NHS Sheffield Community Pharmacy Seasonal Flu Vaccination Programme for hard to reach at risk groups 2012-13 (and catch up campaign for over 65s)

Service Evaluation

The Seasonal Flu Vaccination is now available here, free of charge, on the NHS for people under 65 and in an at risk clinical group.

At Risk Groups:
- All Pregnant Women
- Long term health conditions such as: Diabetes; A chest problem such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, COPD; A heart problem; Kidney disease; Liver disease; A neurological condition such as Parkinson’s, motor neurone disease; A low immune system due to disease such as cystic fibrosis or Crohn’s disease or treatment such as chemotherapy; Have previously had a stroke; A problem with the spleen such as sickle cell disease or if the spleen has been removed.

If you fall into one of these groups, please speak to a member of staff for further information and to arrange your vaccination.

If you are over 65, are a main carer or live in a residential or nursing home you should arrange to have the vaccination via your local GP.

Service commissioned by NHS Sheffield

Supported by
Sheffield Local Pharmaceutical Committee
Supporting Community Pharmacy
www.sheffieldlpc.co.uk
Background and aims

The seasonal flu influenza programme for winter 2012/13 issued by the Department of Health included the offer of protection to those in the clinical at risk groups as a defined target. 2012/13 results\(^1\) showed that 51.3% of registered Sheffield patients aged between 16 and 65 were vaccinated, against a recommended target vaccination rate of 70%.

NHS Sheffield Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment is a strategic document that can be used as a commissioning tool. It identified the uptake of vaccines and immunisations, that didn’t meet recommended targets as a particular need that community pharmacy could support. Whilst this had particular reference and focus to childhood immunisation, the principle of community pharmacy contribution can be extended to flu immunisation targets.

The Community Pharmacy Seasonal Flu Vaccination Programme had 2 elements. Firstly, to engage hard to reach at risk groups, commissioned by NHS Sheffield and delivered from 1 September 2012 to 31 March 2013 and secondly, a catch up element targeting over 65s who had not received the immunisation by 1 November.

The programme had three main aims:

- To increase awareness of the importance of flu vaccination - only targeting those between the ages of 18-65 in the at risk target groups;
- To provide a vaccination service to those between the ages of 18-65 in the at risk target groups, improving patient access and choice to flu immunisation services – with the planned effect of contributing to overall flu vaccine uptake;
- To provide a ‘catch up’ service to immunise patients over 65 years who had missed out on opportunities at their GP surgery for the immunisation.

Service description

The programme was delivered by 24 community pharmacies and was only available to patients resident in the Sheffield PCT area. Contractors had to meet the following requirements to assure quality of the service provided:

- Prior to commencement of the service, Pharmacists had undertaken and self-funded accredited training, which met the national requirements for immunisation. This included underpinning clinical knowledge, vaccination technique, life support and anaphylaxis;
- Suitable premises and consultation room facilities, in line with the NHS Sheffield infection control guidance and room specification for Community Pharmacies;
- Conditions required in the NHS Sheffield Patient Group Direction (PGD) as the legal framework for the administration of the vaccine.

\(^1\) NHS Sheffield Flu Immunisation Update Data 2012/13
Pharmacists were required to establish that patients using the service were within one of the at risk groups which was recorded on a patient questionnaire. Appropriate information and advice about the vaccine were given to each individual and any concerns discussed before consent was obtained and the vaccine given. Within 24 hours of vaccination, the patient’s registered general practice was supplied with the vaccination details, allowing recording onto the patient’s clinical record in a timely manner.

Community Pharmacies were responsible for sourcing and maintaining their own vaccine supply via the usual pharmacy supply chain arrangements. Most pharmacies receive twice daily deliveries. No stock availability issues were reported during the programme.

National and local seasonal flu campaign materials were limited for 2012/13 and Sheffield Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) provided various health promotion materials (figure 1) to support the programme in pharmacies. The aim of these materials was to raise awareness of all patient groups considered high risk and where immunisation services could be accessed. A collaborative approach was a key element of the programme, which including signposting to GP where appropriate.

**Figure 1 Promotional material**

The Seasonal Flu Vaccination is now available here, free of charge, on the NHS for people under 65 and in an at risk clinical group.

**At Risk Groups:**
All Pregnant Women; Long term health conditions such as: Diabetes; A chest problem such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, COPD; A heart problem; Kidney disease; Liver disease; A neurological condition such as Parkinson’s, motor neurone disease; A low immune system due to disease such as cystic fibrosis or Crohn’s disease or treatment such as chemotherapy; Have previously had a stroke; A problem with the spleen such as sickle cell disease or if the spleen has been removed.

If you fall into one of these groups, please speak to a member of staff for further information and to arrange your vaccination.

If you are over 65, are a main carer or live in a residential or nursing home you should arrange to have the vaccination via your local GP.

Service commissioned by: Sheffield
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Figure 2 Service support materials available on Sheffield LPC website
Pharmacies were paid the same fees as GPs – cost of vaccine and the administration fee. There were no additional costs to NHS Sheffield for pharmacy provision.

**Service Activity Overview**

Community Pharmacies used the NHS Sheffield pharmacy data reporting platform to report activity levels and claim payment. The use of the platform has been agreed in partnership with Sheffield LPC to streamline data reporting and to ensure robust data is available for NHS Sheffield to easily analyse the engagement and delivery of the service for evaluation.

**Number of vaccines administered**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Vaccines Administered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2012</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>573</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Patient demography**

The table below shows the postcode area in which patients received their vaccine. To a large extent the results were driven by the location of the 24 providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pharmacy postcode</th>
<th>Number of Vaccines Administered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
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<td>S9</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
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<td>S10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
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<td>S13</td>
<td>81</td>
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<td>S14</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
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<td>S20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>573</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Patient Reported Outcomes

To assure NHS Sheffield around the patient opinion and feedback to the service, pharmacies were required to ask patients to complete a questionnaire during the required post vaccination 10-minute observation period.

504 patients completed the anonymous questionnaire (Figure 3), which represented 87% of patients that received the seasonal flu vaccination, allowing confidence in the views and opinions given.

*Figure 3 Post Vaccination Questionnaire to gather patient reported outcomes*
Summary of Findings

From 504 completed questionnaires, 93 patients (19%) said they would not have had the vaccination if they had not had it offered and administered in the pharmacy (Figure 4). Of these, 42 patients were having the vaccination for the first time.

Figure 4 Alternative choices to community pharmacy for flu vaccination

If this pharmacy could not provide a flu jab today, where would you have had the flu vaccine this year?

100 respondents (20%) to the questionnaire received the flu vaccination for the very first time (Figure 5). This was a drop from the smaller patient sample in 2011-12 of 36% receiving the vaccination for the first time.

Figure 5 Flu Vaccination for the first time
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Figure 6 Reason for choosing community pharmacy

290 (58%) patients expressed convenience as the reason for choosing community pharmacy as a location for receiving the seasonal flu vaccination (Figure 6). No waiting queue, no appointment needed and easy access also featured as fairly strong opinions, potentially indicative of comparisons with other providers.

The need for the vaccination was identified alongside the dispensing process, as well as opportunistically during sales of over the counter medicines. The community pharmacy environment lends itself to a walk in service without the need for an appointment allowing vaccination to take place there and then. This for many patients proved more convenient and preferable.

99% of patients said that they considered the service provision good or excellent (Figure 7) when responding to the question about service rating.

Figure 7 Service Quality Rating
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**GP/Practice Feedback**

It is clear that the pharmacy service had not impacted on uptake of vaccine from practices, given that there was no decrease in GP vaccination rate.

Anecdotal evidence suggest there was the beginning of a collaborative approach amongst practices, as a small number of pharmacies facilitated further supplies of vaccine to practices that had run out. A small number of patient referrals from practices to pharmacies were reported.

**Pharmacy feedback**

The 24 pharmacies participating in the programme were located in a variety of settings including high street, supermarket, health centre, close to GP surgery and in the city centre.

The feedback from Pharmacies was a positive one; utilising the clinical skills of Pharmacists and fitting with the growing health and wellbeing offer from community pharmacies across the city.

**Overall Seasonal Flu Vaccination Performance for Sheffield – Under 65 at risk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Vaccination rate target</th>
<th>% Vaccination rate achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
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**Conclusions**

- As demonstrated by the activity and patient feedback, the programme achieved its three main aims as outlined earlier.
- There was a significant increase in activity from 170 immunisations in 2011/12 to 573 in 2012/13 with double the pharmacy providers.
- Community pharmacy demonstrated it was safe, effective and efficient at delivering an NHS flu vaccination service.
- 503 patients that completed the questionnaire said they would have the vaccine administered in a pharmacy again, citing an excellent service that was convenient and did not require them to wait of have an appointment as the main reasons for doing so.
- As intended, the programme proved to be a complementary intervention, which did not detract from general practices providing their seasonal vaccination service in full as planned.
- From the city wide figures it is clear there is still a need to increase the uptake of vaccination in the under 65 at risk clinical groups and pregnant women.
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- Commissioners did not incur additional costs as community pharmacies invested in the appropriate training, accreditation and facilities, in line with the any qualified provider model.
- The programme delivered in line with QIPP aspirations, delivering high quality preventative services, in an innovative, cost effective way.

Recommendations

To improve the city-wide uptake of all patients eligible for the NHS seasonal flu vaccination, and given the Department of Health has set an uptake target of 75% for at risk patients in 2013/14 it is recommended that:

1. NHS England careful considers An NHS seasonal flu immunisation service for all eligible patients is offered by all interested pharmacies that can meet the quality criteria;

2. The service runs between September to March inclusive;

3. Vaccination of all target groups by all providers is supported by the entire 127 pharmacy network across the city, via a health promotion campaign during September 2013. This could be achieved by using the public health campaign service as part of the national pharmacy contract;

4. Greater collaboration and co-ordination between practices and community pharmacies should be encouraged to help capture the missing under 65’s in an at risk clinical group or pregnant women. A variety of service providers, working together, providing different access - yet consistent quality around seasonal flu immunisation, will maximise outcomes and benefits for patients.

These recommendations fit with guidance outlined by the Department of Health in the ‘Seasonal Flu Plan Winter 2012/13’, which said:

*Community pharmacies are increasingly providing both NHS and non-NHS flu immunisation services. This is both convenient for, and liked by the public. Pharmacies can also alert patients who are in at-risk groups of the need for vaccination, where they do not administer the vaccines themselves. During the period of transition, as new commissioning arrangements are formed, commissioners may wish to consider the continuation of local innovative services where there is clear evidence of beneficial outcomes.*

In addition this service is ideal to sit within the ‘Healthy Living Pharmacy’ initiative that is underway in the city, as part of a wider national pathfinder project, recognised in the public health white paper ‘Healthy lives, healthy people’. NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group is committed to the role of community pharmacies in the health and wellbeing of their communities.

Image Credits

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