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## **Devon Carers support Carers UK calls for the UK Government to prioritise unpaid carers for the COVID-19 vaccine**

When Carers UK asked unpaid carers in October\*\*\* what support they needed most, they ranked their prioritised access to vaccinations highly at second place, even putting this above breaks and increases in benefits such as Carer's Allowance.

Devon Carers support Carers UK in their call to the Government to clarify the priority position of unpaid carers to receive the vaccination.

We have been inundated with calls with regards to the Pfizer/BioNTech mRNA vaccine. The Government's vaccination priority list has caused confusion within the unpaid carers community. It references 'residents in a care home for older adults and their carers'\* to be one of the first groups to receive it.

This has caused uncertainty by referring to the term 'carers' which some unpaid carers believe refers to them. The NHS have amended their priority list from using the term 'carers' to 'people who work in care homes'\*\*\* and we believe the Government should do the same to remove any confusion.

Carers UK\*\*\* report that 'caring during the pandemic has been one of the hardest things carers say they have done, as they have tried to manage with limited support from services that have been reduced or closed entirely. They have spent nine months worrying about the risk of infection to the people they care for with complex health or care conditions, and this has taken its toll on their own health.'

'Carers UK has raised the issue of prioritised access to the COVID-19 vaccination with the Minister for Care and it was a recommendation from the Carers Advisory Group to the Adult Social Care Taskforce.'

'Carers UK want to see carers prioritised for the COVID-19 vaccination for the same reasons

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they are recognised as a key worker during this pandemic and are prioritised for the flu jab. The Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recognised that if carers got the flu, then this could be catastrophic, impacting carers' ability to care and putting the person they care for at risk. When unpaid carers cannot continue to carry out care, this places additional pressure on social care and health services. They want the same logic applied to the COVID-19 vaccination.'

Devon Carers supports the actions of Carers UK and as such we have also raised our concerns with the Government to clarify the whereabouts unpaid carers lie in the vaccination priority list.

\* [Priority groups for coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination: advice from the JCVI, 2 December 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020)

\*\* [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/news/2020/12/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine)

\*\*\* [Carers UK calls for unpaid carers to be prioritised for COVID-19 vaccination - Carers UK](https://www.carersuk.org/press-releases/2020/12/carers-uk-calls-for-unpaid-carers-to-be-prioritised-for-covid-19-vaccination)