**MEA TEMPLATE LETTER RE: COVID VACCINE PRIORITY FOR PEOPLE WITH ME/CFS**

* Please modify the letter template to suit your individual circumstances.
* Then copy and paste to your own letterhead or email.
* Make sure it’s dated and signed, contains your home address and date of birth – then either email it or send by royal mail.

Dear [YOUR GPs NAME],

**Request to be included in Group 6 for Covid vaccine priority.**

I have a diagnosis of ME/CFS, and I believe I should be included in 'Group 6' on the Covid vaccination priority list.

The ME Association (MEA) has suggested that I should make this request because ME/CFS is a recognised neurological condition and there is an increased risk that Covid infection could cause a significant relapse and additional complications.

The MEA has provided the following information for you to consider and has confirmed that ME/CFS is being included in Group 6 by other GPs, Covid vaccination centres and at least one health authority in Wales – with more expected to follow throughout the UK.

**1.** People with a chronic neurological disease are listed as having an underlying health condition in Group 6 in the JCVI guidance. See page 9 in Chapter 14a of the ‘Green Book' on Covid vaccine priority:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/955548/Greenbook_chapter_14a_v6.pdf>

**2a.**  The World Health Organisation (in ICD10 section G93.3) recognises ME/CFS as a neurological disease (as it does in ICD 11 which will become effective in Jan 2022):

* ICD 10: <https://icd.who.int/browse10/2019/en#/G93.3>
* ICD 11: <https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en#/http://id.who.int/icd/entity/569175314>

**2b.** SNOMED CT, the NHS electronic classification system, has accepted the WHO ICD classification for ME/CFS: <https://termbrowser.nhs.uk/>

**2c.** NHS England acknowledge ME/CFS as a long-term neurological condition: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/ltc/our-work-on-long-term-conditions/neurological/>

**2d.** The Scottish Government accepts the WHO definition for neurological diseases: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/neurological-care-support-scotland-framework-action-2020-2025/pages/4/>

**3a.** The JCVI 'Green Book' guidance (page 10) states that:

“The examples above are not exhaustive, and, within these groups, the prescriber **should apply clinical judgment** to take into account the risk of COVID-19 exacerbating any underlying disease that a patient may have, as well as the risk of serious illness from COVID-19 itself.”

**3b.** The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, has commented on this guidance and said that it should also be applied to people with ME/CFS: <https://meassociation.org.uk/2021/02/matt-hancock-on-me-cfs-covid-vaccine-priority/>

**4.** Even though ME/CFS does not feature as a named example of a neurological disease in the ‘green book’ list of neurological conditions, the guidance makes it clear that the examples are not intended to be exhaustive.

**5a**. New infections are probably the commonest cause of exacerbation or relapse of ME/CFS – as noted in section 3.3.2 of the Chief Medical Officer’s Working Group Report on ME/CFS: <https://meassociation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CMO-Report-2002.pdf>

**5b.** This is also noted in section 1.6.4 of the new (draft) NICE clinical guideline on ME/CFS which will become operational in April 2021: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/gid-ng10091/documents/draft-guideline>

**5c.** Chu et al (2019) in an epidemiological study examining outcomes in ME/CFS reported that infections are the most common factor for having a deleterious impact on the course of the condition: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6370741/>

**6.**  Patient evidence to the MEA also indicates that almost everyone with ME/CFS who has caught COVID-19 has had a  significant and/or prolonged relapse of ME/CFS. This is not surprising given the considerable degree of clinical overlap between ME/CFS and Long Covid.

**7.** The MEA has now received information from Dr David Hefin, Member of the Welsh National Assembly for Caerphilly, that the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board has accepted people with ME/CFS into Group 6 of the JCVI priority list. Other health authorities in Wales have also been contacted.

I would therefore be very grateful if you could confirm that I have been added to the Group 6 list.

**[You might like to include a brief paragraph here about your own situation and ME/CFS severity especially if attending a vaccination centre would prove too difficult. We have heard that some people with ME/CFS have received the vaccine at home.]**

To ensure that I can be contacted as soon as I am eligible, please add my mobile number to my file as a primary means of contacting me.

Thank you very much in advance for your time and indeed for everything you and your other NHS colleagues are doing during this pandemic.

**With kind regards,**

**Your Full name. Address. Contact phone number. Date of birth. NHS Patient Number.**