

Supporting your employees to get the Covid-19 vaccine in Gloucestershire

About the vaccination programme

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is the biggest in NHS history and a huge step forward in our fight against the virus. The vaccine is helping to protect people from serious illness, is saving tens of thousands of lives and is a big part of making sure we can all return to a more normal life.

For the vaccine to be as effective as possible, it is really important that as many people as possible have it.

**EVERY VACCINATION
GIVES US**

HOPE

Calling all Gloucestershire businesses

Your business can play a vital role in helping to promote a positive vaccination message. Only through collective effort will we help people to make well informed decisions and encourage as many people as possible to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

There are benefits for everyone: including reducing absence from work. In supporting business and society to get back to normal, we will hopefully avoid any more years like the one we've all just been through.

How do I find out more about the vaccination programme in Gloucestershire?

The bulk of vaccinations in Gloucestershire are being delivered through a network of 10 GP led 'Primary Care Network' (PCN) vaccination services.

For more information, including locations of local vaccination sites, FAQs and information in other languages and formats, visit: <https://covid19.glos.nhs.uk/vaccinations>. We would encourage you to share this link with your staff, along with an article for your staff newsletters, fact sheet and other resources which you will find under the 'workplaces' section of the webpage.

What can employers do to encourage employees to get the Covid-19 vaccine?

- Be as flexible as possible, including giving paid time off work for employees to attend their vaccination appointment
- Paying staff their usual rate of pay if they're off sick with vaccine side effects, instead of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)
- Not counting vaccine-related absences in absence records or towards any 'trigger' system the organisation may have.

Get involved

- Use the campaign resources to run an awareness campaign in your organisation and provide employees with access to reliable and accurate information about the vaccine, via the Gloucestershire [NHS COVID-19 portal](#), nhs.uk, or gov.uk
- Share the [Q&A document](#) and expert advice videos to explain the vaccine and answer common questions employees may have
- Urge staff to be cautious of misinformation and encourage them to use trusted sources like nhs.uk if they are searching for information or answers to questions about the vaccine
- Create employee advocates by encouraging staff to discuss their vaccine experiences and share accurate information with colleagues, family and friends
- Encourage staff to take a photo or video when they have their jab and share on social media channels, using the hashtag #jointhemillions and #DoltForGlos – tag in @GlosCCG on Twitter and Facebook.

Where can I find more information about how to support employees?

CIPD have developed a helpful [guide for employers](#), as have [ACAS](#).

These resources outline the following:

Employer responsibility to encourage vaccination

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 obligates employers to take reasonable steps to reduce any workplace risks. COVID-19 is also notifiable under RIDDOR. Vaccination is a key part of your workplace risk assessment.

Voluntary vaccination policy

Adopting a voluntary vaccination policy allows employers to outline the organisation's stance on vaccination and explain the role and responsibilities of managers, HR and employees in increasing vaccination coverage. Advice on vaccination policies can be found in [here](#).

If an employer feels staff should be vaccinated due to their role

If an employer feels it's important for staff to be vaccinated, they should talk together with staff or the organisation's recognised trade union to discuss what steps to take.

Any decision after that discussion should be put in writing, for example in a workplace policy. It must also be in line with the organisation's existing disciplinary and grievance policy.

It's a good idea for the employer to [get legal advice](#) before bringing in a vaccine policy.

How to support employees that might be hesitant or refuse the vaccine?

Employers should listen to any concerns employees have around vaccination with empathy and understanding, and refer people to the [Gloucestershire NHS COVID-19 portal](#).

COVID-19 risk assessments

COVID-19 risk assessment should include alternative safety measures if vaccine coverage is not high (for example the continued use of PPE and social distancing). When carrying out risk assessments these should:

- Reflect the availability of the vaccine to different age groups and stage of the vaccine programme roll out
- Include any special considerations for clinically vulnerable staff or those that cannot have the vaccine; health and safety mitigations; and policies which avoid discrimination resulting from vaccination or failure to vaccinate
- Review of other COVID-19 secure measures such as home working, social distancing.

There's no law that says people must have the vaccine, even if an employer would prefer someone to have it. There may be some people who are advised not to have the vaccine, for example for health reasons.

If staff refuse, or are unable to have the vaccine, the employee's reasons and any concerns should be considered with your risk assessments. This may require further mitigations including re-deployment.

Employers should keep up to date with [latest advice from the UK government](#) and maintain open and honest communication with employees.

Remind employees that even after having the COVID-19 vaccine, they should continue to protect themselves and those around them by following social distancing guidance, wearing a face covering and washing hands regularly.

Find out more at <https://covid19.glos.nhs.uk/vaccinations> or nhs.uk/covidvaccine