

COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

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carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Contents

1. Background	3
2. Scope	3
3. Vaccination Process	3
4. Individual's decision.....	3
5. Further information.....	3
6. Time off for vaccination appointments.....	4
7. Return to work following vaccination appointments.....	4
8. Treating colleagues with respect	5
9. Travelling claims for Covid19 Vaccinations	5
10. Staff who decline the offer of a Covid 19 vaccination.....	5

1. Background

The Government is currently rolling out its national COVID-19 vaccination programme. Carmarthenshire County Council fully supports the Covid-19 vaccination process and aims to ensure that all employees get the opportunity to receive the vaccine when this is offered to them.

The aim of this Policy is to clearly set out the Authority's approach to all aspects of the COVID-19 vaccination in relation to our employees.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all Carmarthenshire County Council employees excluding staff on the complement of locally managed schools. Schools may wish to adopt a similar approach.

3. Vaccination Process

Vaccinations are free of charge on the NHS. They are being administered according to a priority list at vaccination centres, including some hospitals, sports facilities, conference centres and GP surgeries.

We encourage employees who are not registered with a GP to do so as soon as they can. See [NHS 111 Wales - Local Services : GPs - Information and Links](#) for information on how to do this.

4. Individual's decision

We ask that, when a coronavirus vaccination becomes available, employees take the opportunity to be vaccinated. We understand that this is ultimately each individual's choice, but we encourage our workforce to make an informed decision by:

- reading up about COVID-19 vaccinations via official sources,
- paying attention to the information the NHS provides when offering a vaccine; and
- being wary of misinformation around COVID-19 vaccinations put out by unreliable sources.

We would also encourage any of our employees who have concerns to discuss these directly with their line manager.

5. Further information

Information on the national COVID-19 vaccination programme is set out at:

www.phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-information].

6. Time off for vaccination appointments

To assist our workforce, and where appointments fall within your normal working hours, we are providing employees with time off during 2021 to attend COVID-19 vaccination appointments including the booster vaccine.

Employees should obtain approval from their line manager in advance of taking time off to attend a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. They should give their line manager as much notice as they can that they would like to take time off for this purpose.

Line managers may, at their discretion, ask employees to produce evidence of their appointment (for example an appointment card or email/text inviting them to a COVID-19 vaccination appointment).

To facilitate this, appropriate time off with pay will be granted for employees who receive a vaccination appointment during working hours.

Time off will not be credited to an employee who receives a vaccination appointment outside normal working hours.

Time off will only be provided for the two vaccination appointments during 2021 and the booster vaccination.

7. Return to work following vaccination appointments

Following a vaccination, employees should be able to resume their normal activities, including working, as long as they feel well.

This means that employees should return to work as soon as they can after their vaccination appointment. If it is not practical for the employee to return to work immediately after their appointment, for example if it is towards the end of their working day, they should discuss alternative arrangements with their line manager.

However, employees who are unwell after receiving a coronavirus vaccination should take sickness absence in the usual way and should notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable, preferably before they are due to start work.

8. Treating colleagues with respect

We recognise that the subject of the COVID-19 vaccination programme can be divisive and lead to the expression of strong opinions. However, employees must remain responsible and respectful when communicating with their colleagues about COVID-19 vaccinations.

Employees must not act against colleagues in a way that could amount to bullying or harassment, for example mocking a colleague's views on COVID-19 vaccinations or foisting their own views on COVID-19 vaccinations on others.

For example, the harassment or intimidation of colleagues because of their views or individual circumstances may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Any employee who is offended by, or concerned about, a colleague's behaviour in this regard should raise the matter with management and/or can raise a formal complaint by referring to our [Behavioural Standards in the Workplace guidance](#).

9. Travelling claims for Covid19 Vaccinations

The costs of travelling to receive the vaccination will not be covered.

10. Staff who decline the offer of a Covid 19 vaccination

As an employer, we cannot compel our employees to be vaccinated if they do not wish to do so. However, we are supportive of the Covid 19 vaccination programme and would strongly encourage you to take up the offer of a vaccine, particularly if you are working in a client / patient facing role. We would also encourage any of our employees who have concerns to discuss these directly with their line manager.

However, there may be instances where staff who perform specific roles with Services Users who are clinically potentially at greater risk of serious illness from Covid19, who for a range of reasons may not be vaccinated. In these rare situations, the Authority may need to undertake a risk assessment to ensure that both Employees and Service users are safeguarded, and that we endeavour to assess and minimise the exposure to risk of harm.

An employee's vaccination status constitutes special category data and, as an employer, we are not entitled to routinely request, hold or share information about an employee's vaccination status, however, in certain circumstances or settings it may be fair, relevant and necessary to request this information for a specific

purpose. If such a request is made, the reason for doing so will be made clear to the employee at the point of request

**THIS POLICY IS BEING KEPT UNDER REVIEW AND WILL BE UPDATED AS
NEW LEGISLATION OR GUIDANCE IS PUBLISHED.**