



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy



Department  
of Health &  
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5 February 2020

## **Re: COVID-19 vaccination prioritisation of ‘frontline healthcare’ staff**

I want to thank you for raising your concerns about the prioritisation of key diagnostic staff at our recent Life Sciences Covid Response Group. The industry is faced with ongoing health and operational challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and I recognise that this is a difficult time to maintain business as usual.

Our priority is to protect those who are most at risk of serious illness and death, and those who are likely to have contact with multiple vulnerable patients within a healthcare setting, who are considered ‘frontline healthcare’ staff. This approach is in line with the advice of Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Public Health England’s Green Book (which sets out guidance on immunisation against infectious disease) provides guidance on the roles and activities which may be considered frontline healthcare in line with the JCVI advice. This covers those roles providing direct clinical care to patients, as well as ‘Non-clinical staff in secondary or primary care/community healthcare settings’ who may have contact with patients but are not directly involved in patient care.

When identifying frontline health and care staff who are priority for vaccination, it important to assess whether the activities they are undertaking meet the criteria for prioritisation as set out by the JCVI as follows:

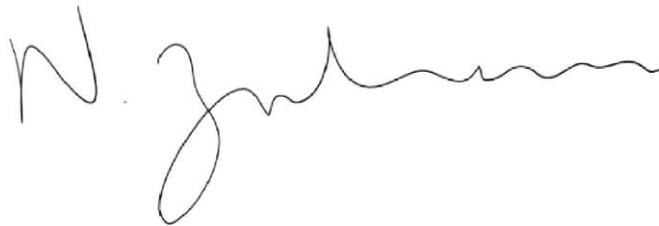
- a) Do these workers work, all or part of the time in a Hospital, Care-home, primary care or community-based setting where many patients vulnerable to COVID-19 are cared for?
- b) Are these workers likely to be infected by COVID-19 themselves because they are in regular contact with people who are infected or with infected material?
- c) Are these workers more likely to transmit COVID-19 to multiple persons particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 or to other staff in a healthcare environment?

Those whose activities meet all these criteria would be considered 'frontline healthcare' staff and therefore should be appropriately prioritised to be offered a vaccine.

Prioritisation decisions for the next phase of delivery are subject to the surveillance and monitoring of data and information from phase one, as well as further input from independent scientific experts such as the JCVI.

Thank you again for bringing this matter to my attention and I hope this response provides the clarification you need.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', written in a cursive style.

**NADHIM ZAHAWI MP**  
Minister for Business and Industry  
Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment