

**To all Chief Executive Officers**

NHS Trusts in England

Sent by email

7 January 2021

**Urgent COVID-19 vaccination and protection of staff**

**Dear Trust CEO**

We write to you about the urgent need for vaccination of your staff. Concerns have been raised by doctors, medical students and other healthcare workers about the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccines, including a lack of priority afforded to those exposed to the virus, inequitable access to the inoculation in certain Trusts, and wastage of treatment that could save lives. We urge that staff vaccination is of paramount organisational priority.

You will know well the toll COVID-19 has taken on hospital staff; we urge you to act quickly in recognition of your responsibility under HSE legislation to protect your workers as fully as possible and to take all necessary steps to prevent future sickness and death.

Healthcare workers need the maximum protection from COVID-19, as a consequence of their high risk of exposure to the virus. We call on you to ensure that all healthcare workers who are at risk of exposure to COVID-19 during their work (including those on honorary NHS contracts and medical students on placement) receive their first jab by the end of January and that those at highest risk from exposure to COVID-19 are given their first dose of the vaccine within two weeks. Those who have received their first dose of the vaccine must be provided the second as soon as possible. Finally, the waste of vaccine must be avoided at all costs: all residual doses must be used within the organisation, with those most at risk from the virus being prioritised for inoculation.

You may already have seen our recent press release<sup>1</sup> on this subject.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/bma-says-health-and-social-care-staff-must-be-vaccinated-now>

**Chief executive officer:** Tom Grinyer



We would also like to highlight that vaccination status should have no impact on continued access to appropriate PPE. The current crisis has been further complicated by the recent mutation in the virus which has been reported as being between 56 and 70% more infectious than the previous variants, and the growing evidence base that simple coughing from an infected person is sufficient to generate aerosols.

With this in mind, we strongly urge you with immediate effect to follow the example of the many Trusts protecting their workforce in all Red areas (i.e. confirmed COVID areas), Amber areas (i.e. potential for COVID or COVID not excluded e.g. ED and Admissions units) and in Green areas where proven or potential Aerosol Generating Procedures may take place, in line with HSE guidance, with enhanced PPE such as FFP3 masks, goggles and face shields. In addition, we urge you to ensure your organisation adopts a permissive role to PPE use; staff should not – in the face of a more readily transmissible virus – be discouraged from using more effective PPE items, even where such equipment is not mandated.

We would welcome assurances for our members on the arrangements your Trust has in place to address our concerns and meet our asks. We would be grateful if you would share further information with us at [info.cc@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.cc@bma.org.uk).

Yours sincerely



Dr Rob Harwood  
**UK consultants committee chair**



Dr Sarah Hallett  
**Junior doctors committee chair**



Dr Rajesh Kumar  
**Staff, associate specialists and specialty doctors committee chair**



Dr Raj Gupta  
**Medical academic staff committee co-chair**