

Email from NHS Plus

From: nhsplus [nhsplus@nhspartners.nhs.Uk]
Sent: 06 July 2007 15:17
To: info@PSE
Subject: RE: Feedback from Your say website

Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH), and the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act, it is the employers' responsibility to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees at work.

Each employer needs to determine, in relation to health protection, what immunisations are required by their employees; this will almost certainly require the advice of a 'competent person' (as defined in legislation) which in the case of vaccinations is likely to mean an occupational health trained healthcare professional. In many industries, there is a trade association which takes the lead and obtains generic advice which is then used by the members of the association: assuming there is a trade association, I suggest this is a route worth following.

The employer is responsible for ensuring that the necessary control measure (in this case the immunisation) are provided. This includes paying for the immunisations if that is required.

In the past, many GPs have provided such immunisations for free under the NHS; strictly speaking, vaccinations, other than for public health reasons (such as childhood immunisations, etc), are not available free on the NHS. Travel vaccinations that people may have before going on holidays are not free on the NHS but have to be paid for; occupational vaccinations fall into this category and a fee can be charged. Thus although some GPs may not make a charge, this is increasingly unusual.

In summary, there are two issues:

- Deciding what vaccinations are required - this is the responsibility of the employer who will almost certainly need competent advice
- Providing the immunisations - the employer is required to make the arrangements and pay

You mentioned 3 of the immunisations that may be required

Tetanus: many people will already be immunised

Hepatitis: there is a combined Hepatitis A and B immunisation

This reply is general advice and does not constitute 'competent advice' as required under health and safety legislation. It is provided as a general description of the solution and is intended to help you make suitable arrangements.

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