



NHS Flu Vaccination Service from Community Pharmacies

On 9th May 2016 NHS England announced the re-commissioning of the NHS Flu Vaccination service from community pharmacy for 2016/2017 flu season. At the time of writing this article the details of the 2016/2016 service specification and PGD have not yet been published. However, according to the PSNC we are expecting the terms of the service to remain the same as last year and we do not expect any significant differences in the service specification compared to last year.

In order to provide the service it is important that pharmacists and pharmacy premises meet certain criteria and that pharmacy support staff are also prepared. Below is a checklist of the common questions that we get asked by pharmacists. Please note; some of the aspects are not yet confirmed as we do not have the NHS service specification or PGD; however, it would be prudent to use last years service specification and PGD to make preparations.

1. Likely service time scales - The NHS Service is likely to commence from 1st September 2016 and finish on 28th February 2017
2. Premises requirements - It is important that your pharmacy premises meets the premises criteria as defined in the service specification. This includes having a private consultation room, which is clearly designated as an area for confidential consultations. The consultation room must allow the patient and pharmacist to sit down and the consultation should not be overheard outside of the consultation room while speaking at normal speaking volume. The consultation room must meet the GPhC standards for registered premises.
3. NHS BSA registration – Prior to providing the service the NHS contractor must sign up to service delivery through the NHS BSA website
4. Competency requirements – The NHS contractor must ensure that all pharmacists that provide the service are competent to do so. This means that all pharmacists must complete a declaration of competence (DoC) - to be done every 2 years. Signing the declaration of competence whilst not meeting the competencies may constitute or be treated as a fitness to practice issue. The contractor must keep copies of each DoC at the pharmacy premises.
5. Hepatitis B vaccination – The Pharmacy contractor must advise staff that are involved in this service to be vaccinated against Hepatitis B; and they should be advised of the risks if they choose not to be vaccinated.



6. Service availability – If the pharmacy contractor signs up to deliver the service then the service must be provided throughout the pharmacy’s contracted opening hours.
7. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) – The pharmacy must have relevant SOPs for providing this service. The SOPs should include dealing with needles stick injuries and managing emergencies.
8. Service provision outside of the pharmacy premises – In last years service specification it was possible to deliver the service outside of the pharmacy premises where a request was received from a long-stay care facility. Annex C of the service specification provided more details of what to do in this case. In summary the pharmacy must request permission from the NHS Area team before providing the service, and it must also have robust SOPs which include maintenance of the cold chain of flu vaccines.
9. Training requirements – Whilst the Health Protection Agency’s (HPA) National Minimum Standards for Immunisation Training specifies that face to face training should be undertaken every two years, it is important that pharmacists delivering the service feel competent to do so. Each pharmacist is required to declare their own competence; and therefore as a minimum requirement they should feel competent to:
 - a. administer injections in accordance with manufacturer recommendations
 - b. understand the NHS service specification and PGD
 - c. have a good understanding of influenza and the vaccination of it
 - d. be able to manage emergencies such as anaphylaxis, and be able to provide basic life support
10. Advertising of the service – Pharmacies can and should inform patients that they are providing this service, and that the patient can choose whether they receive the service from the pharmacy or their GP practice. Promotional posters and leaflets are available to download or order from Public Health England (these can be accessed via the PSNC website). In addition to this Sanofi-Pasteur provides free printed posters and leaflets which can be ordered directly from its website: www.flu-protect.co.uk

Whilst the above checklist covers some of the important aspects of the NHS flu vaccination service, it is not an exhaustive list and pharmacists must read and understand the NHS service specification and PGD when it is published.

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