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David McColl
Chair, Scottish Dental Practice Committee
British Dental Association

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TRAINING FOR COVID-19 VACCINATORS

Thank you for your letter of 19 January regarding the training and on-boarding arrangements for Covid-19 vaccinators.

We are committed to making it as straightforward as possible for people to play their part in the Covid-19 Vaccination Programme, the largest and most important health programme being undertaken in Scotland. I was therefore sorry to read of your concerns regarding your experience of having tried to register to support the programme.

We recognise the important role that dentists across Scotland can play in delivering vaccinations and we are committed to utilising your members as the programme progresses. It is with this in mind that my officials have written to territorial Health Boards requesting that further steps be taken to ensure that the process for contractors to participate (including registration, vaccination training and induction and on-boarding) in the programme is as simple as possible.

In particular, we have instructed that arrangements be made to ensure that independent contractors willing to participate in the programme have been proactively registered with the staff bank and given access to any necessary training in order that they can be deployed at pace. Throughout this process we have been keen to ensure that our approach to training properly takes account of the existing skills and experience of prospective vaccinators. For individuals who are active vaccinators, they need only undertake training on the specific characteristics of the vaccines being administered. For other experienced healthcare professionals, training requirements should be identified using the self-appraisal tool which has been published by NHS Education for Scotland and Public Health Scotland. I am clear that vaccination training must be proportionate while of course ensuring that safety remains paramount.
This proportionate approach must also be reflected in the wider on-boarding arrangements Health Boards are making for vaccinators joining the programme. To that end, we have written to all Boards asking that they streamline on-boarding processes in the following ways:

1. Contractors working on a sessional basis, and newly recruited vaccinations staff, will only be required to undertake induction training that is essential to ensuring they can work safely in a vaccinations environment.
2. Necessary statutory or induction training that is predominantly about the clinical operating environment within which vaccinations are being delivered, ought to be delivered by using tools such as pre-clinic huddles, for maximum effectiveness and to minimise training time. This might include, for example, fire safety.
3. Where appropriate, staff with prior experience should be given the option to self-certify that they have completed generic training modules.
4. Where individuals, such as contractors, have a prior relationship with the Board, and proxy information can be used, such as GDC registration or a board list number to evidence that the individual would satisfy relevant pre-employment checks, this proxy information should be used to make the process as efficient as possible.

We will of course continue to consider any further steps which could be taken to streamline processes. To that end, I understand you are due to meet with my officials today and I look forward to hearing the outputs of that conversation.

Kind regards,

JEANE FREEMAN

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