**[insert location] PHARMACIES GAVE RECORD NUMBER OF FLU JABS THIS WINTER**

Community pharmacists across England gave almost 1.2 million NHS flu jabs this winter, with pharmacists in [insert location] providing [number] of those jabs. Beating the million mark makes this a record year for community pharmacy provision of the NHS Flu Vaccination Service.

As part of the NHS service, pharmacists have been vaccinating adults aged 65 years and over and those aged 18 years or over and in clinical risk groups. Local pharmacies have been able to offer people a convenient location in which to be vaccinated, often on a walk-in basis. This has been particularly important as the NHS faced its worst winter in seven years, with GP practices and hospitals being put under huge pressure.

Last year 99% of those who had the NHS flu jab at their local pharmacy said they would be willing to use the service again and the figures for [insert location] certainly show that the community continue to value the service.

NHS leaders have also shown their support for community pharmacies with a campaign urging the public to use pharmacies rather than GPs as their first port of call for minor health concerns.

Local pharmacist [insert pharmacist name] told us about how [his/her] pharmacy team has [insert relevant text e.g. given more flu vaccinations than last year (either on the whole or perhaps more to a particular patient group) / used an interesting advertising campaign to raise awareness of pharmacy flu vaccinations etc.]. [He/she] also explained the value local people placed on being able to access face-to-face advice from a healthcare professional without the need for an appointment.

[Insert pharmacist name] comments: “This winter community pharmacies were relied upon more than ever. As well as making sure those who were eligible for an NHS flu jab knew that we could provide it at a time to suit them, we gave plenty of advice on common winter illnesses.

We are the first port of call for many local people on healthcare matters and our regular patients and the wider community really value our support. This has particularly been the case over the winter months with coughs, colds and flu all becoming more common, and GP practices and hospitals already working flat out.”

[Insert LPC representative name] said: “As many patients in [insert location] will know, our local community pharmacies do far more than just dispensing medicines, especially in during winter. They offer a whole range of services such as providing NHS flu jabs, helping to ease pressure on our GPs and hospitals.

We’re really proud of how our local pharmacies have been doing raising flu vaccination levels and being there for people during the recent spell of hazardous weather. But we believe the Government should be making even better use of pharmacies; we would love to offer even more services to help local people to stay healthy, and reduce pressure on other local healthcare services.”

**Notes for Editors**

About community pharmacy

Your local pharmacy is more than just a place to get medicines. It provides a range of NHS services and ensures people can get face-to-face, healthcare professional advice without an appointment.

There are around 11,700 community pharmacies in England, so for most of us, there’s one very close by. In fact, 96% of people can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes by walking or using public transport. Community pharmacists provide rapid access, without appointment, to a healthcare professional and offer a range of clinical and public health services. Around 99% of community pharmacies in England now have private consultation rooms, where you can talk with your pharmacist without being overheard.

You might be surprised at what pharmacies now offer: personalised medicines advice, help to quit smoking and to maintain good sexual health, treatment for common ailments, advice on preventing disease. And more. It’s a package of care…not just packets of pills!

What’s more, pharmacies are part of the fabric of local communities. They provide local employment and are a health and social care asset close to where people live, work and shop.

Community Pharmacy NHS Flu Vaccination Service 2016/17

8,451 community pharmacies in England (71.2%) signed up to provide the national Flu Vaccination Service after their pharmacists undertook the required training, and 950,765 NHS flu jabs were administered in a community pharmacy.

Further national statistics are available from: <http://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PSNC-Briefing-068.17-Services-Infographic-%E2%80%93-Community-Pharmacy-NHS-Flu-Vaccination-Service-201617-The-patient-verdict.pdf>

NHS England’s ‘Stay Well Pharmacy’ campaign

Running from 12th February to 31st March 2018, this campaign aims to increase the public’s trust and confidence in community pharmacy teams as the place to go for clinical advice for minor health concerns, encouraging people to use pharmacies rather than visiting their GP as a first port of call.

Contact

[xxx] Local Pharmaceutical Committee represents community pharmacy contractors (owners) in xxx. For further information on this press release please contact:

[Contact details including phone and email]