

- To:
- All GP practices
 - All community pharmacies
 - All dental practices
 - All general ophthalmic services

NHS England and NHS Improvement
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- cc.
- Regional directors of primary care and public health
 - Heads of primary care commissioning
 - Heads of public health commissioning
 - Regional medical directors
 - CCG, ICS and STP primary care leads
 - Regional PCN leads

29 September 2021

Dear Colleagues,

The national influenza programme 2021/22 – vaccination of frontline primary care health care workers and available funding

Further to the [letter](#) published on 17 July 2021 we are writing with some further updates on the vaccination of frontline health and social care workers.

We are in the position to now confirm that additional funding is available to general practices and community pharmacies to vaccinate all eligible primary care contractors (general practices, pharmaceutical services, dentists and general ophthalmic services) and their frontline staff, including locums, for this influenza season (1 September 2021 to 31 March 2022). For the first time, this also includes frontline patient-facing NHS primary dental or general ophthalmic contractors and their frontline staff. Primary care contractors are expected to support the vaccination of frontline staff through occupational health services already in place, or encourage their staff to visit a general practice or community pharmacy to be vaccinated¹.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has published advice on the coadministration of flu and COVID-19 on 14 September, and where it is operationally practical COVID-19 and influenza vaccines may be co-administered, although the COVID-19 booster vaccine programme should not disrupt or delay the deployment of the

¹ Contractors should use the current definition of healthcare workers as set out in chapter 12 of the Green Book to determine which of their staff should be vaccinated. In addition, non-clinical staff directly involved with the provision of NHS services on a day to day basis who have face to face contact with patients will also be eligible for NHS vaccination this season.

influenza programme. Both programmes are important for individual and public health, especially over winter 2021 to 2022.²

Influenza vaccination for primary care staff and the patient group direction and national protocols updates

As you will be aware the JCVI has advised that all frontline health and social care workers are expected to have influenza vaccination to protect those they care for and that includes frontline primary care staff.³

For this influenza season (1 September 2021 to 31 March 2022) all eligible primary care contractors and their frontline staff, including locums, will be able to receive an influenza vaccination from any general practice or community pharmacy. Primary care contractors and frontline staff are those involved in patient-facing frontline provision of NHS primary care services, including non-clinical reception and counter staff who play an integral part in patient-facing care on a day-to-day basis in primary care settings. Any primary care contractors and their staff not involved in patient-facing frontline provision of NHS primary care services are not included in the definition of frontline staff. Please refer to chapter 12 of the [Green Book](#) for further details.

The Patient Group Direction and National Protocols for Influenza vaccines will be updated shortly to take into account this new eligible cohort.

Update for general practices

The [Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme Enhanced Service Specification 2021/22](#) has been updated for this year only to enable practices to vaccinate primary care contractors (primary medical services, pharmaceutical services, primary dental services or general ophthalmic services) and their frontline staff, who are either registered with the GP practice or not registered with the GP practice, and who elect to receive their vaccination from the GP practice.

This means that practices will be able to claim an Item of Service fee for vaccinating eligible primary care staff in accordance with the Enhanced Service specification, regardless of whether they are registered with the practice or not. Practices may claim the Item of Service fee for vaccination of eligible Patients in this group from 1 September 2021 when the Enhanced Service commenced. GP practices may claim a dispensing fee as set out in paragraph 16(2) and 16(3) of the NHS General Medical Services Statement of Financial Entitlements Direction 2021.

² [JCVI statement regarding a COVID-19 booster vaccine programme for winter 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [National flu immunisation programme 2021 to 2022 letter - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Additional funding is being made available to general practice. As such, practices will be required to provide a manual report (return) on the numbers of staff employed by primary care contractors who have been vaccinated under these arrangements. This collection of data is to assure us that primary care colleagues are protected as quickly and effectively as possible and are able to continue their vital role in supporting the care of others, and further information will be made available.

Where eligible primary care staff are not registered with the GP practice and elect to be vaccinated by the GP practice, the GP practice should first register the patient within their existing GP clinical systems using the Immediately Necessary Treatment (INT) registration status, then code the vaccination event as 'needs influenza vaccine' on or after 1 September 2021. Additional guidance on the recording of vaccination events for all eligible patients that are not registered with their practice in the GP IT clinical systems is appended.

Frontline health and social care staff employed by a registered residential care or nursing home, or a voluntary managed hospice provider may be vaccinated by any GP practice either as a registered or unregistered patient.

Co-administration

The template [Collaboration Agreement](#) has been updated to enable synergistic delivery and/or co-administration of the seasonal influenza vaccine arrangements, where it is operationally practical and clinically appropriate to do so, under the Enhanced Service specification: Seasonal influenza vaccination programme 2021/22.

Update for community pharmacies

The [Community Pharmacy Seasonal Influenza Advanced Service Specification](#) has been updated for this year only to enable community pharmacies to vaccinate primary care contractors (primary medical services, pharmaceutical services, primary dental services or general ophthalmic services) and their frontline staff, who elect to receive their vaccination from the community pharmacy.

This means community pharmacy will be able to claim an Item of Service fee for vaccinating eligible primary care staff as defined in the Advanced Service specification. Community pharmacy may claim the Item of Service fee for vaccination of eligible Patients in this group from 1 September 2021 when the Advanced Service commenced.

Update for dental practices and ophthalmic providers

Eligible clinical and non-clinical frontline patient-facing NHS primary dental or general ophthalmic contractors and their frontline staff may visit a general practice or a community pharmacy to be vaccinated. Any non-clinical staff not directly involved with

the provision of patient-facing NHS services on a day-to-day basis (for example cleaners, back office administrative staff, counter staff) are not eligible for vaccination under this scheme.

We are very grateful to all you are doing to maximize uptake of the flu vaccine this autumn/winter. Please continue to everything you can to protect your staff.



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Annex A: Further Guidance for practices on recoding influenza vaccination events for eligible patients who are not registered with the GP practice

General practices should not administer flu vaccinations to any patients that are not registered with the practice outside of the groups specified in the Service Specification.

Recording the vaccination event for eligible patients who are not registered with the GP practice

Practices should first register the patient within their existing GP clinical system using the Immediately Necessary Treatment registration status. Please note that the Immediately Necessary Treatment registration status is being used for administrative purposes to create a patient record for the purposes of flu vaccination **only** and does not obligate the vaccinating practice to provide Immediately Necessary Treatment owing to an accident or an emergency to patients not registered with the practice that they are administering a flu vaccination to.

Practices should then code the vaccination event as follows:

1. as per the usual process for registered patients, for those patients that fall into either:
 - frontline health and social care staff employed by a registered residential care or nursing home, or a voluntary managed hospice provider; or
 - those living in: long-stay facilities; nursing homes; other long-stay health or social care facilities; or a housebound patient; and
2. using the 'needs influenza vaccine' code for eligible NHS primary care contractors and their frontline staff.

The vaccination event record will then flow via the Data Processing Service (DPS) to the patients registered practice where it will be recognised and therefore excluded from the standard GPES extract count.

Payment process

Vaccination events recorded within the GP clinical system in line with the above process for the period 1 September 2021 to 31 March 2022 will be extracted via a one-off end of season GPES extraction in early 2022/23. Payment of the Item of Service fee will be made to the GP practice that has administered the vaccination. Further information regarding the timescales for the extract and the one-off payment will be provided in due course.

Drug reimbursement

Practices should claim reimbursement for the cost of purchasing flu vaccines administered to patients not registered with the practice in the usual way by submitting the FP34PD form (or FP34D form for dispensing contractors) to the NHSBSA.

Transfer of records to the patient's registered practice

For practices using SystemOne (TPP), EMIS web (EMIS) and Vision 3 (Cegedim) clinical systems the record of the vaccination event will be automatically transferred from the practice that delivers the vaccination on an INT basis to the patient's registered general practice clinical system via NHS Digital's Data Processing Service. No further action is required by the vaccinating practice or the patient's registered practice apart from where there are abnormal conditions which would require action.

Please note that the Immediately Necessary Treatment registration status is not available in EMIS web PCN hub, Vision Anywhere or Vision 360 system so flu vaccination events in respect of patients registered with another practice should not be recorded within these systems.

Further information is available [here](#) and includes system specific guides.