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| News Alert |
| Saturday 17th July 2021 |

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|  | Further details on the 2021/22 flu vaccination programme announced |  |
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|  | Further to the updated NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) flu letter published on 1st April 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Public Health England (PHE) and NHSE&I have jointly published a second letter to provide further information on the national flu immunisation programme for 2021/22.The letter highlights the risk of a lower level of population immunity against influenza because of non-pharmaceutical intervention measures taken to protect the population in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As restrictions lift and the population returns to pre-pandemic norms of social mixing and social contact, the letter draws attention to how this could result in the 2021/2022 winter having co-circulation of seasonal influenza virus (and other respiratory viruses) and COVID-19. With modelling suggesting the influenza impact could be up to 50% larger than that typically seen, it reinforces the message that the vaccination programme will be essential to reduce pressure on the health and social care system this winter.Contractors are advised to read the [**national flu immunisation programme update letter**](https://psnc.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=86d41ab7fa4c7c2c5d7210782&id=22e66bcf4d&e=d19e9fd41c) in full but a summary of the key information for contractors is provided below.**Eligible groups**The expanded influenza vaccination programme introduced in the 2020/21 season continues and the letter confirms that the vaccination of 50 to 64-year-olds will, as part of measures to protect those aged 50 years and older from the risk of hospitalisation, also continue as a temporary measure.**Increasing uptake**Building on the moment of last year's achievements and the successful roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, the Government wants to achieve an even greater ambition in the 2021/22 season. Additionally, the aim is to reduce levels of inequality with no group or community having an uptake of more than 5% lower than the national average.As part of this, providers of flu vaccination are encouraged to put plans in place to try and increase provision amongst those living in the most deprived areas and from ethnic minority and underserved communities, as well as ensuring equality of access.**Pharmacy Advanced service documentation**The Directions, service specification and Patient Group Direction for the Community Pharmacy Flu Vaccination Advanced Service 2021/22 will be published in due course; PSNC will inform contractors once these are available through its usual communication channels.[**Read more on the PSNC website**](https://psnc.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=86d41ab7fa4c7c2c5d7210782&id=71d08e3d7f&e=d19e9fd41c) |  |
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