

## **Back To The Future: the vaccinator journey**

How do you go backwards and forwards at the same time? My husband looked at me in disbelief, friends gasped and there were many raised eyebrows. I had retired from a nursing career that spanned over fifty years, now here was an opportunity to rediscover past skills and serve the local community.

### **First steps**

It takes a lot of planning to open a local vaccination centre; from identifying a suitable site to rolling out the equipment and this has to be done in days. Managing the human resources can take much longer, including the vaccinator recruitment and training process.

“Some people have been put off by the technology.”

I could agree with the recruitment organiser. Completing the online lengthy application form was time-consuming. One size did not fit all! My amazement and delight at, over 70, being offered an interview, was quickly extinguished by my iPhone's inability to accept two attempts at a WhatsApp video call!

Courtesy of the interview organiser, “Could you possibly borrow a friend's more recent iPhone?”

Third time lucky. Again the immense pleasure, this time at being offered the post, was somewhat thwarted by many more online challenges - Employee Form, Criminal Record Form, Disclosure and Barring Service Form, Occupational Health Questionnaire, Health Declaration Form and so it went on.

“I'm so sorry to tell you that some of the forms you submitted have been corrupted, could you please complete them again!”

### **Education Update**

Having been retired for over ten years, my NMC registration had lapsed. I welcomed updating my knowledge but was surprised at the list of online modules and their assessments which had to be passed:

Vaccine: Legal Aspects  
Vaccine Administration  
Immunisations: Vaccine Storage  
Covid-19 core knowledge  
Covid-19 Vaccinations Vaccination mRNA  
Covid-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca  
Covid-19 Vaccine Moderna

Health and Safety awareness  
Information governance  
Fire safety awareness  
Equality and Diversity  
Moving and handling objects  
Infection prevention and control  
Hand hygiene  
Safeguarding Adults  
Safeguarding Children  
Mental Capacity Act

Record Keeping.

The two socially distanced sessions (held in a local hotel) were: Basic Life Support/Anaphylaxis/Automatic External Defibrillation and Injection Technique update.

### **Moving Forwards and Backwards**

Once all the modules and their assessments had been undertaken, the next stage was a two hour Induction session. The Induction was only being held in the north of the county, thirty miles away. At the time, it had the highest Covid reinfection rate in England.

“No, inductions are not being held anywhere else.”

“But I’m high risk.”

I alerted the Director of Workforce, also mentioning my need to have the vaccination, and wait for it to be effective, before I started working.

The next day, a call from my GP Practice, my turn for a vaccine. A fortnight later, to coincide with the opening of a local vaccination centre (my work base), inductions were to be held there.

### **Fit for Purpose**

Before I was let loose, I had to observe and then be observed giving five vaccinations. My confidence was quickly restored. With a clinical facilitator, I also had to complete the Covid-19 vaccinator competency assessment (Public Health England 2020).

The management of the centre, teamwork, supervision, and friendly atmosphere is very impressive. We often vaccinate over 1,000 people a day. I can select the shifts I wish to work. My role can include ‘meet and greet’ and providing side effects information; checking medical history; ‘runner’ (checking and ensuring sufficient supply of vaccine from the pharmacy) & vaccinator (including ensuring a fifteen-minute wait for those who are driving/cycling). There are screened areas for those who have to do a striptease; have a fear of needles and vaccine; require closer observation or at greater risk of anaphylactic shock.

It is a pleasure to be working alongside nurse colleagues and retired doctors and dentists, St John Ambulance volunteers, paramedics, airline pilots and cabin staff. We all feel that it is a great privilege to be part of a diverse workforce delivering the vaccines to the local community.

Public Health England (2020)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/943646/Core\\_competency\\_assessment\\_tool\\_v3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943646/Core_competency_assessment_tool_v3.pdf)

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