

To:

**Social care organisations
representative bodies**

Operations and Information Directorate
NHS England
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Publications Gateway Number: 08260

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10 September 2018

Dear Colleague

Extension of NHS seasonal influenza vaccination

In 2017 NHS England provided additional funding to support the delivery of flu immunisation for social care workers that offer direct patient/client care. We are pleased to confirm that this will continue in 2018/19 and will be extended to include health and care staff in the voluntary managed hospice sector that offer direct patient/client care.

Arrangements have been put in place for the 2018/19 influenza vaccination scheme for eligible health and social care and hospice staff to be offered by GP practices and community pharmacy as part of the seasonal flu programme.

This scheme is intended to complement, not replace, any established occupational health schemes that employers have in place to offer the flu vaccination to their workforce. We would urge employers to continue their efforts to protect their staff and most vulnerable patients/clients by encouraging frontline social care staff to be immunised. They can do this by accessing local schemes that are already in place or, if they are eligible as they are in one of the at-risk groups or other groups identified in the annual flu letter, by going to their own GP practice or any pharmacy.

With the earlier announcement of this scheme we would expect the commissioners and providers of social care to identify and engage eligible staff so ensure there is good uptake of vaccination when the flu programme starts in the autumn.

The extension to the seasonal influenza vaccine will be available to:

- **Health and social care staff, employed by a registered residential care/nursing home or registered domiciliary care provider, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza. Vulnerable means those patients/clients in a clinical risk group for flu or who are aged 65 years and over.**
- **Health and care staff, employed by a voluntary managed hospice provider, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable**

**patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza.
Vulnerable means those patients/clients in a clinical risk group for flu or
who are aged 65 years and over.**

Flu is a serious illness in vulnerable people, potentially causing deaths and complications such as pneumonia. We would ask you to encourage social care staff to take up the offer of immunisation in the coming flu season to protect themselves, their families and the vulnerable people they care for. Flu outbreaks can cause severe disruption to health and social care services in the winter months.

It is important that we work together in the coming months to ensure a successful flu campaign; to protect staff and patients/clients and contribute to the resilience of the health and social care system in the coming winter. I would be grateful if you would be kind enough to circulate this correspondence to the relevant care organisations.

Any queries can be directed to NHS England at england.phs7apmo@nhs.net.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Powis', written in a cursive style.

**Prof Stephen Powis
National Medical Director, NHS England**

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