**Flu Issue 1**

**South East Region**

**Updates for week ending 2 September 2022**

Welcome to the first of this season’s weekly Flu updates that the NHS England South East Regional Public Health Commissioning / Screening and Immunisation Teams plan to provide during the 2022-23 flu season. The updates are mainly for primary care. They aim to summarise the latest information on the flu programme and any changes that have been notified in the previous week. We hope you find it useful. We know it will be another challenging season and want to thank you for your commitment to this year’s seasonal influenza vaccination programme.

**Resources for Healthcare Professionals**

We are finalising the annual flu resource pack and toolkit and aim to issue it shortly. The resource pack collates information from a variety of sources to support providers, particularly in primary care, to deliver the 2022-23 flu programme. It includes links to a range of resources and materials and some guidance and tools to assist practices to improve uptake.

UKHSA has produced comprehensive guidance to this year’s programme, available at the link below.

[The national influenza immunisation programme 2022 to 2023: Information for healthcare practitioners (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1097483/Flu-information-for-HCPs-2022-to-2023.pdf)

Communications materials will be available shortly.

**GP Enhanced Service and Pharmacy Advanced Service**

The service specifications for the GP enhanced service (ES) for the seasonal influenza vaccination programme, the childhood influenza programme and the pharmacy advanced service specification have been published. GP Practices had until midnight on 31st August 2022 to sign up with NHSE. The deadline for sign-up on CQRS/PCSE on-line has been extended to 30th September 2022.

GP practices must proactively call all patients and recall all those in at risk groups.

All providers should use the recommended vaccines as set out in the annual Flu Letter and the Green Book. See Annex D of the ES specification.

The specifications can be accessed here:

[Enhanced service specification: Seasonal influenza vaccination programme 2022/23 (england.nhs.uk)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/B1772-ess-seasonal-influenza-vaccination-22-23.pdf)

[NHS England » Community Pharmacy Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Service](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/community-pharmacy-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-service/)

**Healthy 50-64 Year Olds from 15th October**

All contractors (both GP practices and community pharmacies) are reminded that healthy 50-64 years who are not in a designated clinical risk group only become eligible under the Enhanced or Advance Service from 15th October 2022. The reason for this is to ensure that vaccine is prioritised for those who are most susceptible to and at risk from influenza. Contractors should be aware that any vaccination done before 15th October will not attract an item of service fee unless there is a specific clinical justification for vaccination before this date.

**Vaccinating Patients Not Registered with the Practice**

For this season, GP practices will be able to vaccinate the following cohorts not registered with the practice – see ES paragraph 8.4:

* those living in long-stay residential care homes or nursing homes or other long-stay health or social care facilities; or
* frontline health and social care staff employed by
  + a registered residential care or nursing home,
  + A voluntary managed hospice provider
* locum GPs

Further guidance on recording and claiming will follow but is expected to be similar to last year i.e. register the person as requiring Immediate Necessary Treatment (INT).

**Collaboration Opportunities**

This season, there are two opportunities for collaboration in the delivery of the flu vaccination programme to eligible patients:

* Under an influenza collaboration agreement. This is where practices want to work together to deliver the flu programme only. Collaboration could be with any group of practices not just in an established PCN
* Under a Covid-19 collaboration agreement. This is where practices want to collaborate to deliver the flu vaccination alongside Covid-19 vaccination synergistically or to co-administer flu and Covid-19 vaccines. Collaboration can only be as part of a PCN grouping.

Practices collaborating under either of the above arrangements will be deemed to be a single medical practice on a temporary basis under Human Medicines Regulations 2021, for the purposes of delivering the vaccination programme(s). This means that they can share their flu vaccine stocks without the need for a Wholesale Dealer’s Licence.

In both cases, practices will need to have signed up to the relevant collaboration agreement which will set out arrangements for sharing vaccines and claiming reimbursement.

Practices should note that the Covid-19 PCN grouping collaboration agreement does not cover the vaccination of healthy 2 and 3-year-olds.

Template agreements can be found at the links below:

[NHS England » Influenza vaccination programme: Enhanced service Seasonal influenza vaccination collaboration agreement](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/influenza-vaccination-programme-enhanced-service-seasonal-influenza-vaccination-collaboration-agreement/)

[Coronavirus » COVID-19 Enhanced Service Vaccination Collaboration Agreement: Phase 5 (england.nhs.uk)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-enhanced-service-vaccination-collaboration-agreement-phase-5/)

**Vaccinating Care Home Residents and Staff - Co-administration**

This year, GP practices may vaccinate residents and staff of care homes who are not on their registered list if the resident/staff member so chooses. There is no need for a formal collaboration agreement to be in place. However, practices are advised to liaise with their own and other PCNs responsible for the delivery of Enhanced Health in Care Homes to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Practices may also co-administer to staff and residents of care homes under a Covid-19 Vaccination collaboration agreement as with any other eligible cohort.

Practices must use aQIV as preference. QIVc or QIVr may be used if aQIV is not available. The first flu stock to arrive with practices is QIVe, which is not recommended for people aged 65 and over. Co-administration must therefore wait until the appropriate flu stock arrives but vaccination must not be held up unduly in order to co-administer.

**Co-administration and Synergistic Administration Payment Claims**

GP practices will need to claim differently for flu vaccination administered alongside Covid-19 vaccination depending on whether it is co-administered or administered synergistically.

* Co-administration: practices will nominate a host practice to receive payments on their behalf which will be calculated via the Point of Care system and made through the BSA in the same way as the covid-19 vaccination.
* Synergistic vaccination: practices may choose either to nominate the host practice and claim via the Point of Care System, or to enter the vaccination directly onto their GP clinical system and claim via CQRS in the normal way separately from the Covid-19 vaccination payment process

Where practices are practices are claiming via the Point of Care system, they should be aware that they will have two sources of payment for flu vaccination.

**PharmOutcomes**

We have extended our service level agreement with Pinnacle, part of the EMIS Group, for a further year (up to 31 August 2023). This will ensure that the PharmOutcomes system, that has been used in community pharmacies for several years to record the flu vaccine, will continue to be in place and that flu vaccination data given in pharmacy will flow into GP records.

The system will also enable acute providers to continue to transfer information on pertussis vaccines delivered in maternity to the GP practice electronically. PharmOutcomes is a secure web-based system that allows providers to record vaccination details whilst patient facing, with notification to the GP practice taking place in real time. The system meets the standards required by the NHS for securely managing patient identifiable information.

If you have any feedback or queries relating to this communication, please contact:

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