

WELCOME TO FLU HQ

Show the flu you mean business

Community Pharmacies offer easy and accessible flu advice and help as well as vaccination services.



In Pharmacy Vaccination Programme

Influenza (flu) is a highly infectious disease and an unpredictable pressure that the NHS faces every winter. In England and Wales, it is estimated that 18,500-24,800 deaths are attributable to influenza infections annually. Flu has led to 19,000-31,200 hospital admissions and 799,00-1.164 million GP consultations per year, equating to a £24 million cost to the economy. The Department of Health's seasonal flu vaccination programme aims to protect those people deemed more at-risk from the virus (people aged over 65 years or those 'at-risk' from serious complications due to clinical circumstances), by providing free flu vaccinations via GPs.

The NHS is being asked to plan to reach uptake of 75% for people aged under 65 years in clinical risk groups for 2013/14.

By the end of the 2011/12 flu vaccination season, just over

51% of people under 65 years in clinical risk groups had been vaccinated against flu, resulting in approximately 2.4 million people unprotected.

Achieving higher uptake levels will be demanding but we believe by developing a pharmacy vaccination service that brings greater access and convenience to those people seeking to protect themselves against flu this is achievable. Our aim is to work with NHS to support and encourage the commissioning of pharmacy flu vaccination services via Public Health England.

The rationale is to provide high quality vaccination services for patients in local and convenient settings. The belief is that working together, GPs, nurses and pharmacists are in the prime position to translate patient needs into vaccination services that best deliver what local people want.

Speak to a friendly face at your local community pharmacy

The Rationale – Increasing access through Community Pharmacy

As high street healthcare businesses, community pharmacies are intrinsically accessible, flexible and responsive to the needs of their customers. Community pharmacies located near train or bus stations are particularly convenient for working commuters and the travelling public.

Those community pharmacies that are open 6 or 7 days a week are able to serve patients outside of the working hours of both the patients and the GPs surgeries and are therefore capable of extending vaccine provision. Community pharmacies in town and city centres and in retail parks are particularly convenient for patients going about their usual activities of working, shopping and other family activities. Community pharmacies operate at the heart of the community, and yet provide healthcare services to people who are often hardest to reach but who need it the most.

Community Pharmacy Unfulfilled Potential?

Community Pharmacy is a patient-led service network which in today's demanding 24/7 society, is the only professional healthcare network that is readily accessible wherever people live, work or travel. This is why community pharmacies in South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw receive over 10 million visits every year. The high footfall in Community Pharmacy (research by the RPSGB shows that 84% of the population visits a pharmacy at least once a year), together with unrivalled accessibility and location clearly establishes Community Pharmacy as the partner of choice in reaching high numbers of people. In particular Community Pharmacy is able to access those in disadvantaged communities and those who are not registered with GP practices. In addition pharmacies' customers and patients regularly report that they trust them and find them reliable.

Community pharmacies are visited by both unwell and healthy people of all ages and social groups. They are ideally placed to deliver a primary care based vaccination service.

Community Pharmacies & Flu Vaccination

Since 2008, there has been an initiative aimed at improving service access in the community to help improve uptake of flu vaccinations. The In-Pharmacy Flu Vaccination Programme provides a comprehensive training and support programme to community pharmacists for the delivery of seasonal flu vaccinated, or via Public Health England commissioned service for those eligible for a free flu vaccination paid for by the NHS.

Over the last few years the NHS have fallen short of the target number of patients to be vaccinated. Their response seems to have simply been 'repeat again next year' it is highly probable that, particularly for the under 65 age group, many of whom will be in employment, some of the barriers to uptake will include, the restricted opening hours, group vaccination and need for an appointment all required by GP surgeries.

Benefits for patients

- Pharmacy offers a more flexible and convenient option for getting vaccinated, with 'drop-in' clinics and extended opening hours compared to traditional clinics
- Less burden on the GP practices to provide flu vaccinations, frees up nurse time for other patient needs

Benefits for the NHS and public health

- Relieves the pressure on GP practices providing vaccinations during flu season
- Increased uptake reduces the number of people getting flu and the spread of the virus
- Potential to reduce the number of GP consultations and hospital admissions
- Trained pharmacists could provide additional resource to administer vaccinations in periods of increased demand e.g. during a pandemic.

Flu Vaccination in Sheffield

During 2012/13 24 pharmacists in Sheffield contributed over 500 vaccinations, in a programme targeted towards hard to reach risk groups, followed by a catch up campaign for over 65's.

Patient reported outcomes from the programme, showed that 19% of patients responding to the post vaccination questionnaire, said they would not have had the vaccination if they had not had it offered and administered in the pharmacy. 99% of patients said that they considered the service provision good or excellent.

We wish to work with local stakeholders to find ways to better use the skills of Community Pharmacy teams.

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Providing NHS services

