

Introduction

The Government is currently rolling out its national COVID-19 vaccination programme. This policy sets out our organisation's stance on employees being vaccinated and how the vaccination programme impacts our workforce.

Scope

This Policy covers all ABCA Systems Ltd. employees, regardless of position or status, and to contractors and subcontractors.

COVID-19 vaccination programme

Vaccinations are free of charge on the NHS. They are being administered according to a priority list at vaccination centres, including some hospitals, sports stadiums, conference centres and GP surgeries.

We encourage employees who are not registered with a GP to do so as soon as they can. See www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery for information on how to do this.

Individual's decision

We ask that, when a coronavirus vaccination becomes available, employees take the opportunity to be vaccinated. We understand that this is ultimately each individual's choice, but we encourage our workforce to make an informed decision by:

- reading up about COVID-19 vaccinations via official sources;
- paying attention to the information the NHS provides when offering a vaccine; and
- being wary of misinformation around COVID-19 vaccinations put out by unreliable sources.

New legislation introduced by the Government requires anyone working in a care home to be double vaccinated, unless they have a medical exemption. This will apply to all entering care homes to complete work, and therefore our employees.

Further information

Information on the national COVID-19 vaccination programme is set out at:

- www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/health-protection-immunisation, including details of:
 - the priority list for vaccination;
 - vaccination of specific groups, such as pregnant individuals and older people; and
 - what to expect after your vaccination, including guidance on returning to normal activities; and
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine, including details of:
 - who can get a vaccination;
 - the safety and effectiveness of being vaccinated; and
 - what to expect after your vaccination, including potential side effects.

In addition, information on local arrangements in England is available at www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination-programme

Time off for vaccination appointments

Employees can take unpaid time off to attend COVID-19 vaccination appointments.

Employees should obtain approval from their line manager in advance of taking time off to attend a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. They should give their line manager as much notice as they can that they would like to take time off for this purpose.

Line managers may, at their discretion, ask employees to produce evidence of their appointment (for example an appointment card or email/text inviting them to a COVID-19 vaccination appointment).

Return to work following vaccination appointments

Following a vaccination, employees should be able to resume their normal activities, including working, as long as they feel well.

This means that employees should return to work as soon as they can after their vaccination appointment. If it is not practical for the employee to return to work immediately after their appointment, they should discuss alternative arrangements with their line manager.

However, employees who are unwell after receiving a coronavirus vaccination should take sickness absence in the usual way. Under our organisation's absence policy, they should notify their line manager by telephone as soon as reasonably practicable, preferably before they are due to start work and in any event no later than one hour after they are due to begin work.

Treating colleagues with respect

We recognise that the subject of the COVID-19 vaccination programme can be divisive and lead to the expression of strong opinions. However, employees must remain responsible and respectful when communicating with their colleagues about COVID-19 vaccinations.

Employees must not act against colleagues in a way that could amount to bullying or harassment, for example mocking a colleague's views on COVID-19 vaccinations or foisting their own views on COVID-19 vaccinations on others.

For example, the harassment or intimidation of colleagues because of their views or individual circumstances may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Any employee who is offended by, or concerned about, a colleague's behaviour in this regard should raise the matter with management and/or can raise a formal complaint via our grievance procedure.

Outside of work

We encourage you to continue to take all sensible preventative measures outside of work.