



Department
of Health &
Social Care

DHSC guidance for community pharmacies in England providing seasonal flu vaccination as part of NHS Pharmaceutical Services on accessing DHSC centrally supplied flu vaccines

Published 2 November 2020

Updated 20 November 2020 to include information on the expansion of the programme to all 50-64 year olds on 1 December 2020.

Summary

As you will be aware, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has announced its intention to run the largest flu programme ever in the 2020 to 2021 flu season. Part of this includes a drive to increase uptake in existing cohorts eligible for a free vaccine under the NHS programme, and also expansion to new groups. In order to support the expanded vaccination programme, DHSC has secured an additional supply of influenza vaccines, which arrive later in the season to top up local supplies once they run low. We are now able to confirm the process by which community pharmacies in England providing seasonal flu vaccination as part of NHS Pharmaceutical Services will be able to access this additional stock.

Guidance for GPs and other NHS Providers has been released separately.

Please note, that the stock will be available from November.

In designing the process for accessing additional stock, consideration has been given to how community pharmacies currently source and administer flu vaccinations. It has been designed to limit the impact on business as usual vaccinations and supply chains. We also have a responsibility to balance this with the need to protect and mitigate risks of unintended use, as this is a taxpayer funded programme. With this in mind, additional stock allocations for community pharmacies will be available to purchase via wholesalers, so pharmacies will be able to order and pay for flu vaccines in the usual way from wholesalers.

Initially, additional flu vaccines that community pharmacies purchase can be used to vaccinate patients and frontline social care workers, as set out in appendix A of the [community pharmacy seasonal influenza vaccination advanced service specification document](#), and those using a community pharmacy as part of an occupational health scheme, only in the case of frontline health and social care workers.

Additional flu vaccines may also be used to vaccinate 50 to 64 year-olds from 1 December 2020. In addition, other patients, such as private patients and others as part of occupational health schemes, may be offered a vaccine if surplus stock is available and DHSC notifies community pharmacies that this is permissible. DHSC will make a decision on this later in the season, once vaccinations of the most 'at-risk' groups have been prioritised.

How to order additional stock

This guidance covers community pharmacies in England. Guidance for [GP practices](#) and other [NHS providers](#) has been issued separately.

1. Assess if there is a need for further flu vaccines by assessing current and expected uptake rates in eligible cohorts compared with your current vaccine supply (including ensuring that you have received all of the vaccines you have ordered from suppliers for each eligible cohort). You should only be accessing additional stock if you have allocated or used all of your locally ordered stock.
2. Place an order for additional stock from your wholesaler. You may be asked to confirm that you will only use these vaccines to vaccinate one of the specific groups:
 - group A: patients and frontline social care workers as set out in appendix A of the community pharmacy Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Advanced Service specification, and frontline health and social care workers through occupational health schemes
 - group B: 50 to 64 year-olds
 - group C: all other patients under private provision or occupational health schemes

Initially, additional vaccines must only be used to vaccinate group A. Later in the season, when vaccination is well underway and uptake can be assured in group A, DHSC will notify community pharmacies that they will be able use additional vaccines to vaccinate patients in group B. After this, DHSC may then notify community pharmacies that it's permissible to use additional vaccines to vaccinate patients in group C. It should be noted that vaccines used under group C are not claimable or reimbursable under the NHS service.

3. Community pharmacies will be required by wholesalers to sign a self-certification declaration before they can access additional stock. Community pharmacies may be required by wholesalers to self-certify that:
 - you have allocated all of the locally procured flu vaccines and any additional flu vaccines you have previously ordered, including any vaccines yet to be delivered, for the cohort(s) that you require additional vaccine for
 - you agree not to return any of your local stock order for those cohort(s) to suppliers, as additional stock is only to be used after all of your local stock for a particular cohort has been exhausted
 - you will only use additional stock to vaccinate patients specified as eligible. Initially those patients and frontline social care workers as set out in appendix A of the [community pharmacy seasonal influenza vaccination advanced service specification document](#), and frontline health and social care workers through occupational health schemes. Later, if directed by DHSC, you may use additional

vaccines for 50 to 64 year-olds and other patients under private provision and other occupational health schemes

- you will not be able to return additional stock to wholesalers

4. Community pharmacies should [submit claims](#) for eligible vaccinations administered in the usual way.
5. NHS Business Services Authority Provider Assurance (NHSBSA) team will be conducting post payment verification (PPV) on flu service claims, as they have in the past, on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI). This will also include any vaccinations offered under the NHS service using the additional stock. Any anomalies identified will be dealt with via the NHSBSA's usual PPV processes, with cases that cannot be resolved with the contractor escalated, with full support and information, to the NHSEI regional team for resolution.

Community pharmacies are advised to keep appropriate records to support their claims so if requested by NHSEI or NHSBSA information is available.

Contractors found as part of the NHSBSA Provider Assurance PPV processes to have used the additional vaccine stock outside these conditions or claimed inappropriately through the NHS service when administered as a private service may be subject to further action.

Table 1: additional vaccines available to order from wholesalers

Manufacturer	Product	Vaccine type	Ovalbumin content micrograms per dose
GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)	Fluarix Tetra	QIVe (standard egg-grown quadrivalent influenza vaccine), split virion, inactivated	Equal to or less than 0.05 micrograms per
Seqirus	Adjuvanted Trivalent Influenza Vaccine	aTIV (egg-grown trivalent influenza vaccine), surface antigen, inactivated, adjuvanted with MF59C.1	Equal to or less than 0.2 micrograms per 0.5 ml dose
Seqirus	Flucelvax® Tetra	QIVc (cell-grown quadrivalent influenza vaccine), surface antigen, inactivated	Egg-free
Mylan	Quadrivalent Influvac® sub-unit Tetra	QIVe (standard egg-grown quadrivalent influenza vaccine), surface antigen, inactivated	Equal to or less than 0.1 micrograms per 0.5 ml dose

Other products may also become available. Deliveries will commence in November, and stock will be phased to wholesalers throughout the season. Wholesalers will alert community pharmacies on when stock is available to order, and will advise on delivery times, ordering limits and pricing information. Deliveries will be made as part of the usual deliveries to community pharmacy from wholesalers.

Frequently asked questions

1. What stock is available?

See [table 1](#). Sufficient stock is available for eligible groups. DHSC has worked with all manufacturers of adult flu vaccines to increase supply for use in England. There are a range of products available to cover eligible cohorts.

2. Which wholesalers will stock be available from?

Additional stock can be accessed from Alliance Healthcare, McKesson UK and PHOENIX Healthcare Distribution. This list will be updated as stock becomes available from more wholesalers.

3. Are there restrictions on the volume of vaccines a pharmacy is able to order at one time or in total?

No additional restrictions have been put in place for ordering limits however wholesalers may apply their usual demand management approaches to ensure equitable access for pharmacies.

4. Am I limited in ordering from my main wholesaler?

You should use your main wholesaler in the first instance, and you should have used or allocated all of your local stock before placing an order.

5. Who can be immunised with vaccine with the additional stock?

In line with the aim of the national flu immunisation programme, in the first instance, additional stock can be used to vaccinate patients and social care workers who fall into eligible groups set out in appendix A of the [community pharmacy seasonal influenza vaccination advanced service specification](#) and frontline health and social care workers through occupational health schemes. From 1 December 2020, additional central vaccines may be used to vaccinate 50 to 64 year-olds. Later in the season additional central vaccines may be used for other patients under private provision however DHSC will notify community pharmacies if they are able to use vaccines for these groups.

6. What identification do I need to request to see to prove someone is a frontline health or social care worker?

Eligible frontline health and social care staff can be vaccinated using additional vaccines (under the NHS Advanced service or occupational health services) by presenting at a community pharmacy and self-identifying as a frontline health or social care worker. These staff do not need to present ID. However, employers have been advised that it may be helpful for these groups to present a letter stating they are a frontline health or social care worker.

7. What are the requirements for recording the use of vaccines?

Recording of vaccinations should be undertaken using your normal IT system as with your other NHS flu vaccinations. Claims will be submitted as normal via the NHSBSA MYS platform.

8. Can I use additional stock to vaccinate social care workers who are eligible for a free vaccine?

Yes, community pharmacies can use additional vaccines to vaccinate social care staff who are eligible for a free vaccine under the [community pharmacy seasonal influenza vaccination advanced service specification](#).

9. Can I use additional stock for private patients or for occupational health schemes?

Initially additional stock should only be used to vaccinate patients under the NHS national flu programme. You may also use additional vaccines for occupational health schemes, but only for frontline health and social care workers. Once vaccination of these groups is well underway, DHSC may notify community pharmacies that the central stock may be used to vaccinate other private patients. From 1 December 2020 additional vaccines may be used to vaccinate 50-64 year olds.

10. I have currently used up all of my stock of aTIV, but am expecting another delivery of aTIV from my normal order. Can I order aTIV from the additional stock so I don't have a temporary shortage?

No. Additional stock can only be used once a community pharmacy's locally procured stock supplies have been exhausted/fully allocated and cannot be used to fill temporary shortfalls in the availability of locally procured vaccines.

11. Can I order additional vaccines if I have run out of vaccine for one cohort but not another? For example, running out of QIVe but not aTIV, if I am not expecting to receive any more QIVe.

Yes. If you have run out of a vaccine for a particular cohort, you can access the additional stock even if you have stock or further deliveries pending of another vaccine for use on a separate cohort. For example if you have run out of QIVe to vaccinate at-risk individuals aged 18 to 64 and aren't going to receive any more, but still have a local order of aTIV to vaccinate individuals aged over 65 yet to arrive, you can place an order for QIVe from the additional stock.

12. Which brands of vaccine are available from DHSC? Are they suitable for all ages and clinical needs?

Vaccines have been ordered by DHSC from several manufacturers. See [table 1](#). This was done to reduce the likelihood of the additional stock being seriously affected should a problem occur with a single manufacturer.

Health professionals accessing additional stock will have a choice of flu vaccines and should order the vaccine(s) best suited to their patient population, in line with Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) guidance as set out in the [national flu immunisation programme 2020 to 2021](#) letter and [green book](#) advice on the suitability of each product for different age groups and clinical needs such as severe egg allergy (anaphylaxis). More detailed information is available from the [manufacturers' summaries of product characteristics](#).

13. Can multiple orders for additional stock be placed at the same time?

Stock is available to order from wholesalers and is subject to their delivery schedules. This has been done to match current arrangements many community pharmacies have when ordering their own flu vaccines. Wholesalers will alert community pharmacies on when stock is available to order, and will advise on delivery times, ordering limits and pricing information. Deliveries will be made as part of the usual deliveries to community pharmacy from wholesalers. DHSC will collect data on orders placed with wholesalers and will monitor ordering by individual community pharmacies.

14. Do I have to pay for additional stock?

Yes. Additional stock for community pharmacies has been made available via wholesalers in order to match arrangements that community pharmacies currently have to purchase flu vaccines. Any of these vaccines offered under the NHS Advanced Service for flu vaccinations can be claimed for reimbursement (and remuneration of the service fee) in line with normal flu vaccinations. This approach also allows for the use of additional stock

for occupational health schemes and potentially for other private use, in line with the restrictions detailed above.

15. How will payments for vaccinations administered under the NHS Advanced service work?

Payments for additional flu vaccines administered under the NHS Advanced service will work in the same way as other locally procured vaccines. You should submit your claim via the NHSBSA MYS flu platform as normal, and you will receive a fee for providing the service and a reimbursement value for the vaccine.

This does not apply to vaccines administered to frontline health and social care workers through occupational health schemes or any other private services, where use of additional stock are allowed to be used.

16. What if, even after purchasing additional stock, I do not have enough stock to meet demand?

Where possible you should signpost patients to other providers in your area that still do have stock available.

Further Information

If you have any further queries, please contact england.fluops@nhs.net.

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