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Please ask for: Chris Spencer

Our Ref: CS/JP

Your Ref:

Date: 3rd February 2021

Dear Colleagues

Re: Important update regarding vaccinations:

As you will already be aware some Children's Services critical (key) workers are already receiving vaccinations as part of the programme to target staff who are delivering services to clinically extremely vulnerable children, young people and their families.

The senior leadership team has just received confirmation that the vaccination programme will now move onto the next phase to include all children's social workers (social care staff) and our foster carers, which is really great news. This is possible because of the progress that has been made with vaccinating other priority groups, including all care homes and over 90% of people over 80 years of age. The supply of the vaccine is also sufficient to make this possible.

The Gold Group considered a variety of additional "claims" to agree the next priority group and after a thorough discussion the following outcome was agreed:

1. Children's social workers (social care workers) NOT working with clinically extremely vulnerable, or themselves vulnerable to COVID-19

This group of staff had previously been excluded on the basis that the standard operating procedures did not confirm eligibility. This position has now changed on the basis that:

- There are inconsistencies between health visitors (who are eligible and "in") and children's social care staff (who are ineligible and "out")
- The potential for **unknown** exposure of **unknown** vulnerable people in homes in the community on visits (as opposed to schools where cohorts are known); and,
- The fact that other Local Authorities have already included social workers (social care staff)

It has therefore been agreed that the vaccination will be offered to all children's social workers (social care staff) who are frontline critical (key) workers visiting children, young people and families in their homes / placements.

2. Gloucestershire Foster Carers

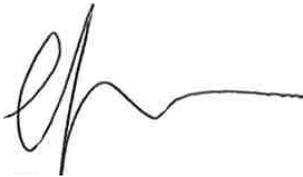
Some of our Foster Carers have already been vaccinated in the earlier phase of the vaccination programme. As a result of the decision that has been taken, all Gloucestershire Foster Carers will now be vaccinated. It was accepted that it is prudent to ensure that the widest variety of placement options are available if a clinically extremely vulnerable child needs a placement.

Tom Underwood, Business Manager, is the children's social care single point of contact and he will continue to coordinate and communicate the names and contact details for all relevant social workers (social care staff) and Gloucestershire's foster carers. The children's social care Leadership Team will discuss the logistics and communicate details as quickly as possible. The senior leadership team anticipates that once the current cohort of staff who are working with extremely critical children and young people have been vaccinated there will be arrangements to follow on with all other staff and foster carers. It is estimated that this could be in approximately two weeks' time. Please remain alert for further updates and notifications.

The senior leadership team is delighted that this decision has been reached. We would however, like to ask you to be sensitive and manage this news appropriately, especially given the fact that not all council employees, partners and providers will have been offered the vaccination yet.

As ever, we are truly grateful for everything that you have done, and continue to do, to help support vulnerable children, young people and their families in Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Spencer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Spencer
Director of Children's Services