monitor the national response to vaccination's within the Health & Care sector and may review this policy periodically in line with Government or clinical advise, with the safety of our employees, volunteers and services users as a priority.

Vaccination Policy approved : 1st February 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hazel Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Signed by Chair of Trustees