

COVID-19 Vaccination and the Special Constabulary

ASCO is delighted that the UK was the first country in the world to commence the roll-out of a COVID-19 vaccine programme.

We also fully support the expertise of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) which advises that the first priorities for the current COVID-19 vaccination programme should be the prevention of COVID-19 mortality and the protection of health and social care staff and systems. Secondary priorities would then include vaccination of those at increased risk of hospitalisation and at increased risk of exposure, and to maintain resilience in essential public services. The JCVI identifies that this would potentially include first responders, the military, those involved in the justice system, teachers, transport workers, and public servants essential to the pandemic response. Vaccination of those at increased risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 due to their occupation could also be a priority in the next phase. Priority occupations for vaccination are considered an issue of policy, rather than for JCVI to advise on. JCVI asks that the Department of Health and Social Care consider occupational vaccination in collaboration with other government departments.

We welcome, in respect of this and in the interests of maintaining resilience in essential public services, the representations of Police and Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables and others in identifying the need to prioritise front-line police officer colleagues, following the vaccination first of those most highly vulnerable and medically prioritised groups.

David Pedrick-Friend, Chair of ASCO said:

“We recognise the need to first protect those most vulnerable in our care homes, hospitals, communities and those at increased risk of illness. Following this, consideration should also be given to develop contingency plans to vaccinate all those at increased risk of exposure and to maintain resilience in public services which should include all front-line police officers including Special Constables. This is so that their dedicated volunteer support can continue safely for all those in our communities who call for our help.”



“Special Constables have been providing resilience throughout this pandemic but they are also deeply worried. Many have said that their biggest concern is potentially taking the disease home to their families.

After many months of Special Constables adding resilience to their forces and serving their communities during this most difficult of periods, they are tired, and stressed. We particularly recognise the enormous contribution to society being made by those Special Constables who also serve through their employment in the NHS.”

ASCO supports and encourages the inclusion of all operational volunteer Special Constables within this call for prioritised vaccination of front-line police officers and emergency service workers, given the substantial contribution being made by volunteers to front-line policing during this period of national crisis and the need to keep those volunteers and their families safe.