

To:

- Chief Executives of all NHS trusts and foundation trusts
- Chief Nursing Officers of all NHS trusts and foundation trusts
- Medical Directors of all NHS trusts and foundation trusts
- All GP practices
- All community pharmacies

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Dear colleagues,

Achievements and developments during 2020/21 season

The 2020/21 NHS Annual Influenza Vaccination Programme has been the most successful in the history of the programme. Despite the pandemic, the hard work and diligence by NHS and social care providers has resulted in our best uptake levels yet. In addition to implementing good practice identified from previous years, the 2020/21 programme was supported by new developments to information technology systems. For the first time, a national call/recall service to support primary care and school aged provision was implemented. In another first, NHS school age vaccination services used a NIVS to record data in a standardised and more timely manner resulting in much less duplication of effort and manual reporting. Informed by more timely data, the NHS has been able to offer vaccinations more successfully to eligible individuals regardless of where they live, their ethnicity, disability or other individual circumstances.

During 2021/22, the NHS will be undertaking further work to further increase uptake, improve equity, and build on the developments achieved so far in data and technology to get further granularity, accuracy and electronic interoperability of data.

JCVI advice on influenza vaccines for 2021/22

In November 2020 the JCVI published advice on the use of influenza vaccines in the UK for the 2021/22 season.

NHS providers delivering influenza vaccinations to health and social care professionals are encouraged to review the JCVI advice¹ and order vaccines in line with NHS England and NHS Improvement reimbursement guidance below.

¹ <https://app.box.com/s/t5ockz9bb6xw6t2mrrzb144njplimfo0/file/737845224649>

Vaccines reimbursed as part of the NHS Seasonal Influenza Immunisation Programme 2021/22²

The following JCVI-recommended vaccines will be reimbursed as part of the NHS Annual Influenza Vaccination Programme for adults in 2021/22.

Those aged 65 years and over	At-risk adults, including pregnant women, aged 18 to less than 65 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aQIV • QIVc (where aQIV is not available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QIVc • QIVe (where QIVc is not available)

JCVI considered the use of QIV-HD in those aged 65. However, because of a significantly higher list price QIV-HD is **not** eligible for reimbursement under the NHS Annual Influenza Vaccination programme for 2021/22.

JCVI also considered the use of QIVr in both those aged over 65 and those aged 18 to 64. However, it is **not** eligible for reimbursement under the NHS Annual Influenza Vaccination programme for 2021/22 at this stage. Further guidance may be issued on this vaccine.

Influenza vaccines for eligible children are centrally procured by Public Health England and are supplied free of charge via ImmForm. These vaccines will NOT be reimbursed as part of the NHS Annual Influenza Vaccination Programme.

All children aged from 2 years old to those in school year 6, and children in clinical risk groups aged 2 to <18 years	Children aged 6 months to less than 2 years in clinical risk groups (for whom LAIV and QIVc are not licensed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAIV • QIVc (if contraindicated to LAIV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QIVe

Uptake ambitions for programme - vaccine ordering and planning

In planning for the forthcoming influenza vaccination season, all providers should identify and work closely with their designated CCG flu lead and their regional Public Health Commissioning Team, to ensure the effective planning and delivery of the 2021/22 NHS Annual Influenza Vaccination Programme.

All providers should plan their influenza vaccine ordering to at least equal the high levels of uptake achieved in 2020/21. For frontline healthcare workers, providers should plan to achieve a 100% offer of vaccination to all appropriate staff groups. School aged influenza vaccination services should plan to achieve at least 75% uptake across all commissioned year groups.

² Prices and suppliers of the vaccines can be found here: <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/medicinal-forms/influenza-vaccine.html>

Hospital trusts should continue to vaccinate pregnant women under their care and in addition should work with their regional Public Health Commissioning Teams to offer vaccinations to all those eligible individuals considered clinically at risk through in and out-patient appointments. Trusts should ensure they order sufficient vaccines to fulfil their contractual obligations in this regard.

Manufacturers will start to produce volumes of vaccines shortly based on the orders they have received. Please submit your order as soon as possible.

For reference, the uptake achievements for each cohort as of 28 January 2021 are as follows:

Eligible groups	2020/21 season uptake
Aged 65 years and over	81%
Under 65 clinical at-risk group	52%
Pregnant women	44%
Children aged 2 and 3 years old	58%*
All primary school aged children from reception to year 6 (January data not currently available)	75% ambition
Frontline health care workers	100% offer

* based on the higher 3 year old uptake

Community pharmacies should plan their ordering on the basis of meeting at least the numbers of vaccinations they achieved during the 2020/21 season.

As with 2020/21, there may be policy developments to extend the eligible cohorts during 2021/22. These developments will be informed by the levels and impact of COVID-19 infection to the population. In this situation, should additional cohorts be introduced, further advice will be communicated as soon as possible.

Further information will be provided on the policy decisions on offering an alternative to LAIV for children whose parent/guardian does not consent to the vaccine on grounds of objection to the porcine gelatine content, and on extending the complementary offer of a free NHS vaccination to adult social care workers in 2021/22.

Yours faithfully,



Professor Stephen Powis
National Medical Director
NHS England and NHS Improvement