

Internal communication toolkit - Not to be shared in the public domain

Flu vaccination campaign for health and social care workers

Communications Toolkit

Launch: September 2020

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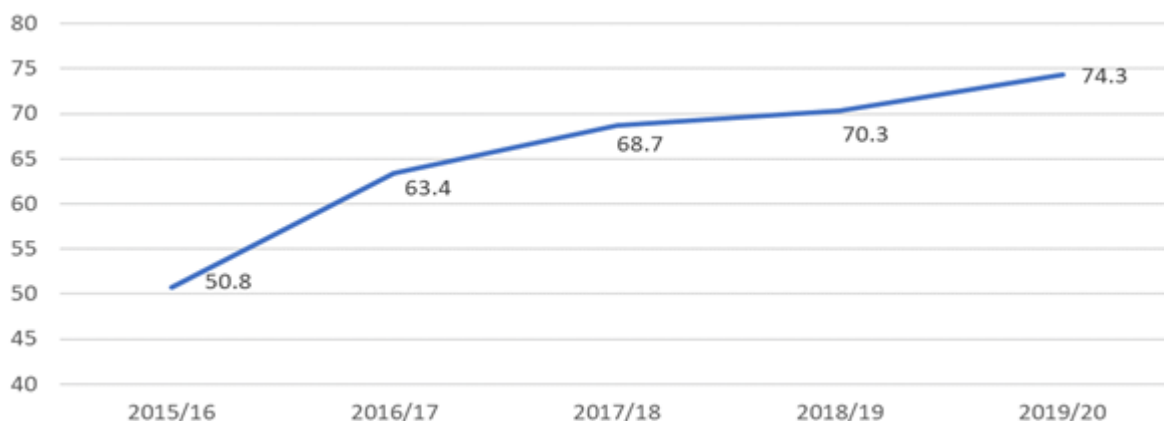
Introduction

All health and social care workers should have the flu vaccination.

Staff in the residential and care home sector, as well as staff providing care to people in their own homes, are working with some of the most vulnerable in our communities, so it is important that they help protect themselves and service users against flu.

Flu immunisation should also be offered by NHS organisations to all employees directly involved in delivering care. Immunisation against flu should form part of healthcare organisations' policy for the prevention of transmission of infection to protect patients, staff and visitors. In addition, frontline health care workers (i.e. staff involved in direct patient care) have a duty of care to protect their patients from infection. This is not an NHS service, but an occupational health responsibility being provided to NHS staff by employers. Other independent providers such as GPs, dental and optometry practices, and community pharmacists should also have flu vaccination.

In 2019/20, the NHS in England achieved a record flu vaccination uptake rate among frontline health care staff of 74.3%. This is an increase of 4.0ppts compared to last year (70.3%), with more than 33,000 more staff vaccinated. Uptake has increased every year since the introduction of the CQUIN in 2015/16 and is one of the highest rates in Europe.



This has been a significant undertaking for NHS providers, who have devoted increasing resources to the programme.

Although overall uptake was high, universal uptake has proved challenging to achieve and there remains significant variation between the [highest and lowest performing trusts, provider sectors as well as a variation between staff groups.](#)

This year's flu programme for social care workers is aiming to increase uptake significantly with the support of the social care sector by expanding the offer to social care workers and removing barriers to access.

Uptake among social care workers is believed to be lower, although there is less robust data on how many social care workers have been vaccinated. It is suggested that there is huge variability in the sector, with the best uptake at around 25%. The low uptake has been due to a lack of awareness of the need for vaccination, barriers to access, and employers lacking resources to vaccinate their own staff.

This year's expanded offer includes this year free flu vaccination from their GP or pharmacy for health and social care workers employed through Direct Payment (personal budgets) and/or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants, to deliver domiciliary care to patients and service users.

Context

This is anything but a typical year and this year's flu season is likely to coincide with the continuing impact of COVID-19 on the population, the NHS and social care services at the same time. There is a unique opportunity to be even more ambitious and achieve universal uptake in 2020/21 among health and social care workers.

The aim of this document is to support NHS and social care communicators and occupational health advisors with creating their own flu vaccination campaign to encourage their staff to get vaccinated. This toolkit includes:

- Narrative and key messages
- Marketing material and examples for localisation
- Best practice examples
- Q&A

Please note that the press notice and long and short copy will follow.

Narrative

On average, flu kills over 11,000 people every year - some years this number is much higher - and it hospitalises many more. This is anything but a typical year, due to the potential impact of flu and COVID-19 circulating at the same time. Therefore, we need to make sure that we provide easy access to the flu vaccination to health and social care workers and encourage universal uptake.

The flu virus spreads from person-to-person, even amongst those not showing any symptoms. Unvaccinated, asymptomatic (but nevertheless infected) staff may unknowingly pass on the virus to vulnerable patients, friends, family and colleagues. Flu can cause severe complications and flu-related staff sickness also affects service delivery, impacting on patients and on other staff. Recently published evidence suggests a 10% increase in vaccination may be associated with as much as a 10% fall in sickness absence in the NHS.

Flu outbreaks also have a serious effect on the social care sector. Every year there are flu outbreaks in care homes despite high flu vaccination rates for residents. This is partly because as people age, they do not produce as good an immune response to vaccination. Vaccination against flu protects the people we care for and protects staff, their family and friends, helping to keep services running safely during winter.

Flu can cause severe complications, but this FREE vaccination is the best protection. Whilst the threat may be invisible, the protection against it is clear.

Key messages

- This is anything but a typical year and we all want to protect ourselves and those close to us. Flu can be deadly and is easily spread
- If you're a frontline worker in the NHS or social care, you're more likely to be exposed to flu.
- You can have no symptoms but unknowingly spread it to your friends, family and patients / those you care for.
- Being healthy doesn't reduce your risk of getting flu or passing it on.
- All frontline health and social care workers have FREE access to the best protection available, the flu jab.
- To keep you, your family and patients / those you care for protected, get your free annual flu jab as soon as you can
- Flu immunisation can reduce the rates of illness, reducing staff absence and pressures on the NHS and social care services

Leadership specific messages

- Overall NHS vaccine uptake levels have been increasing for a number of years, but there is variation from trust to trust.
- Social care uptake is historically low – DHSC and the NHS are acting this year to make the flu vaccine easier to access for social care workers and will be doing more to push messages to the sector. All frontline social care workers should be vaccinated against flu.
- The flu vaccine is the best defence we have against the spread of flu. We can all do our bit and take this easy but important step to protect our patients / those we care for and ourselves.
- An NHS survey (2019) found that patients and those receiving care feel safer and are more likely to get vaccinated when they know staff are vaccinated

- At an organisational level, leadership has a strong impact on vaccine uptake; if managers promote vaccination and are seen by staff to have the vaccine themselves, this is a driver for others to follow suit.
- Social care employers have responsibility for ensuring their staff are vaccinated. If they can, they should arrange for this privately; if they can't, they should direct their staff to get a vaccine free of charge from a GP or pharmacy.

Social media hashtag:

- #Ivehadmyflujab
- #flu
- #flujab

Call to actions:

- Protect those close to you. Get your free flu vaccination.
- To keep you, your family and [patients / those you care for] protected, get your free flu jab as soon as you can

Materials developed for you to use

If you are an employer / running a local campaign, please visit PHE's [Campaign Resource Centre](#) for support in engaging your colleagues – we have free print, digital and social campaign materials available.

Building on feedback from flu leads and HSCWs from last year, this year's campaign develops the popular "shield" motif with imagery that says "I've had my flu jab". The protective benefit of the flu vaccination is emphasised further with the message "Protects you, your family and patients / those you care for from the flu".



As last year, the "I've had my flu jab" campaign will be available to colleagues across NHS and social care to encourage the uptake of flu vaccination amongst their frontline colleagues, to use either "off the shelf" and/or adapt to suit their needs.

The resources available include:

- Leaflets, A4 posters, empty belly posters (where partners can localise with e.g. details of vaccination clinics)
- “I’ve had my flu jab” stickers
- Adaptable artwork of all materials
- Social media and digital tools including digital banners and screen savers
- A campaign toolkit, suggesting ways to use the campaign materials, brand guidelines and tips on how to localise assets.

Example assets are below:



Timing

Marketing resources are now available on [PHE's Campaign Resource Centre](#). For the best results early engagement is key, therefore we encourage you to start as soon as you can.

Best Practice

There are many good practice examples that can help your local flu campaign. These tips will help you see how other organisations have encouraged board members to get involved, increased staff uptake for the flu vaccine, delivered a campaign that engaged with staff and increased accessibility to the vaccine.

You can find a list of best practice and useful tips [here](#).

Bylined article

Please use the following article to support your internal communications plan.

Protect yourself, your family and the people we care for from flu this winter

This is anything but a typical year and we all want to protect ourselves and those close to us. Due to the potential impact of influenza and COVID-19 it's now more important than ever that we act to protect ourselves from getting the flu. To help keep you, your family and the people we care for safe, I'm encouraging you to get your free annual flu jab as soon as you can.

The flu virus spreads from person-to-person, even amongst those not showing any symptoms. As frontline workers, we're at an increased risk of contracting flu and it's very easy for us to pass the virus on without knowing. Even if we're healthy, we can still get flu and spread it to the people we care for, our colleagues and to our family. Getting your flu jab is simple, easy and free. All you need to do is [\[insert local details of employer-led or complementary scheme or NHS Trust\]](#).

The injected flu vaccine given to adults contains inactivated flu viruses so it cannot give you flu. The most common side effect can be a slight temperature or your arm may feel a bit sore where you had the injection. Other reactions are rare.

The flu vaccine is the best defence we have against the spread of flu so join me and let's do all we can to get ourselves protected.

[\[Image of author getting their flu vaccine/with their flu jab sticker\]](#)

Q&A

Why should Health and social care workers be vaccinated against flu?

- Having the flu vaccine protects you, your family and the people you care for from flu. On average over 11,000 people die each year from flu. Some years it's much more and many more are hospitalised each year.
- Vaccination means less staff sickness from flu, helping the NHS and social care to keep running effectively during a flu outbreak when services are particularly busy.
- You can give flu to your family and those you care for even if you don't have any symptoms. Staff who aren't vaccinated may unknowingly pass on flu to those who are at increased risk from the virus.
- Those you support feel safer and are more likely to get vaccinated when they know the people who care for them are vaccinated.

How effective is the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine will help prevent you getting the flu and is your best protection against the virus. It will not stop all flu viruses but if you do get flu after vaccination, it's likely to be milder and shorter-lived than it would otherwise have been.

How long does the flu vaccine take to become effective?

It takes between 10 and 14 days for your immune system to respond fully after you've had the flu jab.

Can the flu vaccine cause flu?

No. The injectable vaccine does not contain any live viruses, so it cannot cause flu. You may get a slight temperature, and your arm may feel a bit sore where you had the injection. Other reactions are rare.

I had the flu vaccination last year. Do I need to have it again?

Yes. The viruses that cause flu can change every year, which means the flu (and the vaccine) this year may be different from last year.

Why is it particularly important to get the flu vaccine this year?

With COVID-19 in circulation it's especially important to get the flu vaccine this year. The flu jab won't protect you against coronavirus, but it will help stop you spreading flu to the people you support, many of whom are vulnerable to both.

Useful links:

[Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in healthcare workers \(HCWs\) in England: winter season 2019 to 2020](#)

[PHE Annual Flu reports](#)

[Science and Technology Select Committee 2018, Flu vaccination programme in England](#)

Pereira M, Williams S, Restrict L, Cullinan P, Hopkinson NS. Healthcare worker influenza vaccination and sickness absence – an ecological study. Clin Med. 2017 Dec 1;17(6):484–9.

World Health Organization How to implement seasonal influenza vaccination of health workers. July 2019. www.who.int/immunization/documents/ISBN_9789241515597/en/