



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

020 7210 4850

31 January 2022

Dear Chair,

I am writing to you in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

I would like to start by thanking you for your work over the last two years to support your registrants and the NHS and care providers during an unprecedentedly difficult time.

Vaccination of the population and of people working in health and care settings has been vital in tackling the pandemic. In light of changing evidence, I am today announcing that the Government will launch a consultation on ending vaccination as a condition of deployment in health and social care settings.

This in no way diminishes the importance that health and care workers are vaccinated. Indeed, it is the responsibility of all healthcare professionals to take steps to ensure the safety of patients and service users, including having appropriate vaccinations. As the approach to ensuring vaccine uptake among health and care staff changes it is important that this personal professional responsibility is re-emphasised.

I am aware of the important role that you, as professional regulators, play in setting the framework of professional responsibility alongside clinical leaders and representative professional bodies. I am also aware that you have published guidance that sets out that registered healthcare professionals should have appropriate vaccinations for the roles in which they operate, unless there are strong reasons not to.

There is a clear strong and global scientific consensus on the importance and value of maximising the rates of full vaccination against Covid. It benefits vaccinated individuals themselves, the communities they live in, the health and social care system and wider society and the economy. For health professionals there is an additional responsibility to protect their patients, particularly vulnerable patients, and to protect their colleagues. And health professionals have a particular personal professional leadership responsibility to set an example to their patients, their colleagues and the public. This view is supported by professional representative bodies, including the Medical Royal Colleges, as well as by the Chief Medical Officers, the Chief Nursing Officers and other leading clinicians across the four countries.

In that context, and in the unprecedented circumstances of the global pandemic, I am concerned that the guidance from the professional regulators on this issue is

currently limited to a statement about vaccination in general. Given the importance of your role in setting professional standards and in ensuring that all professionals act in a way that enhances public confidence in health professionals, I would be grateful if you would urgently work with professional leaders in the United Kingdom to ensure yourself that your current guidance on vaccination, and particularly vaccination for Covid, sends a clear message to registrants who are not fully vaccinated about their personal professional responsibilities in this regard.

While the vast majority of health and care professionals are fully vaccinated against Covid, a sizeable minority are not. I am determined that collectively we do all that we can to re-emphasise the professional responsibility of all health and care staff to take the necessary steps to protect those for whom they care, including taking the Covid vaccine.

Given that you regulate professionals across the whole of the UK I would ask if you could take this forward in conjunction with colleagues and professional leaders in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I am sending this letter to the Chairs and Chief Executives of the General Medical Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Health and Care Professions Council, the General Dental Council, the General Pharmaceutical Council, the General Optical Council, the General Osteopathic Council, the General Chiropractic Council and the Professional Standards Authority.

Yours ever,



RT HON SAJID JAVID MP