

22 October 2021

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing, on behalf of the REC's members operating across health and social care, to share the view of the medical recruitment industry regarding the government's consideration of the mandatory vaccination for frontline health and care staff.

[The Recruitment and Employment Confederation](#) (REC) is the voice of the UK recruitment industry, speaking up for great recruiters. We drive standards and empower recruitment businesses to build better futures for jobseekers. We provide legal advice, business support, training and labour market intelligence. The REC's membership includes over 450 recruitment agencies working in the health and social care space, including the ten biggest staff suppliers to the NHS.

Recently, the REC conducted a poll with a group of our members who are frequent suppliers of permanent and temporary healthcare professionals such as nurses, doctors, carers and healthcare assistants. The point was to get a view on the mandatory vaccination and there is good and bad news. **While the majority of our members think that vaccination should be required as a condition of deployment, they are deeply concerned about the potential negative impact that such measures could bring - in the form of further labour shortages.**

75% of the respondents indicated that vaccinations should be a legal requirement for frontline NHS staff as a condition of deployment. However, two thirds of our members think such measures will have a negative impact on the UK's medical workforce. 78% of our members are concerned about labour shortages in the midst of existing worker shortages across the NHS and social care. 75% of the participants also indicated that they are concerned that they may not get clarity from the government around what is required as proof of vaccination and whether an employee can be exempt from vaccination on medical grounds.

The health and social care sectors are experiencing worker shortage at an alarming rate with 40,000 vacancies for nurses and 100,000 vacancies for carers. The REC and our members completely understand the importance of vaccines for frontline healthcare workers, particularly during a global pandemic, and our position has always been that all frontline professionals should be encouraged to be fully vaccinated before interacting with patients. However, a proposal as important as this one should comprehensively consider the ripple effect on workforce planning. Any requirements should seek to minimise the potentials for workers leaving the health and care sector.

I hope that the department will examine the views of medical recruitment agencies carefully. We are happy to meet with you or members of your team to discuss this further and share the experience of recruitment businesses recruiting in this sector. If you would like to discuss mandatory vaccines, labour and skills shortages issues and/or long-term workforce planning within the NHS and social care, please let Ellie (ellie.goddard@rec.uk.com) in my office know and she'll be happy to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Shoesmith
Deputy Chief Executive