



Flu vaccination guidance for social care workers and carers

All frontline workers in a social care setting are eligible for the flu vaccine and are encouraged to protect themselves and those they care for.

Flu is a serious virus that can cause severe respiratory illness. In England, around 8,000 people die every year from flu, and thousands more need hospital treatment. We want to ensure that those delivering care and those being cared for are as well protected from the flu virus as they can be. Having the flu vaccine provides the best protection and helps prevent individuals from getting flu and from spreading it to other people.

How to get the flu vaccine

All frontline social care workers are eligible to get the flu vaccine to protect yourself and those you care for.

In some cases, your employer may offer the vaccine through work.

If your employer does not offer the vaccine, you can access a free flu vaccine from the NHS, by visiting your GP or a local community pharmacy and self-identifying as a social care worker.



The scheme is available to all frontline workers employed by the following types of social care providers:

- a registered residential care or nursing home
- registered domiciliary care provider
- a voluntary managed hospice provider
- Direct Payment (personal budgets) or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants (PAs)

Why you should get a flu vaccine

Getting the flu vaccine will help protect yourself and those you care for from illness during the busy winter months. For people in at-risk groups, such as older people or those with an underlying health condition, flu can be a serious disease and can cause death.

As someone delivering social care or as a carer, you will be caring for many people in these at-risk groups. Getting the vaccine will also mean you are much less likely to spread flu to them and will help to protect those you are caring for and help to keep care services running and reducing the burden on them this winter.

Identification needed to prove you are a social care worker or carer

If accessing the NHS complementary scheme, you may need to present proof of your employment at your registered GP or community pharmacy when receiving the flu vaccine.

If you are asked to provide proof some of the things you could use are:

1. A letter from your employer
2. An ID badge
3. A payslip

If you are a carer, you may be eligible for the flu vaccine if you are the main carer of someone who is elderly or disabled and who would be at risk if you got sick, or you receive a carer's allowance. This includes some people who provide unpaid care, for example a family member, close friend or neighbour. You should let your GP or pharmacy know this when you arrive for your flu vaccine.

Effectiveness of the flu vaccine

The flu vaccines used in the national vaccination programme have a good safety record. The vaccines are thoroughly tested before they are made available in England.

You may have a mild fever and aching muscles a few days after having the vaccine and your arm may be sore at the injection site. Further information is available on possible side effects. If you have had an allergic reaction to a flu vaccine in the past, please speak to your GP.

The flu vaccine is the best protection we have against flu. There's not a 100% guarantee that you won't get flu if you've been vaccinated.

However, even if you do get flu after being vaccinated, studies have shown that you're likely to have a much milder and shorter illness.

You cannot catch flu from the flu vaccine because there are no live viruses in the adult flu vaccine.

Getting the flu vaccination every year

New flu vaccines are produced every year to protect against the strains most likely to be in circulation, which is why people are advised to be vaccinated every year. Also, the protection from the vaccine you had last year will decrease over time.

When to get the flu vaccine

The best time to have a flu vaccine is in the autumn, from October to end of November.

For information on flu vaccination for [social care and hospices providers](#) and [personal assistants](#) please see specific flu vaccination guidance available [here](#).

