

UKCFMA update on COVID-19 guidance

11 January 2021

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has now approved two COVID-19 vaccines manufactured by Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca. Roll out for both has already started. People with CF on the shielding list will be in priority group 4 for the vaccination, if over the age of 16 years. It is hoped that they will be offered the first dose of the vaccine by mid-February. Those not on the shielding list but who are considered to have a “serious underlying health condition” will be able to access the vaccine in priority group 6. We would encourage everyone to take up the offer of vaccination as soon as it is made available to them. This will be a major step towards ending the pandemic and enabling people to resume normal lives.

We now have information that over 171 people with CF in the UK have been infected with COVID-19. Broadly outcomes have been similar to those seen in the general population. Age is the most important determinant of outcome after COVID-19 infection. Adults with CF should take all practicable measures to avoid infection. The combination of age, more advanced CF lung disease and other CF-related problems, increase the risk of more severe illness and the need for treatment in hospital. For further information on the latest research, please look at the November 2020 paper on the [global impact of COVID-19 on people with CF](#), and a [further publication](#) from April 2020. Similar results have also been found when reviewing the [impact of COVID-19 on children with CF](#).

With the new variant of COVID-19 in the UK, the transmission of the virus has significantly increased. So far there is no evidence to suggest that this strain results in more severe infection or worse outcomes, but we are monitoring the situation and will update you as more information becomes available. Regardless of this, it is important that people with CF continue to follow their respective government’s advice and take measures to avoid infection. Strict social distancing, wearing a face covering and cleaning hands continue to be very important.

With all devolved nations currently in lockdown, shielding has been re-introduced for those on the Shielded Patient List (except for Northern Ireland). If you are on the shielding list, you will have been contacted by your CF team or received a letter from your GP. If you are unsure about whether you are on the list, or feel you should be, please get in touch with your CF team.

As earlier in the year, the advice is to work from home if possible or not go to work. Everyone not on the shielding list, including those with CF, should continue to follow current government guidelines. Employers cannot compel those with shielding notifications to go into work, but adults with CF who choose to do so should ensure that their workplace has

adequate infection control processes in place. Children with CF should follow the national guidance with respect to school attendance. They should only shield if they have been instructed to by their CF team. The Government will announce what support will be available to those shielding to help people to stay safe. Please keep an eye on the CF Trust website which will provide further information when available.

If you have concerns about your own particular circumstances, you should discuss these with your CF Centre.