

Information for Family Carers

Approaching your GP COVID-19 Vaccine



Friday, February 12, 2021.

We know that many family carers are concerned about COVID-19 and its potential impact on the people you care for. We are concerned too. ENABLE Scotland believes that every person with a learning disability should be offered the COVID-19 vaccine as part of the [JCVI priority group 6](#) - all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality. We are campaigning to try and achieve this.

As of this week, data is available that shows:

- People who have a learning disability in Scotland are at greater risk of death – three times more likely to die than the general population from COVID-19
- People who have a learning disability in Scotland are at greater risk of infection – twice as likely as the general population to test positive for COVID-19
- People who have a learning disability in Scotland are at greater risk of becoming seriously ill as a result of COVID-19 – twice as likely to be hospitalised

You can read more information about these findings on the ENABLE website. Click [here](#).

These findings are presented on top of existing health inequalities which result in higher mortality rates for the population who have a learning disability generally – Scottish Learning Disability Observatory (SLDO) data shows that people who have a learning disability in Scotland on average die twenty years earlier than the general population.

In the short term, based upon this evidence showing an increased risk of severe disease for people with a learning disability and increased mortality of people with a learning disability it may be worthwhile contacting the GP practice of the person you care for and asking for them to consider vaccinating your loved one as part of the JCVI Priority Group 6.

You can do this by giving the practice a call. Ask to speak to a GP in regards to the COVID-19 vaccine. The person should organise an appointment with a GP – this will most likely be over the phone. If you speak to someone from the surgery and they refuse to arrange for you to speak with a GP, then you should ask them to record that refusal in the notes of the person you care for. If you do speak with a GP and your request for a vaccine as part of JCVI priority group 6 is declined you should also ask for that to be recorded.

Once you are speaking to the GP you should explain to them that [Annex A to the JCVI statement issued on 6 January 2021](#) states: “While prioritisation is set nationally, the

knowledge, experience, system leadership and collaborative approach with local partners of Screening and Immunisation Teams embedded within Public Health Commissioning in NHS England (and their equivalent teams in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) should be utilised to improve vaccine uptake and reduce inequalities in the implementation of the COVID-19 immunisation programme.”

The data published by SLDO shows that people who have a learning disability face a clear health inequality around COVID-19.

It is however not certain that the GP will agree and consider to vaccinate the person you are acting on behalf of. They could ask that they wait to be offered the vaccine in line with other people in their age group.

ENABLE Scotland is calling for greater support for people with a learning disability to access the vaccination in Priority Group 6 in line with the current JCVI guidance.

Family Connect can offer you support to make this approach to your GP. You can contact Gary from Family Connect by emailing familyconnect@enable.org.uk or by calling 0300 303 0228.

