



Wednesday 23rd September 2020

To: All GP Practices & Community Pharmacies: Surrey & Sussex
Letter by email

Dear Colleagues,

NHS Seasonal Flu Vaccination Programme 2020-21

We are writing to all practices and pharmacies following discussions between Surrey & Sussex Local Medical Committees (LMCs) and Local Pharmaceutical Committees (LPCs), about the 2020/21 seasonal flu vaccination programme.

Community Pharmacy and GP practice teams have both been delivering flu vaccination services for several years now under national commissioning arrangements. This current flu vaccination season is certainly going to be more challenging than in previous years, not least because of pandemic related issues, but also because there is likely to be increased demand and the expectations of NHS England & Improvement (NHSE&I) Infection Protection and Control guidance.

We would like to set out some important and new elements for this year:

Working Together & Joint Incentives

Now more than ever, we would encourage close co-operation between colleagues, including talking to each other at both individual and Primary Care Network (PCN) level. This should include the vaccination service they are planning to offer and agree how best to work together locally in the interest of patients. To facilitate this, for the first time, NHS England & Improvement has introduced a joint incentive for community pharmacy and general practice at a PCN level.

The main aim of the joint incentive is to collectively reduce the risk of harm from the influenza virus for all patients aged 65 and over and to reduce pressure on the NHS during the winter. This will be funded through the [PCN Impact and Investment Fund \(IIF\) – PR01](#), and the [Pharmacy Quality Scheme \(PQS\) domain 4 PCN](#) prevention respectively. Participating pharmacies and GP practices will be rewarded for achieving at, or above, a specified percentage point (70.1%-77%) for flu uptake of patients aged 65 and over, and the key point is the achieved threshold represents an aggregate uptake level in this cohort, regardless of where the patient was immunised.

Frequently asked questions about different aspects of GP practice and community pharmacy flu service funding streams, beyond the joint incentive can be found [here](#).

Promotion of Immunisation Services

GP Practices and Community Pharmacy colleagues are equally at liberty to advertise and promote their immunisation services and we would encourage you to pro-actively do so, but both the LMCs and LPCs would urge colleagues not to express this in ways that undermine the other's professionalism in the eyes of each other and our patients.



Notification Arrangements (Community Pharmacy to GP practice)

In line with the respective service specifications, we urge that information about vaccination should be passed promptly and accurately to the patient's practice, using electronic means. Community Pharmacies across Surrey, Sussex and Kingston and Richmond will be using the PharmOutcomes or Sonar IT systems to record and transmit vaccine notifications.

GP practices will receive the full details of the vaccination including Read Codes, in a PDF document via NHSmail and can add any additional information to the patient record manually as appropriate. Some GP systems can receive structured information, which means details can be added directly to a patient's GP record, without having to transcribe the information manually.

GP practices should ensure they monitor these communications. **As a matter of urgency, practices that haven't already nominated and activated a secure email for notification purposes, can email helpdesk@phpartnership.com visit <https://pharmoutcomes.org> and message the help desk team.**

Changes this year – Residential and Care Homes

There have been additional flexibilities introduced to support immunisation delivery during the ongoing pandemic. GP practices can vaccinate in the residential/care home, residents and staff who are registered with the practice, and there are provisions for community pharmacies to provide the same scope of service.

This means that local discussion will be needed planning of vaccination to residential care / nursing home residents and staff. We would recommend local colleagues should consider historical plans, especially where vaccine stock has already been allocated to residential/care homes by a provider.

To facilitate the transfer of locally held vaccine stocks, NHSE&I have recently issued [new guidance](#), which may be helpful if acute local challenges arise.

Both the LMCs and LPCs are committed to helping resolve any difficulties that may arise throughout the season. Colleagues are asked to contact their own representative committees in the event of any concerns and refer each other to their counterparts as below.

With best wishes

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