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COVID-19: Vaccination Programme

There has been so much hype about this mass vaccination programme that it has understandably caused a lot of frustration and anxiety in Primary Care, not least because much of the information about the Direct Enhanced Service (DES) was leaked well ahead of Practices being informed. NHSE published the indicative DES earlier this week, and the BMA has also produced [guidance](#) about what the CVP (COVID-19 Vaccination Programme) service in England involves, what is expected of Practices, what you will get to support this work, and guidance on what to do now.

COVID-19: Long COVID

The condition 'post-COVID syndrome' (also known as 'Long COVID') is having a debilitating effect on people's lives and, although the focus has been on saving lives during the pandemic, there is a growing recognition that people are facing long-term ill health due to COVID-19. National [guidance](#) for post-COVID syndrome assessment clinics was published recently and will be updated in December 2020, further to the release of NICE/SIGN/RCGP guidance.

Guidance is also available for the [Your COVID Recovery](#) platform, which is an online interactive and tailored recovery programme to provide rehabilitation support for Patients to manage their recovery at home in addition to primary care support and rehabilitation.

COVID-19: Deaths of People with Learning Disabilities

In a recent [report](#), the COVID-19 death rate for people with learning disabilities was 3.6 times the rate in the general population for the same period last year; although this is likely to be higher because a quarter of deaths reported in the COVID-19 Patient Notification System (CPNS) did not say whether or not the deceased had learning disabilities. Most of these deaths happened in hospital.

Some of the most common reasons for the disparity in mortality are delays or problems with investigating, diagnosing, and treating illnesses; and respiratory infection is the most common cause of death in people with a learning disability. People with learning disabilities are also more likely to have problems in having their needs identified and appropriate care being provided if their condition changes. So, in conjunction with the [QOF Quality Improvement](#) domain 2020/21 to support people with learning disabilities, Practices should proactively call and recall these Patients for health checks

and flu immunisations and have their needs for reasonable adjustments, including adhering to the Accessible Information Standard, recorded and flagged.

Flu – Centrally Supplied Flu Vaccines

Many Practices are now ordering flu vaccines from the DHSC central supply for those in the at-risk categories, and the seasonal influenza [DES specification](#) (Part 2) has been further updated to reflect the arrangements for accessing, administering and claiming payment for administering these flu vaccines.

Proxy Access for Care Homes Ordering Medication

A new [guide](#) from NHS England has been published to support best practice for CQC registered care homes, GP practices and pharmacies to work together to allow care home staff to order online repeat medication on behalf of residents.

We have also published a summary of proxy access and the steps that care homes and GP Practices need to take, along with useful links to templates and checklists. You can find this in the resource centre.

Review of NHS Health Checks

Since its introduction 11 years ago, the NHS Health Check Programme has now shown a significant variation in uptake and follow-up of health risks, and recently [consideration](#) has been given for people to benefit from a more tailored service or a particular focus at key changes in their life. The government therefore announced its intention to consider whether changes to the NHS Health Check Programme could help it deliver even greater benefits to prevent ill health and reduce health inequalities. This includes assessing the benefits (including costs) of the current process and how to promote uptake and facilitate follow-up. The report from this is due to be published at the end of this year.