

Dear Practice Manager / Lead GP / Colleagues,

HIV and clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) status

People living with HIV are not considered clinically extremely vulnerable unless they have specific HIV risk factors. A small number of individuals attending our clinics fall into this group. We have already contacted these few individuals, added them to the SDSC database with their consent and provided relevant information about shielding.

There are several cases where people living with HIV who are not high risk, have been advised to shield due to incorrect information. Our professional body BHIVA, has raised this with DoH and we are advising our patients accordingly.

Of course, many of our patients have other comorbidities and may be consider high risk for non-HIV related reasons and we have recommended they follow advice issued by their GP.

COVID vaccination in people living with HIV

Apart from the above CEV group everybody else living with HIV falls into Priority group 6 for COVID vaccination.

People living with HIV can receive any of the available COVID vaccines. Some of the patient information leaflets list a weakened immune system under warnings and precautions for use and advise that patients disclose before vaccination. This advice is not based on concerns about safety; **there is no evidence for more adverse effects in people with HIV.** There is a lack of data to suggest that people living with HIV mount a weaker response to COVID vaccination, **but they are expected to be protective and are recommended.** In addition there is no interaction between COVID vaccines and antiretroviral drugs.

Many local GPs have already recommended COVID vaccination to our patients, for which we are grateful. We have recently contacted all our patients to inform them that, if they have not already received the vaccine, they are eligible in priority group 6 and should contact their registered GP practice for further information.

Very few of our patients are not registered with a GP and we are exploring ways to ensure they receive the vaccine.

Please see our website www.sexualhealthwestsussex.nhs.uk or www.BHIVA.org for more information.

Many thanks

West Sussex Sexual Health Team