[Date]

Dear [PCN Clinical Director]

I am writing to let you know that over the coming weeks, community pharmacies across your PCN will be coming together to discuss how they can support key NHS priorities, focusing specifically on one topic that forms part of priority patient services and local system resilience. These discussions have been prompted by [**NHS England and NHS Improvement’s new Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS)**,](https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-quality-payments-scheme/pqs/) which commenced on 1st September 2021.

Within the scheme, there is one domain that requires community pharmacy contractors to collaborate within PCN geographies and to work with the PCN. This is to support the provision of NHS flu vaccinations for patients aged 65 years and over. You will be aware that both community pharmacy and general practice are being incentivised through the PQS and the [**Impact and Investment Fund**](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/investment-and-impact-fund-2020-21/) respectively, to work collaboratively to increase the number of eligible patients vaccinated.  As part of this, community pharmacies in the PCN geography will be sharing a draft community pharmacy flu vaccination plan with you via the PCN Pharmacy Lead.

To support this work, the PCN Community Pharmacy Lead [LPCs can add Leads name if the wish to personalise] will be in touch with you and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss and understand the PCN’s flu vaccination plans. This will enable the pharmacies to also consider these plans as part of their collaborative working.

I have attached a short briefing to provide you with some further background information and a short summary of the requirements of the PQS.

Please feel free to contact me directly should any further information or assistance be needed.

Yours sincerely

[Chief Officer’s details]

**Briefing for Primary Care Network Clinical Directors - Pharmacy PCN Leads and the Pharmacy Quality Scheme 2021/22**

**Background**

As part of the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF), community pharmacies are being encouraged, via the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS), to come together within their Primary Care Network (PCN) footprints to work more collaboratively both between themselves and with their PCNs on the provision of priority patient services.

Under the previous PQS initiative in late 2020/21, pharmacies came together to:

* focus on increasing the number of patients aged 65 years and over who receive a flu vaccination; and
* improve local system resilience through working together to consider their business continuity planning and sharing aspects of these plans with their PCN.

For the 2021/22 PQS, pharmacies have again been asked to work together to focus on increasing the number of patients aged 65 and over who receive a flu vaccination. This requirement is aligned to a similar element included in the GMS Investment and Impact Fund.

This collaborative work will be facilitated by our identified Pharmacy PCN Lead; the LPC will be able to provide the contact details of the lead for your PCN if you do not already have them.

The CPCF funding for this role remains limited, so while it is hoped that the lead’s interactions with the PCN will foster greater ongoing mutual understanding, dialogue and integration on a range of matters, initially they will understandably need to have a clear focus on the requirements of the PQS.

**PQS requirements for 2021/22**

**Flu vaccination for the 65 years and over group**

The scheme requires that the Pharmacy PCN Lead has engaged with the PCN Clinical Director to agree how community pharmacies in the PCN will collaborate with general practice to increase the overall vaccination uptake in the 65 years and over group. The aim of this domain is to reduce the risk of harm from the influenza virus for all patients aged 65 and over and to reduce pressure on the NHS during winter.

[Insert your LPC name] will be working with all partners to facilitate these interactions, and to perhaps propose what such collaboration may involve. It may be that sharing and discussing some basic information on how pharmacies and practices are planning to overcome the challenges faced in service delivery this year for this cohort would be a sensible approach, so that the overall “offer” to patients is better understood by all.

For more information on this PQS requirement please see:

[**psnc.org.uk/pqs**](https://psnc.org.uk/pqs) (Domain 4).

NHS England and NHS Improvement’s inclusion of this requirement within the PQS is seeking to support the integration of the community pharmacy network within PCNs. We hope that PCN Clinical Directors will feel able to support this aim.