

To: All Health and Social Care Workers

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Web Site:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>
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Dear Colleague,

UPDATE: INFLUENZA VACCINATION SERVICE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKERS (HSCWs) FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY PHARMACIES

This letter supersedes any prior communication in relation to the Community Pharmacy Seasonal Flu Vaccination Service (CPFV) 2020/2021.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that this year **participating community pharmacies** across Northern Ireland will be able to provide flu vaccinations for all HSCWs. This service is provisionally due to start week commencing 28th September 2020 and has been developed in partnership with DoH, HSCB, PHA and Community Pharmacy NI (CPNI). The map of participating pharmacies in your area can be obtained by visiting: www.pha.site/CPFV.

Background – the need for HSCW Flu vaccination

Flu immunisations help to protect your staff, your family and the people you care for. In addition to preventing staff sickness from flu they also reduce GP consultations, unplanned hospital admissions, pressure on emergency departments and are therefore a critical element of the system-wide approach for delivering robust and resilient health and care services during winter.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of ensuring staff are protected against disease. While there is currently no vaccine against COVID-19, there is a vaccine against seasonal influenza and it is important that frontline staff have access to this vaccine. The Joint Committee on

Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommends that the flu vaccine is offered and provided to all Health and Social Care Workers (HSCWs) **who are in direct contact with patients/clients to protect themselves, their families and their patients.**

Targets for 20-21

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the **target for 2020/21 has been raised to 75% for all frontline health and social care staff in NI.**

In order to increase uptake and meet this target, it is especially important to encourage all HSCWs to have the vaccine and remove barriers to accessing the vaccine by making it more easily accessible. It is hoped that this new service, that will be available in participating community pharmacies, will improve accessibility and therefore vaccine uptake.

Aims of the Service

The aims of this service are to:

- Provide improved accessibility and convenience for HSCWs to access flu vaccinations
- Support the [Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme 2020/21](#)¹ to sustain and maximise the uptake of the flu vaccine in all HSCWs by building capacity of community pharmacies, as an additional route to vaccination.

Service Outline

This service will be available from **participating community pharmacies** across Northern Ireland from late September 2020 until 31st March 2021.

The cell based Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (QIVc) will be available free of charge within the community pharmacy to all HSCWs including but not limited to:

- all HSC employed staff
- health and social care staff employed by a registered residential care/nursing home, which provides care for vulnerable patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza
- health and social care staff employed by a registered domiciliary care provider, which provides care for vulnerable patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza

¹ <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/Flu%20Vaccination%20Programme%202020-21%20amended.pdf>

- health and care staff, employed by a voluntary managed hospice provider, which provides care for vulnerable patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza

All HSCWs can be vaccinated through CPFV including Trust, non-Trust, frontline and non-frontline staff.

Eligibility

The service is available to those who:

- Work as a health and social care worker (HSCW)

AND

- are aged 16 years or over.

Those HSCWs who are pregnant or over 65 years old are still eligible to avail of the flu vaccine through CPFV; however it is important to know other vaccination providers and other vaccine options may be available. If the HSCW is pregnant or over 65 years old and are vaccinated through CPFV, they should notify their employer and also any relevant health care professionals, such as GP, Obstetric provider, etc.

The HSCW should be advised they need to:

- **Provide proof they are working in the health and social care sectors either via an employer photo identification badge/ or other proof of employment in a health or social care setting e.g. payslip, letter from employer on official letterhead plus photographic proof of identification. (This is to allow the pharmacist to confirm they work as a HSCW.)**
- **Check with their desired pharmacy if they need to book an appointment.**
- **Confirm with the pharmacy that the service has started.**
- **Confirm with the pharmacy if there are any additional infection control measures in place that they will need to adhere to whilst attending for vaccination, such as face coverings. ***
- **Not attend the pharmacy or vaccination appointment if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or are currently in self-isolation having been identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead contact the pharmacy to get advice and rearrange their appointment.***

***This also applies to chaperones**

We would be grateful if you could publicise this service to your employees by displaying the enclosed poster(s) in staff areas. Posters can also be viewed online at www.pha.site/CPFV.

If you have any queries in relation to this service, please contact:

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Yours sincerely,



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