

Reviewed: October 2024

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 available vaccinations against infectious diseases 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 Act 1974 requires employers to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. We continue to take extensive infection control measures in all our workplaces and to provide information and training to our employees and volunteers to reduce the risk of disease transmission through our activities. Vaccinations provide 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. Uptake of any available vaccinations against infectious diseases is voluntary.

Our stance

It is the policy position of the organisation to strongly recommend and encourage all employees to become vaccinated against infectious diseases including influenza and COVID-19, 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 national Government COVID-19 vaccination programme has now ended. COVID-19 is more serious in older people and in people with certain underlying health conditions. For these reasons, people aged 65 years and over, those in older adult care homes, and those aged 6 months and over in clinical risk groups are being offered a COVID-19 vaccine from October. (including primary doses and booster doses). If you fall into this category, please contact your GP surgery to ensure you receive your vaccination when it is available. Frontline health and social care workers may also be eligible; this will be confirmed when the Government announces the details of any booster programmes.

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 65 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

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 £15 to cover the costs incurred, this can be claimed via normal expense claims, a receipt must be provided.

Time off for vaccinations

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.

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.

Information Gathering

Whilst the organisation may collect information on who has been vaccinated against COVID-19, influenza or other infectious diseases, 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.

Declining or unable to take a vaccine

Should a staff member, or volunteer, choose, or are advised by clinicians, not to have the COVID-19, influenza or other infectious disease 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 infection control measures being implemented.

FURTHER INFORMATION

COVID-19 vaccine information

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

Flu vaccine information

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

MONITORING

We will continue to monitor the Government's guidance on infectious disease vaccinations within the Health & Social Care sector and will review this policy periodically annually, with the safety of our employees, volunteers and services users as a priority.

Vaccination Policy approved: October 2024



Signed by Chair of Trustees

Version Control Tracker

VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	COMMENTS
1.0	January 2022	Sam Burton	Policy created.
2.0	June 2023	Sam Burton Liz Wright	Scheduled review. References to mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for NHS staff removed. Eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination updated. Vaccination policy broadened to include any available vaccinations against infectious diseases.
2.1	September 2023	Liz Wright	Eligibility for Covid-19 and influenza vaccinations updated.
2.2	September 2024	Kirsten Monk	Eligibility definitions updated Reimbursement limit increased