



Sara Lurie  
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Our Reference: 202100169000

9 March 2021

Dear Sara Lurie,

Thank you for your letter to the Scottish Government. As I am sure you can appreciate, Scottish Ministers are currently receiving an unprecedented volume of correspondence. I am therefore responding on behalf of Ms Freeman and the Scottish Government in relation to your letter regarding priority vaccination for foster carers.

First of all I want to reassure you that the commitment foster carers make to caring for some of our most vulnerable children and young people, especially at this extremely challenging time, is greatly appreciated. Scottish Government have been working closely with key stakeholders like the Fostering Network and CELCIS to provide them with as much guidance and support as possible.

With regard to the vaccination programme, decisions to prioritise one population group over another have not been taken lightly, nor are they straightforward. The Scottish Government are currently following the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) Guidance in the planning of delivering the vaccine. This evidence based guidance advises that the single greatest risk of mortality from COVID-19 is increasing age, and that the risk increases exponentially with age. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): update on vaccinations - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19/update-on-vaccinations/pages/2.aspx)

Currently there is no sectoral prioritisation of any other workers, other than frontline health and social care workers. This is because we don't know if the vaccine prevents spread, but it does reduce the harm to those most at risk should they catch the virus. Foster carers will be called forward for vaccination according to their position on the priority list, if they are eligible within the JCVI Cohorts (e.g. All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which puts them at a higher risk of serious disease and mortality).

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We are aware of and sympathise with the position that foster carers are in with regard to facilitating family contact for the children and young people in their care and have published guidance on family contact that might be helpful to them: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-looked-after-children-and-young-people---family-contact/> However if foster carers have any concerns about the risks to them or their family they should discuss these with their supervising social worker to see what arrangements can be made to mitigate against these.

Foster Carers can also call Fosterline Scotland on 0141 204 1400 from 10 am - 4 pm Monday to Friday if they require any additional support or advice in connection with their foster caring role.

I hope this helps to explain the reason for the current position and the difficult decisions that we are having to make in managing the speedy delivery of the vaccine programme in Scotland.

Yours sincerely



Arron Ashton  
**MNHL : Neurodevelopmental Support**

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