

FAQs on the vaccine rollout to the social care workforce - VCS

1. Questions about priority groups and the eligibility criteria
2. Questions about the process for identifying eligible staff and volunteers
3. Questions about the vaccine rollout in Camden

1. Questions about priority groups and the eligibility criteria

Q: Why have the priority groups been defined to include some frontline social care workers but not all?

A: It's important to remember the primary aim of the vaccination programme: to protect our residents who are most at risk from becoming seriously unwell or dying from COVID-19. Then we think about protecting our services and people who work to protect those most clinically vulnerable groups.

If the first four JCVI priority groups are able to be fully vaccinated, an estimated 88% of deaths from COVID-19 could be prevented across the country.

As more people are vaccinated from the priority groups, and more supplies of the vaccine become available, more people will be added to the groups of people being invited to book their vaccine appointment. We will keep you updated as this progresses.

Q: Are different boroughs interpreting the guidance differently?

A: Each Director of Adult Social Care has the ultimate decision on eligibility for the borough they work in. All the Directors of Adult Social Care and Directors of Children's Services across NCL agreed shared principles for implementing the national eligibility criteria and guidance together. This should reduce the likelihood of there being discrepancies between boroughs. We stay in touch with the other NCL boroughs and work together to try to keep things as consistent as possible.

Ultimately it is about making sure that everybody who is eligible for a vaccine is able to have one.

Q: Why is it important that we stick to the eligibility criteria, when we have other people who want to receive the vaccine now but are not able to?

A: There is extremely close monitoring across the health system of the vaccine rollout, and of who gets the vaccine – it is really important that we implement the criteria as accurately as we can to make sure the vaccine is being used appropriately and effectively.

Q: Are staff and volunteers delivering food to vulnerable people eligible?

A: The national guidance is very clear that food delivery and distribution should not be included as an eligible role. However, we are aware that there is a huge variety of organisations working within the food delivery space, and that some staff in some of them will be doing things which fall within the social care criteria.

It depends on the specific work of each individual. We are aware that for example, food preparation (eg a luncheon club in a community setting or supporting someone to eat in their own home by helping them prepare a meal), may be included but food delivery alone or distribution in a food bank would not be.

That is why we are encouraging people to contact us directly at **socialcarevaccinationinfo@camden.gov.uk** so that we can have a conversation with you to work out what the activity is that is happening, and make sure that people who are eligible are included.

Q: Can privately paid carers or personal assistants receive a vaccination?

A: Yes and we are really keen to hear from people who we might not know about but who are working as privately employed carers or personal assistants in the borough. If you know of anyone working in this area who has not yet received an invitation to book a vaccination appointment please ask them to email socialcarevaccinationinfo@camden.gov.uk

Q: What about people whose roles have changed because of COVID-19 who now do frontline work?

A: Decisions around eligibility should be based on the work that the person is doing now.

2. Questions about the process for identifying eligible staff or volunteers

Q: Why do you need additional information to know if staff or volunteers in my organisation are eligible or not?

A: We don't want to make blanket decisions about organisations or services because we will miss people. We want to have individual conversations with you about what you or your staff are doing.

It is not about if one organisation is better than another at justifying what they are doing – it's about understanding the detail of what individuals are doing.

That should allow us to get more people vaccinated who are eligible.

If you think you have staff who may be eligible for vaccination, please contact socialcarevaccinationinfo@camden.gov.uk

Q: What information do you need in the email we send to socialcarevaccinationinfo@camden.gov.uk to ask if staff are eligible?

A: It will help us to progress your query more quickly if you are able to tell us in your initial email:

- Your specific employer / organisation / community group
- Your role (the work you do)
- Confirmation that you or your staff provide direct care and support to people who are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19
- (If you are a service manager or director: please also tell us how many staff you think are eligible for vaccination).

If you or your staff are eligible we will then send you the booking link, eligibility letter, and relevant information.

Q: How long will it take you to respond to my enquiry?

A: The central email address is monitored 5 days a week. We are getting through all queries in one working day currently. If you do not hear back after one working day please do send a follow up email and we will make sure to get back to you.

Q: How many people from my organisation can I put forward for vaccination?

A: As long as it has been agreed that each person is eligible for vaccination in line with the national criteria, there is no maximum limit. The important thing is that everybody who is eligible for vaccination is able to get vaccinated.

Q: Can we share the link?

A: We are not able to share the booking link for vaccination as the NHS have asked us only to pass that link on to people we have already deemed are eligible. We can share our email address: socialcarevaccinationinfo@camden.gov.uk

Please use this central email address for enquiries, and encourage others to email queries about individual staff eligibility, too.

Q: Will you be running more Q&A sessions on this topic?

A: We can arrange this if it would be helpful.

3. Questions about the vaccine rollout in Camden

Q: What are timescales for people being vaccinated in Camden once they have registered on the system?

A: We have found that once people are registered with the online booking link they are able to be vaccinated within 48 hours.

Q: Is there wastage of vaccine? Is there not an argument that we should be able to add people to a reserve list to make sure no vaccine is wasted?

A: There is no vaccine being wasted, thankfully. Staff in vaccination sites are not opening the vaccine vials unless they are absolutely sure they can be used – as they cannot be kept once they are opened.

Q: What are you doing to make sure unpaid carers can get vaccinated once they are eligible?

A: We are working hard to try to identify all unpaid carers in the borough. We are asking organisations and groups where possible to try to match the people they support against the JCVI priority groups – including unpaid carers, who are currently in priority group six. The more information we have to hand about staff, volunteers, and residents, against those criteria, the easier it will be to identify opportunities for vaccination.

If you work with or know of unpaid carers please encourage them to register with their GP and tell their GP about their caring responsibilities. This will ensure they can be contacted at the right time to book their vaccination.

Q: How are you reaching small grassroots groups who will have eligible staff and may not know how to put people forward? How are you working to support people through this process if English is not their first language or they do not have the communications skills required?

Q: We're working with partners across health and social care systems to try and reach as many organisations and individuals as we can. We are continuing to share information in a range of languages and formats – you can find this at camden.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-in-other-languages

We have set up a Community COVID Response team in Camden who are working with a huge range of people across the borough such as faith groups, community groups, TRA halls, searching for organisations and groups working within the COVID response and pulling together a list so that we can make sure we're supporting them and that they have access to the vaccine for eligible staff. Adult Social Care is working in partnership with the community covid response team and collectively we are trying to reach out to as many organisations and groups as we can.

If you think there is an organisation or group who have no contact within the local authority please encourage them to get in touch with us at socialcarevaccinationinfo@camden.gov.uk so that we can support them through this.