

## Seasonal Influenza Update

### Background

Flu occurs every winter in the UK and is a key factor in NHS winter pressures. It impacts on those who become ill, the NHS services that provide direct care, and on the wider health and social care system that supports people in at-risk groups. For most healthy people, flu is an unpleasant but usually self-limiting disease with recovery taking up to a week. However, older people, the very young, pregnant women and those with a pre-existing health condition (in particular diabetes, heart disease, chronic respiratory conditions like asthma or those with a weakened immune system) are at risk from the more serious effects of flu. These people are entitled to take up a free flu vaccine via their GP.

### Flu vaccination of frontline health and social care workers

Frontline care workers are more likely to be exposed to the influenza virus particularly during the winter months when some of the individuals they work with may be infected. The impact of flu on frail and vulnerable patients in communities, care homes, and in hospitals can be fatal. NHS organisations and local authorities need to ensure that appropriate measures are in place for offering flu vaccination to their health and social care workers with direct patient contact. As part of your duty of care to your patients or residents you should do everything in your power to protect them against all infections. **This includes implementing good hygiene and infection prevention such as hand hygiene as well as getting vaccinated against flu.**

### Flu checklist for care homes

- How many residents do you have?
- What plans have you made to get your residents vaccinated?
- How many staff do you have?
- Do you promote and provide flu vaccination amongst your care staff?
- How many of your staff are vaccinated against the flu?
- Where are your staff vaccinated?
- Did you know you can get vaccines from a local pharmacy?