

## **Guidance for Vaccination in Care Homes during COVID / Flu Like Illness Outbreaks**

### **Purpose**

The aim of this guidance is to support decision making in relation to proceeding with vaccination in Care Homes with an ongoing outbreak; this will help ensure residents and staff can receive COVID and Flu vaccines in a timely way, to provide protection from these viruses.

### **Can Community Pharmacy attend and offer vaccination at a Care Home where an outbreak of COVID or Flu like illness is ongoing?**

If the Care Home has been informed that they have an outbreak of COVID-19 or Flu like illness, in most cases the COVID-19 and Flu vaccine autumn booster should be able to proceed as scheduled. This will be supported by a risk assessment which should be discussed with the PHA duty room and the outcome communicated by the Care Home to the community pharmacy undertaking the vaccination programme.

If vaccination is to proceed, as with any vaccination, the Care Home residents and staff should be individually assessed for their suitability for COVID-19 vaccination.

### **Can an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 be vaccinated?**

Vaccination of individuals who may be infected or asymptomatic or incubating COVID-19 infection, is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the illness. However, vaccination to date has usually been deferred to around four weeks from the first positive test. This is mainly to avoid confusion between symptoms caused by the infection and side effects of the vaccine.

Given the vulnerability of Care Home residents, the most up to date advice is that, there may be an advantage in offering vaccination to residents with recent confirmed COVID-19, without a four-week deferral, provided they are well and do not have any symptoms at the time of vaccination. The reason for this is that Care Home residents are particularly at risk of serious illness should they be infected again and delays to vaccination should be avoided. The vaccine reduces the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation and death.

### **What should be considered when assessing if vaccination should proceed in a Care Home with an outbreak?**

The decision as to whether vaccination should proceed will depend on the extent and stage of the outbreak. All situations should be discussed between the PHA duty room and the Care Home. A risk assessment will be carried out and a joint decision made regarding proceeding with vaccination.

### **Can a Care Home undergoing terminal clean proceed with vaccination?**

If the home is terminally cleaning, then the COVID and flu vaccine autumn booster can proceed as scheduled.

### **Can a Care Home with a recently closed outbreak proceed with vaccination?**

If the outbreak is recently over, then the COVID and flu vaccine autumn booster can proceed as scheduled.