

## Unpaid carers

Revised national guidance from the JCVI describes unpaid carers as:

**Those who are eligible for a carer's allowance, or those who are the sole or primary carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of COVID-19 mortality and therefore [clinically vulnerable](#).**

Those clinically vulnerable to COVID include children with severe neuro-disabilities, those who are designated Clinically Extremely vulnerable (CEV), adults who have underlying health conditions and those who need care because of advanced age. Eligible carers should be vaccinated in priority group 6.

The aim of this guidance is to provide clarity and consistency and ensure we vaccinate those unpaid carers that will have the greatest impact on preventing deaths. Due to the large numbers of unpaid carers and the importance of vaccinating those at the highest risk, we cannot vaccinate everyone who provides care for a friend or family member. This is not to devalue the significant caring role undertaken by so many, rather it is to maintain the clear focus of the vaccination programme on preventing deaths and protecting our vital health and social care systems.

Many unpaid carers will receive an earlier vaccination depending on their age. Unpaid carers aged 50 years and over, who are not prioritised for vaccination as an unpaid carer, will nevertheless be offered the vaccine in priority groupings 7-9. Our aim is to offer vaccination to all those in these priority groups by the end of April 2021.

### Prioritisation for vaccination

In deciding which unpaid carers should be prioritised for vaccination, there are three important factors to consider:

1. The vulnerability of the person being cared for:
  - is 65 years old and over (group 5)
  - is deemed extremely clinically vulnerable (group 4)
  - has a defined underlying health condition including mental illness (qualifying as group 6)
  - is a child under 16 with complex medical needs/ severe neuro-disabilities
2. The nature of the care provided to those 16 and over:
  - includes, but is not restricted to, helping with eating, bathing, shaving, managing continence, dressing and walking. It may include intervening in challenging or risky behaviour. It may include providing significant levels of support and supervision at home or in the community and where social distancing is not possible

The nature of the care provided to children under 16 with complex medical needs/ severe neuro-disabilities:

- is beyond the care and support parents ordinarily provide for a child. It is likely to include tasks like tracheostomy tube care, airway suction, repositioning to manage pressure areas and care interventions such as respiratory physiotherapy. It may include intensive personal care such as daily washing and continence care and /or managing behaviours that challenge.

3. The unpaid carer is the sole or primary carer:

- we recognise that caring for some people may require two people to assist with such tasks as positioning, hoisting, bathing and changing. In such instances, both unpaid carers may be considered as the primary carers

To be prioritised for vaccination, an unpaid carer should satisfy all three factors.

Young carers under 16 will not be offered the vaccination. No children under 16 are being vaccinated, unless in exceptional circumstances due to severe-neuro disabilities.

Eligibility for prioritisation is not dependant on receipt of carer's benefit, membership of a carers' organisation or being known to social services.

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Team are working closely with Social Care and Primary Care colleagues to identify and provide vaccine offers to those who meet the criteria.