

Dear colleagues

## Re: Revoking vaccination as a condition of deployment across all health and social care

The North East and North Cumbria Social Partnership Forum (NENC SPF) brings together NHS workforce leaders, trade unions and a range of other health and social care partners in the NENC region. As a regional group we pursue the common purpose of developing a world class health and social care service, delivered by a world class workforce who are supported and empowered to do their job.

In response to the current open consultation on revoking vaccination as a condition of deployment across all of health and social care, we are writing to submit the following on behalf of the NENC SPF:

- The NENC SPF recognises the vital clinical benefits of vaccination - for patients, staff and society and takes every opportunity to encourage staff to take the vaccination.
- Staff members, teams and trade unions across the NHS and social care sector have worked tirelessly to encourage hesitant staff to come forward for their vaccine. This work has been completed whilst staff members, teams and trade unions are stretched to maximum capacity due to a range of combined/conflicting factors such as – sustained COVID-19 pandemic pressures; significant staff wellbeing support needs; higher than normal absence rates; cumulative workforce shortages for many years; expectations and delivery targets around elective recovery; continually increased central reporting requirements; and new expectations/planning required for ICS development under the Health and Care Bill.
- The decision to revoke vaccination as a condition of deployment will have an unintended negative impact on our colleagues in social care and will widen the existing gap between social care and wider health care. During November 2021 social care faced disruption and the loss of staff when mandatory vaccination became law.

- Significant change to policy at the eleventh hour has created distrust not only within organisations but for the Government. Considerable time will need to be devoted to rebuilding levels of trust across all health and social care.
- Staff morale and wellbeing has been significantly affected by the decision to both introduce and revoke legislation on mandatory vaccinations. Relationships within teams have become fractured and unrest amongst staff has been heightened.

We hope you find these comments helpful and we would be happy to expand or discuss further on any point. The points raised in this response are in relation to the impact decisions made on vaccination as a condition of deployment have had across health and social care.

The NENC SPF would welcome any future decisions on matters such as this to be made in partnership with Social Partnership Forums. Sufficient time for engagement and meaningful consultation must be prioritised from this point forward to avoid negative unintended consequences across health and social care.

Signed:

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*(JOINT CHAIRS OF THE NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA SPF)*