

Covid-19 and the prospects of workplace vaccination. An industrial relations perspective on vaccination programmes in the UK and Italy

In early 2021, one year after the Covid-19 outbreak, immunization campaigns started. Countries are investing as many resources as possible –financial, political, logistic, organisational –first to produce and/or access vaccines and then to inoculate them. We consider the latter and focus on vaccination programmes in the UK and Italy. Specifically, we examine the different approaches that key industrial relations actors in the two countries have followed. We will also investigate the prospects of workplace vaccination: absent (as foreseeable) in the UK, present (so far planned but not yet launched) in Italy.

The analysis has four aims. First, to review the policies and legal aspects underlying vaccination programmes (e.g. employers' and employees' obligations), discussing also the rationale used by policymakers to prevent or to allow workplace vaccination. Second, to identify employers' and trade unions' contribution towards vaccination programmes in both countries, in terms of the narrative, design, implementation and monitoring of such programmes. Third, to assess the outcomes of workplace vaccination in the Italian case, examining the numbers of workers immunized through this channel as well as the characteristics of these workers, then comparing these with developments in the UK. Fourth, to discuss insights that can be drawn from these two cases, building upon classic and contemporary literature in industrial relations and welfare studies.

Primary authors: GASPARRI, Stefano (UWE Bristol Business School); MARCOLIN, Arianna (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies)

Presenters: GASPARRI, Stefano (UWE Bristol Business School); MARCOLIN, Arianna (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies)

Session Classification: 4.1

Track Classification: Track 1