

Helen Whately MP
Minister of State (Minister for Care)
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London, SW1H 0EU

22 December 2020

Cc Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

By email

Dear Minister,

Given the crisis facing the UK and the recent rise in cases of the new strain, we are seeking urgent guidance on behalf of the thousands of agency staff working in the NHS as to how these vital frontline workers can access the vaccine.

We are in another worrying phase of the pandemic, and temporary staff are crucial in helping the NHS cope. I am sure you will agree these individuals deserve equal protection via the vaccine. This is in the interests of the people they care for, the colleagues they work with, and entirely necessary given they are putting their own health at risk to serve the nation during the pandemic.

We ask assurance from you that you will issue clarification to all NHS Trusts to prioritise agency staff alongside other frontline NHS workers, so they can all receive vaccination promptly. Coupled with this is necessary access to the enhanced levels of Covid testing being rolled out for other NHS and social care workers.

Since your call at the start of the pandemic for the recruitment sector to work in constructive partnership with the NHS, we have worked closely with your department, NHS England /Improvement and the framework providers, to support the NHS during our national emergency.

Nevertheless, we remain concerned that agency staff are not being offered the protections that they, and their patients, need and deserve.

My team and I are available anytime over the Christmas period should you wish to discuss anything that will help our members keep their staff safe and help the NHS deliver.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Shoesmith
Deputy CEO