

Adjournment Debate Briefing – UK Vaccine Strategy – Monday 8th November 2021

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This briefing includes:

1. Suggested interventions
2. Booster jabs in adult social care settings
3. Dementia context

1. Suggested Interventions

- *Care home residents are one of the most crucial demographics to vaccinate. Given that 95% of older adult care home residents in England have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, can the Minister explain why the rate of booster jabs is lagging behind on 81.7%, and what action her Department is taking to address this?*
- *NHS England had a target of offering booster jabs to all care home residents by November 1st, but as of today 1,100 homes are yet to be visited. It is understandable that COVID-19 and norovirus outbreaks in some homes may cause delay. Can the Minister provide an updated estimate for when the remaining visits will be completed?*
- *People living with dementia have been worst hit by the pandemic, with more than a quarter of people who have died with COVID-19 in England and Wales having dementia. It's therefore crucial to protect them from COVID-19 this winter by offering them booster doses as soon as possible. With 4 in 10 people with dementia living in a care home, how does the Minister intend to ensure all remaining care home residents receive their booster as a matter of urgency?*
- *Protecting people in care homes means that booster doses are vital – not just for residents, but also for our dedicated care workforce. Can the Minister confirm what proportion of care home staff have received a booster vaccination, and can she outline what measures she's taking to ensure that providing booster doses to care home staff is as straightforward as possible?*

2. Booster jabs in adult social care settings

On 21 September 2021, the NHS began taking bookings from people invited to receive a COVID-19 booster jab, **with NHS England stating that local health teams would “prioritise care home residents and staff to ensure they are offered a booster jab by the beginning of November.”**¹

An earlier letter from Professor Sir Keith Willett, SRO Vaccine Deployment; and Dr Nikita Kanani, Medical Director for Primary Care, also stated that all Primary Care Network-led local vaccination services (LVS) should “prioritise care homes for older adult care home residents and care home

¹ **NHS England and Improvement.** NHS encourages people to get COVID booster jab as bookings open. 21 September 2021. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/09/nhs-encourages-people-to-get-covid-booster-jab-as-bookings-open/>.

staff,” with **“all eligible patients in this cohort” to be offered a booster vaccine by 1 November 2021.**² The letter adds that “delivery plans should be designed to meet this [1 Nov] target.”³

On 5 November, NHS England and Improvement issued a press release confirming that 81.7% of eligible residents in older adult care homes had received a booster vaccine.⁴ Alzheimer’s Society welcomes the prioritisation of care home residents and staff for the vaccine, particularly as around 69% of care home residents are people living with dementia.⁵

However, **as NHSE’s initial deadline has now passed, and as people living in communal long-term care settings are especially vulnerable to COVID-19, urgent action must now be taken to ensure that the nearly one in five residents in older adult care homes who are yet to receive their booster vaccine are able to do so as soon as possible.**

3. Dementia context

People living with dementia – the majority of care home residents – have been worst hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, it’s crucial that they receive their booster vaccines as soon as possible. Between March and June 2020, at the height of the first wave of the pandemic, dementia was the most common pre-existing condition with for COVID-19 deaths, **and more than a quarter (27.5%) of people who died with Covid-19 from March to June had dementia.**⁶ Moreover, the largest increase in excess non-Covid-19 deaths was in people with dementia. It is crucial that we act quickly to protect people living with dementia from COVID-19 as we head into the winter.

By the end of September 2021, 94.8% of older adult care home residents (aged 65 or over) had received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, which demonstrates that a high rate of uptake is possible in a care home setting.⁷

Alzheimer’s Society would therefore like to hear the Government’s assessment on how the rate of booster jabs can be urgently improved, through accelerating delivery and encouraging uptake.

² **NHS England and Improvement.** Letter: Immediate action required for Phase 3 Booster vaccinations. 15 September 2021. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/09/C1410-immediate-action-required-for-phase-3-booster-vaccinations.pdf>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ **NHS England and Improvement.** NHS offers residents in every eligible care home a COVID booster jab. 5 November 2021. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/11/nhs-offers-residents-in-every-eligible-care-home-a-covid-booster-jab-2/>.

⁵ **Prince, M et al.** Dementia UK: Update, second edition report, King’s College and LSE. 2014. https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrate/downloads/dementia_uk_update.pdf.

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurringinjune2020>

⁷ **NHS England and Improvement.** Covid-19 Vaccination Statistics. Week ending Sunday 26th September 2021. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/09/COVID-19-weekly-announced-vaccinations-30-September-2021.pdf>.