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## WORKER VACCINATION POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Any vaccine-preventable disease that is transmissible from person to person poses a risk to both healthcare professionals and service users.

### PURPOSE

GPS workers have a duty of care towards service users which includes taking reasonable precautions to protect them from communicable diseases.

Immunisation of healthcare workers may therefore:

- Protect the individual and their family from an occupationally acquired infection.
- Protect patients and service users, including those considered vulnerable who may not respond well to their own immunisation.
- Protect other healthcare workers and allows for the efficient running of services without disruption.

The most effective method for preventing infections is the adoption of safe working practices. Immunisation should never be regarded as a substitute for good practice, although it does provide additional protection. Workers who handle clinical specimens or have service user contact may be exposed to a variety of

### RECOMMENDATIONS BY STAFF GROUPS

The objective of occupational immunisation of GPS workers is to protect those at high risk of exposure and their families, to protect service users and other workers from exposure to infected workers, and to sustain

### WORKERS INVOLVED IN DIRECT SERVICE USER CARE

This includes workers who have regular clinical contact with service users and are directly involved in frontline care. This includes doctors, dentists, midwives and nurses, paramedics and ambulance drivers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and radiographers. Students and

trainees in these disciplines and volunteers who are working with service users must also be included.

### **WORKERS NOT INVOLVED IN DIRECT DIRECTED SERVICE USER CARE**

This includes non-clinical ancillary staff who may have social contact with service users but are not directly involved in service user care. This group includes receptionists, administrative workers, and cleaners.

### **ROUTINE VACCINATION (MANDATORY FOR ALL DISCIPLINES)**

All workers should be up to date with their routine immunisations, e.g. tetanus, diphtheria, polio and MMR. The MMR vaccine is especially important in the context of the ability of workers to transmit measles or rubella infections to vulnerable groups. While healthcare workers may need MMR vaccination for their own benefit, they should also be immune to measles and rubella to assist in protecting service users. Satisfactory evidence includes documentation of having received two doses of MMR or having had positive antibody tests for measles and rubella.

### **SELECTED VACCINES**

#### **BCG – (DEPENDENT ON DEPARTMENT)**

The BCG vaccine is recommended for healthcare workers who may have close contact with infectious service users. It is particularly important to test and immunise workers within maternity and paediatric departments and departments in which the patients are likely to be immunocompromised, e.g. transplant, oncology and HIV units.

The BCG vaccine is not routinely recommended to workers who are not involved in direct service user care.

#### **HEPATITIS B**

Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for healthcare workers who may have direct contact with service users' blood or blood-stained body fluids.

Antibody titres for hepatitis B should be checked one to four months after the completion of a primary course of vaccine. Such information allows appropriate decisions to be made concerning post-exposure prophylaxis following known or suspected exposure to the virus.

The HEPB vaccine is not routinely recommended to workers who are not involved in direct service user care.

#### **INFLUENZA**

Influenza immunisation helps to prevent influenza in staff and may also reduce the transmission of influenza to vulnerable service users. Influenza vaccination is therefore recommended for

healthcare workers directly involved in patient care, who should be offered influenza immunisation on an annual basis.

The influenza vaccine is recommended to workers who are not involved in direct service user care.

### **VARICELLA**

Varicella vaccine is recommended for susceptible healthcare workers who have direct service user contact. Those with a definite history of chickenpox or herpes zoster can be considered protected. Healthcare workers with a negative or uncertain history of chickenpox or herpes zoster should be serologically tested and vaccine only offered to those without the varicella zoster antibody.

The varicella vaccine is not routinely recommended to workers who are not involved in direct service user care.

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