



Public Health
England



25 November 2021

To: North Yorkshire Care Home
Managers/Domiciliary Providers and Hospices

Dear Colleague,

2021/22 Seasonal Flu Vaccination Campaign for Social Care and Care Homes (Nursing or Residential) /Domiciliary Providers and Hospices in North Yorkshire

We are writing to you to seek your support for the 2021/22 Seasonal Flu Vaccination Campaign across social care and in Care Homes (Nursing or Residential), which includes domiciliary providers and independent hospices in North Yorkshire.

NHS England & NHS Improvement North East and Yorkshire (Yorkshire and the Humber), Public Health England (Yorkshire and the Humber Centre) and North Yorkshire are working together to support the campaign to improve flu vaccination rates amongst your residents and health and/or social care staff who are in direct contact with vulnerable* patients/clients in your care.

Flu and its complications can be serious and sometimes fatal, particularly for older people, and those who have long term health conditions. The virus spreads rapidly in care homes largely due to the age of the clients (many of whom have co-morbidities/long term conditions) and the close contact between residents and staff, with outbreaks often seen in these settings during winter months. Outbreaks of flu-like illness cause severe disruption to health and social care services as a result of, for example, reduced staffing due to sickness, home closures (due to outbreaks) and delayed discharges from hospital. Moreover, JCVI advises that seasonal flu and SARS-cov-2 viruses have the potential to contribute substantially to winter pressures facing both the NHS and social care settings, particularly if waves from both viruses coincide. Between September 2019 and March 2020, there were 53 outbreaks of influenza-like illness reported in care homes across Yorkshire and the Humber. Where outbreaks have occurred and been reported to the Health Protection Team, investigations identified:

- Incomplete records of vaccination in residents in some care homes
- Limited records or evidence of vaccination in staff

Vaccination has shown to be effective in reducing disease spread and mortality in the residential care setting. Therefore, ensuring high uptake of the flu vaccine in both residents and staff remains a high priority this winter.

Important information below describes how residents and staff can access the vaccination programme. Full details of the annual seasonal flu vaccination programme can be found in the [National Flu Plan and Letter](#).

Residents'/Clients' Vaccinations

We would advise that you discuss with the patients'/clients' responsible GP(s) what their plans are for vaccinating **their registered patients** in your facility. Under the [Framework for enhanced health in care homes](#) (EHCH) your care home will have been aligned to a primary care network (PCN) which is responsible for the delivery of the EHCH service for your home. You may want to speak to your PCN clinical lead to discuss how you can maximise uptake amongst both staff and residents.

For the first time GP practices can also vaccinate specific patients and staff that are **not registered with the practice**, namely:

- Front-line health and social care staff employed by a registered residential care or nursing home, or a voluntary managed hospice provider; **and**
- Those residents living in: long-stay facilities; nursing homes; other long-stay health or social care facilities; or a housebound patient.

You may wish to consider alternatives such as a community pharmacist who has opted to deliver this programme this season (details of participating pharmacists should be available on the [NHS Website](#) – (previously NHS Choices). Please note you would need to contact the pharmacist to request this service as they are currently unable to approach you directly due to current contractual constraints.

Staff Vaccination

As people age, they do not produce as good an immune response to vaccination, this therefore makes vaccination of staff caring for these people even more important. All frontline health and social care workers should receive a vaccination this season. This should be provided by their employer, to ensure they meet their responsibility to protect their staff and patients and ensure the overall safe running of services. **Employers should:**

- **commission a service which makes access to the vaccine easy for all frontline staff**
- **encourage staff to get vaccinated, and**
- **monitor the delivery of their programmes/uptake**

Staff will be able to access flu vaccination through a community pharmacy or their registered general practice. This scheme is intended to complement, not replace, any established occupational health schemes that employers have in place to offer flu vaccination to their workforce. Community pharmacists **again** will be able to vaccinate both residential care/nursing home residents **and** staff in the home setting in a single visit to increase uptake rates and offer further protection to this vulnerable* group of patients.

*Vulnerable means those patients/clients in a clinical risk group for flu or who are aged 65 years and over.

It is important to ensure that staff have every opportunity and are encouraged to access a flu vaccination as soon as possible to reduce the chances of them contracting flu and passing it on, between themselves, to the patients/residents for whom they care and vulnerable* family members and friends. For both staff and residents, whilst efforts will be made for delivery models to optimise co-administration of flu and COVID, more especially in residential settings, where this is not practically possible, it is important not to delay flu vaccination.

Good practice guidance along with a range of resource material can be found here: [Increasing Health and Social Care Worker Flu Vaccinations](#). Further updates are underway to include additional resources which will be made available for the flu season this year.

What can you do to support the 2021/22 Seasonal Flu Vaccination Campaign?

You can help by starting to plan now for the flu campaign by:

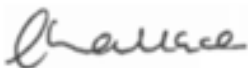
- Appointing a 'flu vaccine champion' in your care home/organisation.
- Compiling a list of eligible residents and who has consented/declined to having the flu vaccine this season.
- Keep this list up-to-date by recording those who have received the flu vaccination and follow up those still outstanding or who have declined, continue to offer, as they may change their mind as the season progresses and circumstances may change (please see Appendix A for a suggested format). Ensure the list is reviewed regularly to allow for new admissions/transfers to your facility.
- **Where a resident is unable to self-consent**, please discuss the flu vaccine offer with their relatives and refer to your local safeguarding and/or consent policies.
- Use resources such as the PHE flu leaflet (link below) to encourage both residents and staff to have the flu vaccine: [Flu vaccination: who should have it this winter and why](#)
- Promote the new Health and Social Care winter vaccines campaign to encourage vaccination. Resources will be available to encourage staff and residents' vaccination and can be downloaded or ordered free of charge from our Campaign Resource Centre. Just sign up here: [Campaign Resource Centre \(phe.gov.uk\)](#)
- Agree arrangements for your frontline staff to receive the flu vaccination and ensure the offer is made individually to each member of staff, so that they know how /where they can access the vaccine. Maintain a list of staff who have consented/declined. Keep this up to date with those who have received the flu vaccine, be aware some staff who previously declined may change their mind during the season.
- Contact your residents' GPs and/or approach a local pharmacist and establish who will be giving the flu vaccine and when. Aim to have all flu vaccinations completed by the end of October or early November before flu starts to circulate.
- Update your residents list regularly. Check any new residents that come into your establishment during the flu season (including existing clients who have been discharged from hospital as they may have missed the planned vaccination sessions). If they have not already received their flu vaccine, please contact their GP or a community pharmacist to arrange this as soon as possible.
- Use your infection prevention and control manual to identify the symptoms of flu so that any possibility of an outbreak is reduced. Reduce the risk of flu being brought into the home by displaying resources that can be found at [Campaign Resource Centre \(phe.gov.uk\)](#)
- **If you suspect there may be an outbreak of flu-like illness or respiratory illness amongst residents or staff in your care home please contact the Yorkshire and Humber Health Protection team immediately on 0113 386 0300.**

If you require further information on the local seasonal flu plan, please contact your local screening and immunisation coordinator ENGLAND.NYAHSIT@nhs.net or carly.walker@northyorks.gov.uk in the Public Health Team.

Regards



Screening and Immunisation Lead
NHS England & NHS Improvement North East and Yorkshire (Yorkshire and Humber)



Louise Wallace
Director of Public Health

Actions:	Achieved	Signature
Appoint a 'flu vaccine champion'		
Compile a list of residents to record consent/decline for vaccine		
Plan and arrangements in place for HSCW to receive flu vaccination		
Contact residents GPs to confirm who will vaccinate & when		
The list of residents is current and up to date with flu vaccine status		
The list of HSCW current and up to date with flu vaccine status		
Ensure staff have read the Infection Prevention and Control Manual and are alerted to identifying flu symptoms including when and who to report them to - to reduce the risk of an outbreak occurring.		

Appendix A – record of residents' flu immunisation status

Home:	On Entry to Home		2021/22			
Residents Name/Identifier	Flu vacc status on Entry to Home (including existing clients discharged from hospital)	Consent discussed with resident/client or person with legal power of attorney for health and welfare	Consent: Given or Declined – Please record if individual is unable to receive flu vaccine due to contraindication	Date Flu Vacc given:	Vacc Given By:	GP informed if given by alternative provider e.g. D/N, Community Pharmacist etc (Please note the pharmacist should notify the patients GP directly).
	Immunised/Not	Yes/No	Given/Declined			
	Immunised/Not	Yes/No	Given/Declined			
	Immunised/Not	Yes/No	Given/Declined			
	Immunised/Not	Yes/No	Given/Declined			
	Immunised/Not	Yes/No	Given/Declined			
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	Immunised/Not	Yes/No	Given/Declined			
	Immunised/Not	Yes/No	Given/Declined			

Appendix B – Record of Staff Vaccination

Home:		2021/22			
Staff Member/Identifier	Job Role	Consent/ Vaccine Given or Declined - Please record if individual is unable to receive flu vaccine due to contraindication	Date Flu Vacc given:	Vacc Given By (provider name):	GP informed by individual if individual is in an at-risk group or aged 65 or over
		Given/Declined			
		Given/Declined			
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