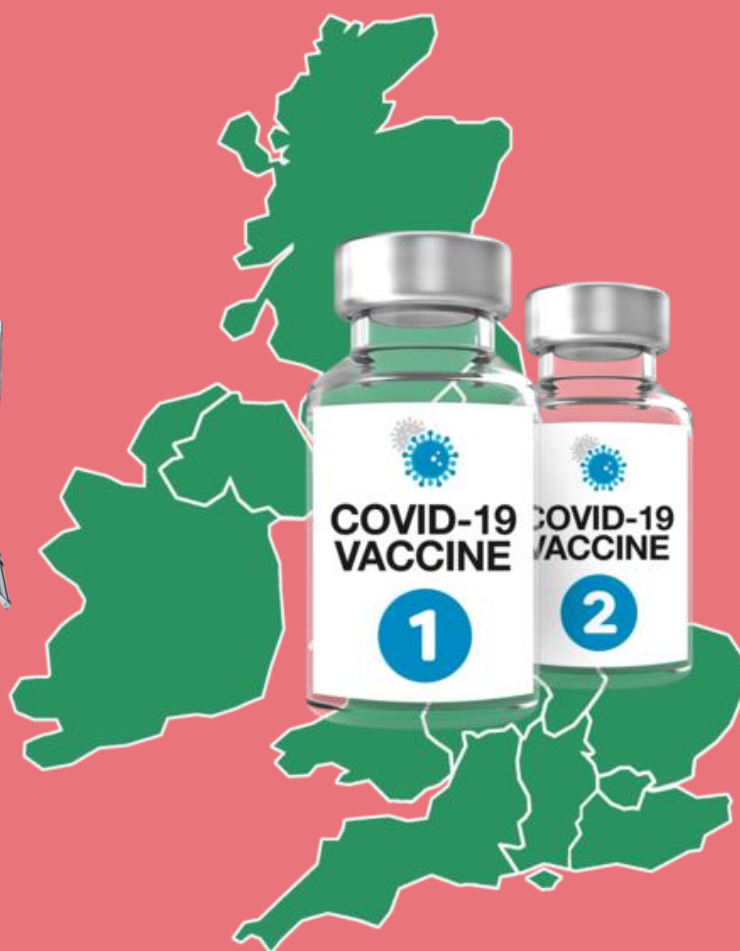


Your Easy Read Guide to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Vaccine and Human Rights



This Easy Read guide was checked by the Kirklees Involvement Network.



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What is in this guide?



This guide is about the coronavirus vaccine and human rights.

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What is Coronavirus?



Coronavirus, sometimes called Covid-19, is an illness which you can catch from other people.

In this guide, we call it coronavirus.



Some people who get coronavirus feel ill – it can feel like having a cold or the flu.

Most people get better from coronavirus, but sometimes people can become really ill and have to go to hospital. Sometimes people die from coronavirus.



If you think you might have coronavirus, you can contact the NHS for help.

You can call 111 or visit www.nhs.uk.

What is a vaccine?



A vaccine is medicine that helps our body fight an illness if we get it in the future.

It is liquid that gets into your body by an injection in your arm, just like the flu vaccine which lots of people have every year.


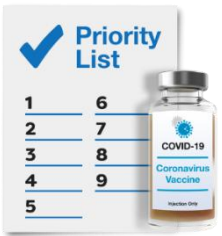




Scientists have made a vaccine against coronavirus which should stop you from getting really ill if you get it.



The vaccine has been tested on lots of people first to make sure it is safe.

Who can have the vaccine?

	<p>Coronavirus can make some people really ill and it can cause some people to die.</p> <p>It affects some people more than others, and it can be worse for older people, people with certain health problems, people with a learning disability, and staff that support people.</p>
	<p>The government has decided that some groups of people should get the vaccine first.</p> <p>You can ask your GP when it is your turn to have the vaccine.</p>
	<p>You do not have to pay for the vaccine. It is free.</p>
	<p>Nobody can make you have the vaccine. It is up to you and your decision if you want it or not.</p> <p>If you lack capacity to decide about the vaccine, then a decision will be made for you. Your human rights are still important. We say more about this on page 12 of this guide.</p>

It is important to know about your human rights when you are thinking about the coronavirus vaccine.

The Human Rights Act



The Human Rights Act is the law which protects our human rights in the UK. Human rights are rules that protect people.



Everyone has human rights under the Human Rights Act.



The Human Rights Act says that it is the law for staff in public services to respect and protect your human rights.

Public services are organisations that serve people and are usually paid for by the government. The NHS, local councils, the police and public schools are examples of public services.



In this guide, we will talk about some of your rights.

These are the ones we think are the most important to know about when we are talking about the coronavirus vaccine.



We have made an Easy Read guide to the Human Rights Act which you can [read here](#).

In this guide we explain where the Human Rights Act came from, how it works, what staff have to do to follow this law, and what this means for you.

You can also find out more about your human rights on our website – <https://knowyourhumanrights.co.uk/>

Your right to life



This is protected by **Article 2 of the Human Rights Act**.

Staff who work in public services have to try to protect your life, especially if you are at risk of dying.

How is the government protecting the right to life when it comes to coronavirus?



The government is trying to protect the right to life by giving people the vaccine, because this can help stop people from getting unwell or dying if they get coronavirus.



The government thought about who is more likely to get ill or die from coronavirus and then they made a list of who should have the vaccine first.



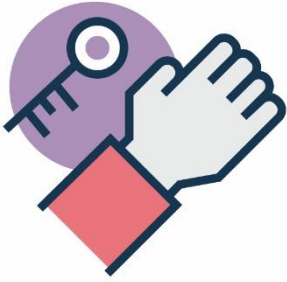
The government is asking all adults to have the vaccine, even those who are not likely to get ill from coronavirus, to help protect everyone's right to life.



Staff in public services have to protect your right to life, BUT they also have to think about your other human rights at the same time.

In this guide, we will look at other human rights that are important when we think about the vaccine.

Your right to be safe from serious harm



This is protected by **Article 3 of the Human Rights Act**.

Public services and the staff who work there must not treat you in a way that makes you feel very scared, bad about yourself, embarrassed or which causes you a lot of pain.

Staff in public services must keep you safe and protect you from serious harm.



Everyone is different, and what one person thinks of as serious harm might not feel like that to someone else.

Why is this right important when we think about the vaccine?



If it is your turn to get the vaccine and you decide that you want it, nobody can tell you that you can't have it.



You could feel very scared or sad if there are too many rules in place to keep you or other people safe from coronavirus, like your family not being allowed to visit you for a long time.



You could feel very scared or in pain if someone holds your body to give you the vaccine. This is called being restrained.

We say more about this on page 12 of this guide.



Staff who usually support might be told to give people vaccines instead of helping you. This could mean you don't get the support you need which might make you feel bad about yourself or embarrassed.

Your right to freedom



This is protected by **Article 5 of the Human Rights Act**.

This protects you against big controls or limits on your movement.



Staff in public services can stop you from doing things sometimes, but they have to make sure that their decision is:

- **Lawful** – there is a law saying this is allowed.
- **For a good reason** – such as to keep you or others safe from harm.
- **Thought about properly** – can changes be made which give you more freedom to move? This is sometimes called making the **least restrictive** decision.

Why is this right important when we think about the vaccine?



Staff can't stop you from leaving the place where you live to stop you getting or passing on coronavirus unless they have a good reason and they have thought about it properly.



Sometimes staff might decide that they need to hold you still to give you the vaccine.

This would be a big restriction on your right to liberty.



If I am being made to stay in hospital to get mental health care, can staff use mental health laws to make me have the vaccine even if I don't want it?

No. Treatment for a mental health problem can sometimes be given even if you don't agree to it.

Coronavirus is **not** a mental health problem. This means that nobody can force you to have the vaccine using mental health laws.

Your right to private and family life, home and contact



This is protected by **Article 8 of the Human Rights Act**.

This protects lots of day-to-day things, like your wellbeing, having control and being involved in decisions about you, keeping in touch with people who are important to you, and keeping your private information safe.



Staff in public services can restrict these things sometimes, but they have to make sure that their decision is:

- **Lawful** – there is a law saying this is allowed.
- **For a good reason** – such as to keep you or others safe from harm.
- **Thought about properly** – can changes be made which protect this right better? This is sometimes called making the **least restrictive** decision.




If you think changes could be made which mean that your human rights would be better protected, then you can tell staff in public services this. Their decision might not be the best option for you.


Why is this right important when we think about the vaccine?




Staff in public services should listen to your decision about the vaccine, even if they don't agree with you.

It is okay to change your mind about the vaccine at any time.

	<p>Some rules or changes have been made to protect people's right to life, such as stopping people from visiting each other or taking away some of the support people normally get.</p> <p>These changes could harm your mental or physical wellbeing which are protected by this right.</p>
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<h2 style="text-align: center;">Your right to think and believe what you want</h2>	
	<p>This is protected by Article 9 of the Human Rights Act.</p> <p>Everyone is allowed to have their own opinions. Staff in public services can't force you to change what you think or believe in.</p> <p>How you show your thoughts or beliefs can sometimes be limited by staff in public services, as long as this is lawful, for a good reason and thought about properly. This is explained on the page before.</p>

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Why is this right important when we think about the vaccine?</h2>	
	<p>Some people don't think the vaccine is right for them and that is okay. Nobody can make you have the vaccine.</p> <p>If you lack capacity to decide about the vaccine, then a decision will be made for you. This decision should consider your wishes and feelings. Your human rights are still important. We say more about this on page 12 of this guide.</p>

Your right not to be treated unfairly



This is protected by **Article 14 of the Human Rights Act**.

Everyone should be able to enjoy their human rights.

Nobody should be treated worse than others for **any reason**, such as race or disability, or **for a few reasons**, like being a young, black, disabled woman.



Staff in public services can treat you differently if they can show that this is **right and fair for everyone**.

For example, giving the vaccine first to people who will be unwell if they get coronavirus is right and fair.



You should be supported as much as possible to make your own decision about the vaccine.

You should be also supported to have the vaccine if you decide that you want to have it. For example, getting help to book an appointment online so that you can get your vaccine.

Making decisions about the vaccine



The ability to make decisions is called **mental capacity**.

There are laws which tell staff in public services what to do if someone needs help to make decisions, or if someone does not have capacity to make a decision.



Staff should start off thinking you can make your own decision about the vaccine.

Staff should not think you can't decide about the vaccine, just because they think your decision is wrong.



Staff should support you as much as possible to make your own decision about the vaccine.

Staff should give you information in a way you understand, like using easy read guides. You can [find our easy read guide about the right to accessible information here](#). Staff should also make sure you understand about side effects.

What if a person can't decide about the vaccine?



If you can't make your own decision about the vaccine, someone will decide for you, thinking about what is best for you as an individual person.



If someone is deciding about the vaccine for you, it is very important that they ask you what you want to happen.

They should talk to other people in your life and think about the good and bad things for each option.

When someone else is deciding if you should have the vaccine, they should choose an option that respects and protects your rights the best.

A real life story about the coronavirus vaccine



Sam (not his real name) is a 31-year-old man who has a learning disability and some health problems. Because of Sam's health problems, staff were worried that he could get very ill if he got coronavirus.



Sam did not have capacity to decide if he should have the vaccine. This meant staff had to decide what was best for him.

We talk more about **mental capacity** on page 11.



Sam could not tell staff what he thought about the vaccine because of his learning disability.

Staff thought Sam should get the vaccine, but Sam's dad didn't think he should get it. Because staff and Sam's dad didn't agree, a judge had to decide what was best for Sam instead.



The judge thought about Sam's human rights, like his right to life, and he decided that it was best for Sam to have the vaccine.

The judge said staff were not allowed to hold Sam still to give him the vaccine.

What can I do if I'm worried about my human rights and the vaccine?



You can talk to staff in public services about their decisions to do with the vaccine, and you can ask them to tell you how they are looking after the rights as we have explained in this guide.



If you think changes could be made which mean that your human rights would be better protected, then you can tell staff in public services this. Their decision might not be the best option for you.

Where can I find more information?



- [BIHR Easy Read Guide to the Human Rights Act](#)
- [BIHR Know Your Human Rights Tool](#)
- [BIHR Easy Read Guide to the Right to Accessible Information](#)
- [UK Government Easy Read Vaccination Guide](#)
- [Mencap Easy Read Vaccination Information](#)