**Dear colleague,**

**Covid-19 boosters for people under the age of 50 who have ME/CFS**

We would be grateful if you could arrange for **[NAME OF PATIENT]** to have a Covid-19 booster vaccination as a priority, despite their age.

Everyone over the age of 50 is now being offered a Covid booster if it has been six months since they received a second dose, and it has now been announced that this is being extended to anyone over the age of 40.

The NHS is also encouraging everyone under the age of 50 who has a pre-existing health condition that makes them more likely to have a serious illness if they catch Covid-19 to have the booster vaccination.

* NHS information: [https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR1OeF_MUxIupMCjnPKbakioK9R9jOSEWxvXlZxFKXfRbCrj1p-jc1dLnlM)

The list of vulnerable medical conditions includes neurological disease (conditions involving brain and nerves) and a few examples are provided, although ME/CFS is not specifically mentioned. There are over 600 neurological conditions and the NHS website information does not say that any conditions are excluded.

We feel that people with ME/CFS are clinically vulnerable to Covid infection and have been recommending priority vaccination for those that decide to have one. This is because:

1. ME/CFS is classified by the World Health Organisation (in section G93.3 of ICD10) as a neurological disease. This WHO classification is recognised by:
   1. The Dept of Health and NHS England:   
      <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/ltc/our-work-on-long-term-conditions/neurological/>
   2. The new NICE guideline on ME/CFS – page 84:  
      <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng206/resources/myalgic-encephalomyelitis-or-encephalopathychronic-fatigue-syndrome-diagnosis-and-management-pdf-66143718094021>
   3. The NHS SNOMED-CT electronic classification system:  
      <https://snomedbrowser.com/Codes/Details/52702003?fbclid=IwAR3UaJxeAU1beLcnEVNd6Ohvg2mIeuY2WwjholofGePNLc5UW8n7MM-xlqo>
2. The ME Association has collected extensive patient evidence to confirm that people with ME/CFS who have caught Covid-19 over the past 18 months have then experienced a significant or serious relapse in their health. This is not surprising given the fact that new infections are probably the commonest cause of relapse in ME/CFS and the condition called Long Covid-19, that may follow Covid-19 infection, is a very similar post-viral illness to ME/CFS.
3. Anyone who has already received a priority vaccination using JCVI Group 6 eligibility criteria should, of course, be automatically entitled to have a booster vaccination.

Please could you therefore arrange for any of your patients under the age of 50 who have ME/CFS to have a Covid-19 booster when this is due.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Charles Shepherd**

**Hon Medical Adviser, ME Association**