



Flu vaccination guidance for social care and hospice providers

Flu is a serious virus that can cause severe respiratory illness.

In England, an average of around 8,000 people die every year from flu, and thousands more need hospital treatment. Every year we see a number of outbreaks of acute respiratory illness in care settings. 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. **Vaccinating your staff against flu is the best way to help ensure this protection.**



The vaccination is required every year

Flu viruses change over time. The vaccines are made each year in advance of the flu season and help protect against the strains of the virus that are most likely to circulate that year. It is unknown when flu will start circulating this year, but it is usually late autumn.

The best time to have a flu vaccine is in the autumn, from October to end of November, however, it is still possible to have the flu vaccine later in the winter, although it's best to get it earlier before flu starts circulating.

What is my responsibility to my staff?

Frontline workers who are in direct contact with people who receive care and support services should be encouraged to get the flu vaccine to help protect themselves and those they care for.

As an employer, it is your responsibility to help protect your staff, the people using your services, and to ensure the overall safe running of your organisation.

You should commission or implement a service which makes access to the flu vaccine easy for all staff, encourages staff to get vaccinated, and monitors the delivery of the programme. This may be via an occupational health service if you have access to one.

If you have an occupational health scheme, you can ask for a GP Practice or local pharmacy to vaccinate staff on site, or purchase digital or paper flu vouchers online, which staff can use at eligible pharmacies.

Alternatively, frontline staff employed by the following types of providers without employer-led occupational health schemes are also eligible for a free flu vaccine via the NHS complementary scheme:

- A Care Quality Commission (CQC)-registered residential care or nursing home or hospice
- A CQC-registered domiciliary care provider
- A voluntary managed hospice provider
- Direct Payment (personal budgets) or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants

Staff can access the NHS complementary scheme by presenting at their registered GP practice or community pharmacy and self-identifying as a health or social care worker. Health or social care workers may need to present ID at GP Practices and pharmacies when they arrive for their vaccination.

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

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

For information on flu vaccination for [personal care assistants](#), [social care workers](#) and [unpaid carers](#) please see specific flu vaccination guidance available [here](#).



How can we plan for success?

Steps you may wish to take to encourage good uptake of the flu vaccine amongst your staff members:

- have a written, up to date flu vaccination policy either as a stand-alone document or as part of another policy, for example infection control – these should cover both resident and staff vaccination
- identify a lead member of staff with responsibility for running the flu vaccination campaign
- plan the communications campaign early so that all staff members are aware of the process and can access the vaccines – set a target for uptake
- use resources such as posters, leaflets, and digital tools, which can be downloaded from the [Campaign Resource Centre](#) and – you will need to register or sign in to access the materials for this campaign or to place orders for paper resources available for free from <https://find-public-health-resources.service.gov.uk>
- at the end of the season review the campaign, discuss and record successes, challenges and learning points for next year
- make it easier for your staff to get vaccinated. If possible, give them time off to attend their appointment. Encourage them to speak to you if they need help, and support them with practical things such as finding their nearest vaccination site on the NHS website



www.nhs.uk/vaccinations