



Department
of Health &
Social Care

CARE

To:
Local Authority Chief Executives
Directors of Adult Social Care Services
Adult Social Care providers

39 Victoria Street
Westminster
London
SW1H 0EU

2 September 2021

Dear colleagues

Preparing for vaccinations in Autumn/Winter 2021

Since December 2020, you have worked tirelessly to protect those in care from COVID-19 and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the fantastic work you continue to do across the sector.

Vaccination has been a crucial part of protecting those at risk from COVID-19, and it is a great collective achievement that 94% of eligible residents in older adult care homes have now had a full course of a COVID-19 vaccination.

Our attention must now turn to preparing for the winter ahead. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that Winter 2021-22 will be the first in the UK when COVID-19 will circulate alongside other respiratory viruses, including the seasonal flu virus. Therefore, it is essential that **everyone** working in social care, and the people they care for who are most vulnerable, are protected against these diseases.

COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters

The majority of social care staff have now completed a full course of COVID-19 vaccination, protecting themselves, their colleagues and the individuals they support and care for. I encourage care managers and colleagues to continue to promote uptake and challenge misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines, making full use of our comms toolkit¹.

Regulations will come into force from 11 November requiring those deployed in care homes to be fully vaccinated unless medically exempt. This means that staff will need to have their first dose of the vaccine by 16 September, so they can receive their second dose ahead of 11 November. We recently publish some guidance² on these regulations to assist you further.

¹ [Vaccine Communications Toolkit for Adult Social Care - Coronavirus Resource centre \(phe.gov.uk\)](https://www.phe.gov.uk/about-us/communications/communications-toolkit-for-adult-social-care-coronavirus-resource-centre)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaccination-of-people-working-or-deployed-in-care-homes-operational-guidance>

Interim advice from the JCVI has also recommended the introduction of boosters for COVID-19 vaccinations from September. The details of how COVID-19 boosters will be delivered will depend on further advice from the JCVI, and we will soon follow up on this when we know more on how and when the booster programme for COVID-19 will be rolled out.

Take a flu vaccination now and a COVID-19 booster, when offered

This year will see additional need to bolster our defence against flu. Flu levels are likely to be higher this season than those in 2020-2021, and so it is more important than ever to get a flu jab.

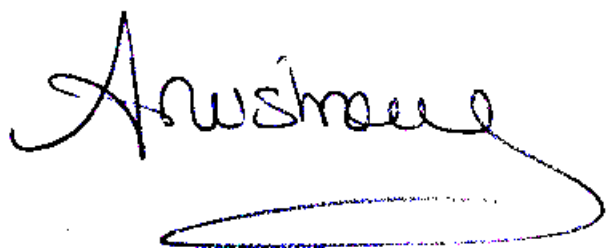
Shortly, we will publish updated guidance about how social care workers can receive their flu vaccination. The National Flu Immunisation programme letter³ sets out an expectation that 100% of social care workers are offered a free flu vaccine from their GP or local pharmacy as early as possible, so please do cascade the guidance as soon as published and encourage take-up.

It may be possible that in the future co-administration of both flu and COVID-19 booster vaccinations will be available in some cases. However, the roll-out of the COVID-19 booster programme will be based on independent clinical advice from the JCVI, and we therefore cannot say today when exactly this will begin.

It is therefore vital that we encourage and support social care workers to get a flu vaccination as soon as possible via the normal route and not to wait for the availability of co-administration. Flu vaccinations will become available to social care workers early this month and I would urge everyone working in the sector to take up the offer, and the offer of a COVID-19 booster, when available.

I want to reiterate my appreciation of the efforts that have been made across the sector to vaccinate and save lives. Thank you for working with us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Armstrong', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right and then loops back under the main text.

Claire Armstrong

Director of Adult Social Care Delivery and Covid-19 Response

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flu-immunisation-programme-plan/national-flu-immunisation-programme-2021-to-2022-letter>