

Government confirms it will revoke GP Covid vaccine mandate this month

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The Government has confirmed that it will revoke the GP Covid vaccine mandate in England this month, amid strong support for the move.

The health secretary announced that [GPs and their patient-facing staff would no longer be required to be vaccinated against Covid-19](#) just days before the [3 February deadline](#) for unvaccinated staff to get their first Covid vaccine – subject to a consultation and a House of Commons vote.

Regulations making vaccination a requirement for patient-facing healthcare staff in England were due to come into force on 1 April, with new legislation required to revoke this.

In [response to a public consultation](#) on revoking the legislation, published today, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) confirmed it will 'bring forward regulations to revoke vaccination as a condition of deployment'.

It said that it 'fully [recognises] the calls for clarity and for quick revocation of the regulations' and that the new regulations will come into force on 15 March 'in order to provide certainty for employers, their staff, patients and people who receive care or support ahead of 1 April'.

The DHSC added that the consultation responses 'showed clearly the strength of feeling about the policy, both through the large number of total responses received and the clear preferences indicated'.

Out of more than 90,000 consultation responses, 90% of respondents supported revoking the mandate for healthcare staff, with only 9% saying

it should still be enforced.

Members of the health and care workforce were 'highly likely' to support revocation of the mandate, with 84% in favour, the DHSC said.

It added that the main areas of concern from healthcare stakeholders in favour of revoking the vaccine mandate included:

- Discontent across the board with the 'timing of communication' of the Government's U-turn on the mandate;
- Acknowledgement of the issues 'already caused as a result of the implementation of the policy to date' and the effect on 'relations between managers and staff in increasing uptake';
- Need for transparency 'over the timelines for revocation and the need for certainty for staff who are currently not fully vaccinated';
- Calls for 'clarity on scope and timeframes' for guidance on infection prevention and control (IPC) measures in healthcare settings.

The DHSC also said it will 'build on the existing work to support and encourage vaccine uptake' as it 'continues to be a clear professional responsibility of all health and social care staff to be vaccinated'.

It comes as the [health secretary wrote to the GMC](#) and other medical regulators to emphasise the importance of Covid vaccination – ensuring that their guidance sent 'a clear message' to registrants – after announcing the decision to scrap the mandate.

A joint statement, issued in February by the GMC and Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, stressed that Covid vaccination is a 'professional duty', but clarified that [non-vaccination alone was not sufficient to launch fitness-to-practise proceedings](#).

Meanwhile, the [CQC had been due to inspect whether patient-facing GP staff had had the Covid vaccination](#).

And NHS England said last month that GP practices should [get in touch with staff who quit over the Covid vaccine mandate](#) to discuss reinstating them in their role.

There had been fears that up to [3,000 GP staff would have had to be dismissed](#), as NHS England guidance said [redeployment into non-patient facing roles was 'not guaranteed'](#).

And, while 58% of GPs responding to [Pulse's snapshot survey regarding the vaccine mandate](#) had said they support mandated vaccines, many also expressed workforce concerns.

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