



To: Local Authority Chief Executives in England

Copied to: Directors of Children's & Adults Social Services

13 January 2020

Dear Colleague,

We are writing in relation to the Covid-19 vaccination programme and the rollout of the vaccination for frontline health and social care professionals.

It is our understanding that local authorities are working closely with NHS partners in each part of the country to identify people in these frontline roles and to include them in the early phases of the vaccination programme.

We are writing to ask that you include Habilitation Specialists and Orientation & Mobility Specialists and trainees in these roles in your frontline health & social care professionals staff group for early vaccination.

Professionals working in both these roles provide vital, frontline services to support the independence and wellbeing of people with sight loss and visual impairment of all ages. Performing these roles requires close proximity working - social distancing presents a unique and difficult challenge for people with sight loss - and can require working in a range of community settings from peoples' homes to school classrooms.

Therefore it is our view that Habilitation Specialists and Orientation & Mobility Specialists fall into the frontline health & social professionals category for vaccination prioritisation as set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation's formal advice to Government at the end of December and in the more recent NHS England Operational Guidance: Vaccination of Frontline Health & Social Care Staff.

We are aware that some local authorities have already moved to include these professional groups within their local categorisation of frontline health & social care professionals in the Covid-19 vaccination programme. A consistent approach to this across the country would be helpful and it is on that basis we would ask that you include Habilitation Specialists and Orientation & Mobility Specialists - and trainees in these roles - in your frontline health & social care professionals staff group for early vaccination.



We would be grateful if you could confirm that you will include Habilitation Specialists and Orientation & Mobility Specialists and trainees in these roles in the early phases of the vaccination programme as frontline health & social care professionals.

We appreciate this is an extremely busy and challenging time for local authorities, thank you for all the vital work your teams are doing in communities in these difficult times.

If you would like to discuss this further or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us: publicaffairs@guidedogs.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Wright".

Tom Wright
Chief Executive
Guide Dogs

Simon Labbett
Chair
Rehabilitation Professional
Workers Network