

Title of Report:	Flu Vaccinations update
Report to be considered by:	The Health and Wellbeing Board
Date of Meeting:	28 November 2013

Purpose of Report: To inform the Board of the flu vaccination work that has taken place and seek suggestions to improve vaccination uptake in West Berkshire

Recommended Action:

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Executive Report

The Flu plan for 2013/14 was published by Department of Health in June 2013 [1]. It supports a coordinated and evidence-based approach to planning for the demands of flu across England.

1. Strategic objectives of the flu plan

These are:

- a) Actively offering the flu vaccination to 100% of all those in the eligible groups, including health and social care workers, and vaccinating at least 75% of those 65 years and over and those under 65 in a risk group
- b) Monitoring flu activity, severity of the disease, vaccine uptake and impact on the NHS
- c) Offering antiviral medicines to patients in at-risk groups as well as those patients who the prescriber believes may suffer serious complications if not treated, in line with NICE guidance and Schedule 2 to the National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of drugs etc) Regulations 2004), commonly known as the Grey List or Selected List Scheme (SLS). These may only be prescribed once the CMO/CPhO letter has been sent to prescribers informing them that they are now able to prescribe antiviral medicines at NHS expense⁵
- d) Providing public health information to prevent and protect against flu
- e) Managing and implementing the public health response to incidents and outbreaks of flu
- f) Ensuring the NHS is well prepared and has appropriate surge and resilience arrangements in place during the flu season

2. Responsibilities of different organizations

a) The **Department of Health** is responsible for:

- policy decisions on the response to the flu season
- holding NHS England and PHE to account through their respective framework agreements, the Mandate, and the Section 7A agreement
- oversight of the supply of antiviral medicines

b) **NHS England** is responsible for:

- commissioning the flu vaccination programme under the terms of the Section 7A agreement

assuring that the NHS is prepared for the forthcoming flu season

- building close working relationships with Directors of Public Health (DsPH) to ensure that local population needs are understood and addressed by providers of flu vaccination services

c) **Public Health England** is responsible for:

- planning and implementation of the national approach

- monitoring and reporting of key indicators related to flu, including flu activity and vaccine uptake
- oversight of vaccine supply and the strategic reserve
- advising NHS England on the commissioning of the flu vaccination programme
- supporting DsPH in local authorities in their role as local leaders of health and ensuring that they have all relevant expert input, surveillance and population data needed to carry out this role effectively

d) Local authorities, through their **Director of Public Health**, have responsibility for:

- providing appropriate challenge to local arrangements and advocacy with key stakeholders to ensure access to flu vaccination and to improve its uptake by eligible populations
- providing independent scrutiny and challenge to the arrangements of NHS England, PHE and local authority employers of frontline social care staff and other providers of health and social care
- providing leadership, together with local resilience partners to respond appropriately to local incidents and outbreaks of flu infection

e) Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are responsible for:

- a duty of quality assurance and improvement which extends to primary medical care services delivered by GP practices including flu vaccination and antiviral medicines

f) GP practices and other providers are responsible for:

- ordering the correct amount and type of vaccine for their eligible patients, taking into account year on year increases or new groups identified for vaccination and the ambition for uptake
- ensuring that all those eligible for the flu vaccine are invited personally to receive their vaccine
- encouraging and facilitating flu vaccination of their own staff
- ensuring that antiviral medicines are prescribed for appropriate patients, once the CMO/CPhO letter has been distributed alerting them that antiviral medicines can be prescribed

g) All employers of individuals working in the NHS are responsible for:

- management and oversight of the flu vaccination campaign for their frontline staff
- support to providers to ensure access to flu vaccination and to maximise uptake amongst those eligible to receive it.

3. Influenza and the flu virus

Influenza is an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract (nose, mouth, throat, bronchial tubes and lungs) characterised by a fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain and fatigue. For otherwise healthy individuals, flu is an unpleasant but usually self-limiting disease with recovery within two to seven days. Flu is easily transmitted and even people with mild or no symptoms can still infect others. The risk of serious illness from influenza is higher amongst children under six months of age, older people and those with underlying health conditions such as respiratory disease, cardiac disease or immunosuppression, as

well as pregnant women. These groups are at greater risk of complications from flu such as bronchitis or pneumonia or in some rare cases, cardiac problems, meningitis and/or encephalitis.

The impact of flu on the population varies from year to year and is influenced by changes in the virus that, in turn, influence the proportion of the population that may be susceptible to infection and the severity of the illness.

4. Rate of flu like illness in November 2013

In the week ending 3rd November 2013, the rate of influenza like illness in West Berkshire was 9.8 per 100,000 population (Source: Public Health England).

5. Flu vaccine uptake in North and West Reading CCG and Newbury and District CCG areas

Table 1 shows the flu vaccine uptake by CCG in the week ending 10th November 2013.

Table 1: Seasonal Flu vaccination uptake week ending 10/11/2013

CCG	Over 65 year olds	Under 65 at risk only	All pregnant women	Children aged 2 years	Children aged 3 years
Newbury and District CCG	56%	42.4%	22.3%	42.7%	40.9%
North and West Reading CCG	63.5%	41.7%	36.8%	28.4%	27%

Source: IMMFORM, Public Health England

6. Actions being taken locally in West Berkshire to improve flu vaccine uptake

These are:

- a) Press releases, residents' newsletters and radio interviews were used to promote this year's flu campaign in West Berkshire.
- b) Leaflets were sent to all children's centres and play groups.
- c) Children in special needs schools were offered flu vaccine in the schools.
- d) Local authority front line staff, including care workers, are being encouraged to advocate the vaccine among their clients who are eligible for flu vaccination.
- e) Free flu vouchers are being offered to care workers, other front line council staff and staff in special needs schools. This is expected to help reduce sickness absenteeism and spread of flu from care workers to vulnerable clients/ residents.

7. Reference

1. Public Health England. Flu Plan Winter: 2013/14

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.