

Occupational Health Provision for Health and Social Care Staff

Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance

Guidance for compliance with criterion 10

- Providers have a system in place to manage the occupational health needs and obligations to staff in relation to infection.
- Providers have a policy that describes the process in place to manage health and care worker health and wellbeing and obligations in relation to IPC (including cleanliness), control and management.
- Occupational health policies on the prevention and management of communicable disease in health and care workers should be in place, to reduce risks of infections for both health and care workers and in service users.
- All staff can access occupational health services or access occupational health advice either through their employee service provider or via their registered primary care clinician.
- Small adult social care services that are not part of a large organisational structure may not have access to occupational health services.
- Service providers should ensure that they are able to get advice when needed, for example through their insurance company, a GP, or an occupational health agency.

Policies for the protection of staff can include for example:

- All new employees should undergo a pre-employment health assessment, which should include a review of immunisation needs.
- Risk assessment of the need for immunisations, for example influenza vaccination, hepatitis B, MMR and Chicken Pox (Varicella)
- Health screening for communicable disease, including tuberculosis and where appropriate,
- Blood borne virus (BBV) screening for those undertaking exposure prone procedures (if at risk of sharps injury from needles, razors etc, being bitten, or coming into contact with blood/blood stained fluids)
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including staff training in the safe use and disposal of PPE
- Post-exposure management, for example for inoculation injuries
- Circumstances under which staff may need to be excluded from work or have their duties modified.

The registered provider should ensure that all staff complete a confidential health assessment after a conditional offer of employment and give information about residence overseas, previous, and current illness and immunisation against relevant infections.

Policies for screening of staff should include:

- health screenings for communicable diseases
- how exposure to infections will be managed
- the responsibilities of staff to report episodes of illness.
- the circumstances under which staff may need to be excluded from work and for how long

Staff from overseas:

Please remember that staff coming from overseas may need a TB test as part of their visa application: They will need to have a tuberculosis (TB) test if coming to the UK for more than 6 months and either:

- live in any of these listed countries
- have lived in any of these listed countries in the past 6 months
- They will be given a chest x-ray to test for TB. If the result of the x-ray is not clear you may also be asked to give a sputum sample (phlegm coughed up from your lungs).
- If your test shows that you do not have TB, you'll be given a certificate which is valid for 6 months from the date of your x-ray. Include this certificate with your UK visa application.

Tuberculosis tests for visa applicants: Countries where you need a TB test for your UK visa application - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Migrant health guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Chickenpox (Varicella) and infectious diseases:

Staff coming from outside of the UK may not have been exposed to some infectious diseases seen in the UK, such as chickenpox, and whilst there is no available vaccination for these staff, you need to ensure they are included when you undertake a risk assessment of all staff, so where possible they are not exposed to the virus in the workplace whilst caring for residents with chickenpox or Shingles or other affected staff members.

Green Book: Chapter 12 Immunisation of healthcare and laboratory staff (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine is recommended for susceptible healthcare workers who have regular patient contact but are not necessarily involved in direct patient care.

Those with a definite history of chickenpox or herpes zoster (Shingles) can be considered protected.

Healthcare workers with a negative or uncertain history of chickenpox or herpes zoster should be serologically tested (Blood test) and vaccine only offered to those without varicella zoster antibody.

Please Note: This vaccination is not on the UK schedule so you may be charged for the vaccine

Immunisations:

Staff coming from outside of the UK may not have received the vaccinations that we give in the UK. Each country vaccinates against those diseases that are circulating there. So please ensure these staff members are seen by their practice nurse so they can be vaccinated in accordance with the UK schedule.



Migrant-vaccination-
ns-leaflet.pdf

Staff Immunisations – Provider Information:

As this is national policy, providers under the Health and Social Care Act and the Safety at Work Act, have a responsibility to ask their employees as to what their immunisation status is.

- CQC have also started to ask homes for evidence of the immunisation status of employees. This comes under regulation 12 and 19.
- We have attached an example of a form that you can use.
- There is also an action log and some further information on Hep B.

Please note: Dates of vaccinations may not be known/available, especially in staff coming from overseas so it is important that your staff member discusses this with their practice nurse, as they may require further vaccines especially if not vaccinated in the UK.



Staff vaccination
assessment form (00)

- **“Making decisions on offering immunisation based on national guidance and/or on the basis of a local risk assessment as described in ‘Immunisation against infectious disease’ (the ‘Green Book’)”** Green Book: Chapter 12 Immunisation of healthcare and laboratory staff (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- If a staff member has not received a required immunisation i.e. Hep B, the Health and Social Care Act it states that:
- “employers should make vaccines available free of charge to employees if national guidance or a risk assessment indicates risk of exposure to biological agents. Where effective vaccines exist, provision should be made to determine whether an employee is already immunised and immunisation should be offered to those not already immunised (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002).”
- If staff have been risk assessed and need to have specialist immunisations, providers will need to source an occupational health company or GP providing private immunisation service.

- ****Hepatitis B vaccination is not free of charge and is classed as a private prescription, therefore not all Occupational health services/GPs provide this service, if they do, you will be expected to pay, the cost for 3 vaccines and blood test can differ.**

What immunisations should staff have:

Immunisation	Staff working DIRECTLY with service users (i.e Carers, Nurses, Cleaners etc)	Staff NOT working directly with service users (i.e. Administrators and Chefs)
Tetanus	YES	YES
Polio	YES	YES
Diphtheria	YES	YES
MMR	YES	YES
Hep B	YES See above	NO Unless identified in a risk assessment
Influenza	YES advised for annual booster	Yes if they meet clinical risk group criteria
Pertussis	Advised for pregnant women only and given via midwife/GP	Advised for pregnant women only and given via midwife/GP
RSV (Respiratory syncytial virus)		
Chickenpox (Varicella)	Healthcare workers with a negative or uncertain history of chickenpox or herpes zoster should be serologically tested (Blood test) and vaccine only offered to those without varicella zoster antibody.	Healthcare workers with a negative or uncertain history of chickenpox or herpes zoster should be serologically tested (Blood test) and vaccine only offered to those without varicella zoster antibody.
COVID 19	No (YES if they meet clinical risk group criteria)	No (YES if they meet clinical risk group criteria)

How can I support staff to become immunised if needed.

- **Ensure staff are supported to attend appointments.**
- **Immunisation appointments maybe during working hours, so support staff to attend.**
- **Ensure staff are fully informed about immunisations – Leaflets are available in different languages.**

Below is a guide as to where staff can get their immunisations (where eligible).

Immunisation	GP	Occupational Health department/company	Other
Tetanus	YES		
Polio	YES		
Diphtheria	YES		
MMR X2	YES	YES – where required due to work only	
Hep B	YES **	YES	
Influenza	YES (or pharmacy)		
COVID 19	YES (or pharmacy)	YES	
Chickenpox (Varicella)	No – unless the GP provides a private vaccination service	Possible, again different companies/departments may differ	Private Clinic

What do I do if a staff member declines an immunisation?

Advise staff to discuss immunisations concerns and queries with Occupational health/GP/practice nurse.

- Ensure the staff member fully understands the importance of immunisations.
- Ensure they have the relevant information leaflet, in relevant language.
- Ensure they understand the importance of vaccinations.
- Ensure they have received all the information about the risks of remaining unvaccinated.
- Document the conversation and complete a risk assessment.
- Advise staff that they can be vaccinated at any time so they can change their mind.

Hepatitis B - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Whooping cough and pregnancy booklet (publishing.service.gov.uk)



UKHSA-12330-MMR
-for-all-leaflet_June:

For general information around immunisations please visit:

- [Immunisation | UK Vaccination Schedule | Patient](#)
- [Immunisation - Blood borne viruses \(BBV\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk)
- [Translations - HSE.ie](http://HSE.ie)
- [Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Who can I contact for further advice?

If you have any questions or need further advice, please contact your occupational health provider:

HIOW IPC Advice Line: Mon-Fri: 09:00 to 16:00. Call 08703 156601 -

Email: hiowicb-hsi.infectionprevention@nhs.net