



# Information for adult social care providers

## Covid-19 and Flu

### Bulletin 112 – 21 October

Dear colleague,

#### Importance of seasonal flu vaccinations

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's more important than ever to prevent the spread of flu and avoid the danger of contracting both flu and COVID-19. This will help to protect vulnerable people, as well as the NHS and social care. All social care workers who are in direct contact with people who receive care and support are encouraged to get the flu vaccine.

Vaccination reduces the spread of flu among staff and people receiving care and support, keeping social care services running and reducing the burden on the NHS during the winter. This is true every year, but it is particularly important this year, as COVID-19 is still in circulation. People who catch flu and COVID at the same time this winter are much more likely to have a very serious outcome than those who have COVID-19 only.

Most people who can get a COVID-19 booster vaccine are also eligible for the annual flu vaccine. A short video on the winter vaccination programme can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/QQitHbIXyN8>. If you are offered both vaccines, it's safe to have them at the same time.

We strongly urge you to encourage your staff to take up the offer of a free flu vaccination as soon as possible – you can have it at:

- your GP surgery
- a pharmacy offering the service: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/pharmacy-nhs-flu-vaccine-service>
- your midwifery service if you're pregnant
- a hospital appointment

Find out more about the flu vaccine at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/>

Information on flu vaccination for social care providers is at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-immunisation-for-social-care->

[staff/flu-immunisation-for-social-care-and-hospice-staff-guidance-for-providers](#). It states that *'Staff can access the NHS complementary scheme by presenting at their registered GP practice or community pharmacy and self-identifying as a social care worker. GP practices and pharmacies have been informed that social care workers can receive free vaccinations and do not need to present ID. However, it may be helpful to provide employees with a letter stating they are a social care worker.'* Please note that although such a letter is not required, we will be distributing a template letter to adult social care providers later this week for workers to use if they wish.

## **COVID-19 protection and boosters**

Like some other vaccines, levels of protection from the COVID vaccinations may begin to wane over time. COVID booster doses will help to extend the protection from the first two doses and reduce the chance of suffering from COVID-19.

The booster is being offered at least 6 months after your last dose and, like previous doses, will be given in your upper arm. It may take a few days for your body to build up some protection from the booster and the dose should help to extend your protection into the next year.

Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective – some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be much less severe. The booster will help to reduce the risk of needing admission to hospital due to COVID-19 infection this winter.

Please see [bulletin 108](#) for detail and how workers can access their booster.

Sustained community transmission is occurring across the UK. All organisations should ensure reliable application of all infection prevention and control recommendations and assurance on adherence, that PPE is available and in supply, and that all staff training is up to date.

## **Webinar recording on medical exemption for care home workers**

A recording of a recent online webinar on vaccination as a condition of deployment (VCoD) in care homes is now available [here](#). The content discussed also includes the CQC enforcement approach, and workforce issues.

Claire Armstrong, the Director of Adult Social Care Delivery and COVID-19 Response at DHSC, has provided [further details on exemptions](#) including self-certification in a letter sent to care colleagues and local authorities.

## **Being ready for your care home's vaccination visit**

Please have all paperwork, including consent forms, ready for the vaccination team's visit to your care home to administer COVID-19 boosters and/or the flu vaccination. This considerably speeds up the process and makes better use of your time and that of the vaccination team.

## **Reminder of end of consultation for mandatory vaccinations in health and social care**

As you know, in September the government launched a consultation on extending mandatory vaccination to frontline health and wider social care staff in England. The consultation proposals state that staff working in these areas may be required to have COVID-19 and flu vaccinations.

We'd like to remind you that the consultation closes this week at 23.45 on Friday 22 October 2021. The consultation document and survey are available [here](#).

## **Reminder of 'extending free PPE to care sector beyond March 2022' consultation**

Just a reminder that the national consultation on extending free PPE beyond March 2022 ends at 23.45 on Sunday 31 October 2021.

The proposals and response survey are available [here](#). Alternatively, you can send your responses and any supporting evidence to [PPE.strategy@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:PPE.strategy@dhsc.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

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The archive of all previous COVID-19 provider bulletins released since March 2020 can be found at <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/working-with-you-during-coronavirus>