

PAC Committee – Covid-19 Vaccination – 11 January

Contact: Jordan Clark, Alzheimer's Society

Email: jordan.clark@alzheimers.org.uk

This briefing includes:

- 1. Suggested questions**
- 2. Vaccination numbers**
- 3. Vaccinations and care home visits**

1. Suggested questions

- *It has now been ten months since many care home residents have seen their loved ones in person. Can you confirm whether it is the Government's intention to allow care home visits to go ahead once the vaccination programme has been rolled out amongst care home residents? If not, at what point will meaningful visits be able to take place?*
- *Can you commit to publishing regular statistics on the number of care home residents that have received both the first and second dose of the vaccine, providing that information as both a number and a percentage?*
- *Can you share with the Committee how many care home staff and residents have so far refused the vaccine and commit to publishing this data regular ongoing basis?*
- *Alzheimer's Society has let me know that many of its staff are in frontline positions, providing vital support services to people affected by dementia and that its staff would like to return to face-to-face provision to provide the best care possible. Can you share with the Committee how charity workers and those working in other organisations will be categorised on the vaccine priority list?*

1. Vaccination numbers

There are more than 400,000 people living in care homes in the UK, with more than 70% of this number being people living with some form of dementia.¹ Many also have other underlying conditions. This group of population are extremely vulnerable to contracting the virus.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended 9 groups of people receive the vaccine in the initial phase of vaccine roll out. The JCVI have designated that care home residents and their carers should be in Group 1 – the first to receive the vaccine. The advice states that this is to ensure prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems.²

On January 4, the Prime Minister committed that all of those in the first 4 JCVI groups – including care home residents and carers – should receive both doses of the vaccine by mid-February.

Alzheimer's Society is recommending the Government begin to publish regular statistics on the number of care home residents and staff that have received the first and final dose

¹ https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrate/downloads/dementia_uk_update.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-december-2020#vaccine-priority-groups-advice-on-30-december-2020>

of the vaccine, including which proportion of the care home resident and staff population have been vaccinated.

2. Vaccinations and care home visits

Throughout the course of the pandemic Alzheimer's Society has been asking Government to ensure that people living in care homes can receive visits from their loved ones. Family and friends provide a vital care to people with dementia living in care homes.

Findings from Alzheimer's Society studies have shown the devastating impact the prevention of meaningful visits has had on residents with dementia. A study conducted by Alzheimer's Society in August 2020 found that 79% of care home managers reported lack of social contact was causing deterioration in health and wellbeing of their residents with dementia.³

Alzheimer's Society welcomed the Government's commitment in October 2020 that by December 18th, residents' loved ones will be given Key Worker status, with access to PPE and testing which would allow them to safely visit in care homes – in line with Alzheimer's Society's calls.

The most recent iteration of guidance, published in [National Lockdown Guidance](#) on 4 January 2021, contains statements which are contradictory and unclear and Alzheimer's Society is seeking urgent clarification from Government on this. The guidance gives two opposing statements on care home visits, which Alzheimer's Society are concerned will cause confusion amongst the sector and public.

- 1) The guidance states that *"you can also leave home to visit someone who is dying or someone in a care home (if permitted under care home guidance)"*⁴. Current care home guidance allows indoor close-contact visits if the visitor has been tested and wears suitable PPE.
- 2) However, the National Lockdown Guidance later states that *"close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak."*⁵

Alzheimer's Society would like the Government to provide care homes, residents and families some clarity on when they can see each other in person, whether the keyworker visitor scheme will be introduced and if vaccination of care home residents and staff will satisfy Government that visits can safely resume.

³ <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/Worst-hit-Dementia-during-coronavirus-report.pdf>

⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/949536/NationalLockdownGuidance.pdf

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/949536/NationalLockdownGuidance.pdf