

1 February 2018

**To: GP Practices and Community Pharmacies in Sheffield**

Dear Colleagues

**Seasonal Influenza Vaccination**

Influenza is a potentially life-threatening infection which is most prevalent in the months October to May. To limit the impact of this illness the national seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) programmes run from September to March with the aim of providing sufficient population coverage as to achieve herd immunity. The SIV programme is designed to protect individuals as well as the population as a whole. However, the latter is only achievable with widespread uptake of an effective vaccine.

The flu vaccination service is an NHS Service and it is expected that GPs and Pharmacists who are commissioned to provide the service will work together to achieve the intended aims to improve vaccine uptake amongst the eligible population whilst offering patients the choice of where to access their vaccination. Unfortunately, it appears to have led to a competitive environment where providers are fighting to vaccinate patients first.

We expect GPs and Pharmacists to maintain professional integrity at all times and to practice in accordance with the code of ethics as set out by each profession's regulator. NHS England (NHSE) expects that the guidance issued for delivery of the Flu Vaccination Service by General Practice or Community Pharmacy will be followed in all respects.

Since the flu vaccination programme commenced for 2017/18 NHSE has been provided with evidence of inappropriate materials and communications sent to patients. We would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to remind all contractors that any promotion of the flu vaccination service, either verbally or written must not be provided in any way as to undermine the service offered by either profession and evidence of such will be dealt with seriously by NHSE and may result in referral to the relevant regulator. This includes any insinuation or proclamation that vaccinations offered by another are less effective, less safe, or that other providers have lack of capacity to deliver the commissioned service.

The NHS Constitution provides patients the right to choose where they have their flu vaccinations delivered from and, as such, Practices and Pharmacies must not make bold statements that instruct patients not to go to an alternative provider.

Further things to consider are itemised below and the attached appendix provides additional pointers for your information which we hope you find useful:

- Patients have a constitutional right of choice of provider;
- Informed consent is required before any procedure;
- Patients can feel threatened that their future care may be affected if they do not make a certain choice;
- Poor relationships between healthcare providers may impact upon the delivery of high quality care in the future.

Yours sincerely



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**Chief Officer**  
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**Duncan Couch**  
**Executive Officer**  
**Sheffield Local Medical Committee**

## Appendix A

### NOTIFICATION TO GP PRACTICES OF VACCINATIONS UNDERTAKEN BY PHARMACIES

Pharmacists need to ensure timely notification to practices when patients have been vaccinated in the community. This should either be via the automated PharmOutcomes email system or by completion of the national template that is part of the advanced service specification documentation via NHS.net. This will ensure robust data collection and support risk management through instant notification.

### PATIENT CONSENT

The NHSE form for patient consent is available via:

<http://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Flu-Vaccination-Record-and-Consent-Form-2017-18.pdf>

The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) guidance states:

*Consent - as with the provision of any pharmacy service, the patient must consent to being vaccinated. The General Pharmaceutical Council's Guidance on Consent provides information on consent for pharmacists and their teams: [https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/in\\_practice-guidance\\_on\\_consent\\_may\\_2017\\_0.pdf](https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/in_practice-guidance_on_consent_may_2017_0.pdf).*

*Patients who consent to participate in the Flu Vaccination Service must complete a consent declaration before being administered the vaccine; this consent declaration is part of the national Flu Vaccination Record and Consent Form (Annex D of the service specification). Completion of this form grants consent to the administration of the vaccine and the sharing of information about the administration of the vaccine with the patient's GP practice. It also grants consent for the sharing of relevant information, where appropriate with NHS England and the NHS BSA for the purpose of post payment verification.*

*Information for patients - Each patient being administered a vaccine should be given a copy of the manufacturer's patient information leaflet about the vaccine.*

### VACCINATING CARE HOME PATIENTS

One of the eligible patient groups for the service is people living in long-stay residential Care Homes or other long-stay care facilities. The Flu Vaccination Service must be provided on the pharmacy premises in the consultation room, but where a community pharmacy contractor has been asked to vaccinate people in a long-stay residential Care Home or other long-stay care facility, and the contractor agrees to vaccinate these patients, they may do this at the Care Home/facility if this is approved by the local NHSE team.

The protocols in Annex C of the service specification must be followed. This includes the need to contact each patient's GP practice prior to seeking consent from the local NHSE team. The request form sent to NHSE requires the contractor to declare that they have undertaken this already, so it is imperative that this is undertaken before the declaration is completed. Request forms, which are available via the link below, should be sent to [england.sybprimarycare@nhs.net](mailto:england.sybprimarycare@nhs.net) prior to any immunisations being undertaken. NHSE should respond within five working days of receipt of the request.

<http://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/advanced-services/flu-vaccination-service/flu-vaccination-providing-the-service-in-care-homes/>