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Dear Colleagues

COVID VACCINE CERTIFICATION: ADVICE TO GENERAL PRACTITIONERS ON MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS

As you may know the Scottish Government domestic certification scheme came into effect on 1 October 2021.

The purpose of the scheme is to:

- reduce risk of transmission.
- reduce risk of serious illness and death and in doing so alleviate pressure on the healthcare system.
- act as a first line defence to allow high risk settings to continue to operate as an alternative to closure or more restrictive measures.
- increase vaccine uptake.

In line with the policy aims the primary objectives of having a medical exemption process is to:

- Allow those who **cannot** be vaccinated due to a health condition to access settings that would otherwise require them to be vaccinated, and support those who cannot be vaccinated due to a health condition to be identified as such for future vaccination purposes.
- Prohibit those choosing not to be vaccinated from accessing settings captured by the scheme (thereby increasing the risk of infections and increasing pressure on healthcare).

Health boards have identified individuals already known who meet the exemption criteria, and Public Health Scotland has issued exemption certificates to these individuals. These certificates have built in security features to ensure that venues can identify genuine certificates.

Scottish Government, Directors of Public Health and the Chief Medical Officer agree only a small number of people cannot be safely vaccinated, and that Immunisation Coordinators are best placed to support safe vaccination. For those small numbers who can't be safely vaccinated, Immunisation Coordinators will approve and issue the medical exemption certificates.

GPs and their teams cannot issue vaccination exemption certificates.

Any patient approaching a General Practices for an exemption certificate should be directed to Gov.scot, NHSinform or the NHS helpline. This will provide information on the scheme, promotion of safe vaccination and routes to obtain an exemption.

I have attached a style poster that you may wish to display in your practice.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Gregor Smith
Chief Medical Officer

Covid Vaccination Exemption Certificates

Important Notice

GPs and their teams cannot issue vaccination exemption certificates.

Further information on the vaccination exemption certificates scheme, including information on safe vaccination and routes to obtain an exemption can be found on the Scottish Government and NHS Inform websites.

Alternatively you can phone the free NHS Covid helpline on:

0800 028 2816

Dr Gregor Smith
Chief Medical Officer