**Cumbria County Council Public Health Update**

**25 March 2021**

**Advice for staff getting vaccinated**

**Introduction**

We are pleased to hear that more school staff are starting to be vaccinated. The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is safe and effective. It gives you the best protection against coronavirus. The vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

**Safety**

So far, millions of people have been given a COVID-19 vaccine and reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare. No long-term complications have been reported.

There have been reports in some countries of a small number of people having blood clots after the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. The MHRA says the current evidence does not suggest the clots were caused by the vaccine and you should still get vaccinated when invited.

[See the MHRA response to Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic authorities' action to temporarily suspend the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mhra-response-to-danish-authorities-action-to-temporarily-suspend-the-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine)

Involvement in the vaccine programme is voluntary. If you have a member of staff who is hesitant about getting the vaccine, we suggest making sure they have clear information available to them, to help them make an informed decision. The [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/) provides a good summary.

**Common Side Effects and advice for staff**

The [Green Book](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961287/Greenbook_chapter_14a_v7_12Feb2021.pdf) contains very detailed information about vaccines, including expected side effects.

The most common side effects we expect to see (and the approximate % of people being vaccinated who are likely to experience these symptoms) are:

* injection site pain (up to 80%)
* fatigue (up to 60%)
* headache (up to 50%).
* high temperature (>38°C) within the first 48 hours (10-25%)
* muscle aches and/or joint pains

Side effects are generally less common in those aged over 55 than those aged 16 to 55 years.

* Taking paracetamol can help manage any side effects
* If staff develop a high temperature in the 48 hrs after having the vaccine, they are able to come back to work as soon as they feel well enough to do so. If the high temperature lasts longer than 48 hours, or is accompanied by any of the other symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. change to/loss of sense of taste/smell or a new continuous cough) the individual should isolate and get a PCR test to check they do not actually have COVID-19.
* If staff develop any side effects that they are worried about, they should contact their GP or call NHS 111. Side effects should also be reported [here](https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/)

Any queries about this update, please contact the Cumbria County Council Public Health Team by emailing [EducationIPC@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:EducationIPC@cumbria.gov.uk)

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