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### Flu Update

Although some Practices have started their flu clinics already, the guidance around the flu campaign appears to be changing and evolving on a regular basis. NHS England appreciates that Practices will need to implement new and different ways of working this year.

#### PPE

The guidance, issued on 20 August 2020, addressed PPE concerns for vaccination and injection clinics where contact with individuals is minimal, and therefore the need for single use PPE items for each encounter (e.g. gloves and aprons) are no longer necessary. However, gloves and aprons are recommended when there is an anticipated exposure to blood, bodily fluids on non-intact skin. Staff should wear sessional face masks and of course good hand hygiene is always required.

#### RCN Top Tips

There has been a lot of discussion about managing flu clinics this year and the RCN has published [guidance](#) outlining the key principles for maintaining the national immunisation schedule, with top tips including time allocation, safety and infection prevention and control, and safe vaccine administration.

#### Recording Batch Data

The RCN also provide advice about records and data and, in the latest NHS England Flu Webinar, the following ways of recording the flu vaccine data were suggested:

- **Admin support** – Admin staff could document and input the relevant data, to be reviewed by the clinician before being saved into the patient record
- **Bulk adding** – Practices could set up a macro in their clinical system with the vaccine information (e.g. the expiry date, manufacturer, batch etc.), then click on the macro in the patient's notes and the detail will be added to the patient record, whilst also adding consent and post immunisation advice
- **Documentation of vaccines when delivered 'off site'** – If there is no computer access during the flu clinic, written records with relevant details should be taken e.g. patient name, DOB, site of vaccination, batch number, and expiry date. This information must then be data entered into the patient record when the staff are back with access to the clinical system and the paper lists could be scanned as back up evidence and then entered into secure waste.

## Vaccines for Frontline Staff

This needs to be a priority this year and staff should be vaccinated in good time using peer to peer vaccination. For vaccines given to care home staff they should be coded as 'care home' staff so that they can be identified easily if necessary at a later date for reporting purposes.

## Directed Enhanced Service (DES) Specification Seasonal influenza and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccination programme 2020/21

The [Flu DES](#) has been amended and republished to provide for the additional new cohorts of patients to be vaccinated in general practice, including household contacts of those on the NHS Shielded Patient List or of immunocompromised individuals.

A useful new [poster](#) has been published by NHS England as a visual aid to identify all the cohorts this year.

## National Flu Comms and Marketing Campaigns

Research has shown that the public still do not see influenza as a serious illness, but they understand it a bit more e.g. asymptomatic, but can pass it on like coronavirus. Materials are now available for Primary Care, and a public facing campaign will launch on 22 September, with National TV ads, local radio, social media, media medics, PR, and partnerships such as supermarkets advertising from 5 October. There will be specific targeting of the BAME community and the National Immunisations Management System (NIMS) will send reminder letters to all cohorts except pregnant women and household contacts.

## Learning Disabilities Annual Health Check Update and Flu

It is more important than ever to offer flu vaccinations at annual health checks, and letters will be sent out from NHS England from 21 September to those who are eligible including Easy Read letters for people with learning disabilities. NHS England wants Practices to take a proactive approach particularly with learning disabilities (those aged 14 and above), and those in care homes and supported living and give their vaccines in their home.

NHS England also encourages different pathways to completing learning disability annual health checks during the COVID-19 pandemic such as:

- Pre-annual health check online
- Video examination, if clinically appropriate
- Encouraging combined face to face flu jab appt and LD health check
- Being flexible in the way health checks are delivered this year and offer reasonable adjustments, to protect this very vulnerable group of people

## Patient Communication

Reminder flu letters to patients will include a QR code for patients to scan and update their preferred contact method e.g. text or email rather than letter, and there will be an opt out option to meet GDPR requirements.

## Nurse Support

Nurses looking for more support can find it on the Digital Nurse Network:

Twitter: [@digitalnurseNHS](#) Email: [digitalnursenetwork@nhsx.nhs.uk](mailto:digitalnursenetwork@nhsx.nhs.uk)