

COVID-19 vaccination for intensivists and anaesthetists

The Association of Anaesthetists, the Intensive Care Society, the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine and the Royal College of Anaesthetists have been contacted by members expressing concern about the NHS's decision to delay the administration of a second dose of COVID-19 vaccine to many healthcare workers and others who had already received their first dose. This was announced in a [letter](#) to the profession from the four Chief Medical Officers published on 31st December 2020. The letter refers to a [scientific rationale](#) for this decision published by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which in turn is outlined in a shorter [statement](#) from the JCVI.

We share our members' concerns about this decision, particularly in view of the key roles that anaesthetists and intensivists are playing in the care of patients infected with the virus, and the consequent risks of infection to themselves and their families. Without effective vaccination, there remains a significant risk that healthcare and care home workers will become unable to provide care for the sickest patients because they themselves become asymptomatic carriers or are incapacitated by COVID-19.

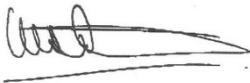
We accept that we do not have expertise in vaccination and must therefore put our trust in the guidance provided by the experts who advise the NHS in these complex matters. Further, we understand the rationale behind extending first vaccinations to more people by delaying the administration of second injections. However, we strongly encourage the NHS to prioritise all frontline healthcare and social care workers for booster injections as soon as adequate stocks become available, according to the [vaccination prioritisation list published on 30 December 2020](#), and in particular those whose work places them in close proximity to patients with COVID-19.



Professor Ravi Mahajan
President, RCoA



Dr Alison Pittard
Dean, FICM



Dr Mike Nathanson
President, Association of Anaesthetists



Dr Stephen T Webb
President, ICS