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COVID-19: Supporting People with SMI

Some people with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) may not know they are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination as part of priority group 6. Therefore, in line with the JCVI green book, it's vital that an inclusive approach is taken to ensure people with bipolar, schizophrenia and any other illness that would impact functional impairment can access their COVID-19 vaccination. For instance, this could include people with an eating disorder (either a high or low BMI) or people with a diagnosis of personality disorder.

This [blog](#) from NHS England explains more with links to support people with an SMI, or those who care for someone who does and suggestions for reasonable adjustments for those who attend for their vaccination.

COVID-19: Supporting Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) Staff

Shielding advice will be paused nationally from 1 April 2021, but the Shielded Patient List (SPL) will continue to be kept current in case of a future need. The [new advice on supporting CEV staff](#) from 1 April is to continue to work from home where possible and if individuals cannot work from home, employers should undertake a comprehensive, individual, workplace risk assessment reflecting the current working context (i.e. improved testing, vaccination and relationship with transmission).

NICE: Single Guideline for Managing COVID-19

One year on from the first national lockdown, NICE has recently published a [single piece of guidance](#) for the management of COVID-19 in children and adults. It covers the management of clinically or lab-diagnosed COVID-19 for children, young people and adults across all care settings. It also lists the key symptoms of COVID-19 for identifying patients with severe illness, including confusion, reduced oxygen levels, and shortness of breath.

Flu Vaccine Ordering for 2021-22

People aged 50 to 64 year olds are expected to be included as an eligible cohort for the 2021/22 flu season. The flu reimbursement letter is currently being updated to reflect the inclusion and will be republished imminently, therefore Practices are asked to await the updated flu reimbursement letter for more information.

Registered Nursing Associates (RNAs) Training in Cervical Screening

The RCN has issued a [statement](#) acknowledging that they recognise that RNAs carry out cervical screening, in line with national standards. Practices who employ RNAs should be confident that appropriate and relevant training and supervision is in place and aware that extra training may be required.

Publishing GP Net Earnings

GP Practices are reminded to publish their GPs' net earnings, along with the number of GPs, on the website by 31 March each year. Just as a reminder, the mean GP earnings figure must include income for all contractors, salaried and locum GPs who worked full or part-time in the practice for a total of six months or more within the financial year. Practices or their accountants have to generate the earnings report, and more information can be found on the [BMA website](#).

Prescription Charges from 1 April 2021

In England, changes for both the NHS prescription charge and prescription pre-payment certificates (PPCs) will increase from 1 April 2021 as follows:

Prescription charge type	Current charge (up to 31st March 2021)	New charge (1st April 2021 onwards)
Single charge (per prescription item)	£9.15	£9.35
3-month PPC	£29.65	£30.25
12-month PPC	£105.90	£108.10

PPCs offer savings for those needing 4 or more items in three months, or 12 or more items in a year.