



## Flu Vaccinations 2021/22

Dear Colleague,

September is here and the start of the annual flu vaccination service in general practice and community pharmacy.

In light of COVID -19, it is more important than ever that we are working together to ensure patients are vaccinated during 2021/22. Pharmacy and General Practice have a role to play in identifying and engaging these patients and vaccinating to keep people out of hospital this winter to help protect the NHS. We feel it is in everyone's interest to have a joint approach in promoting flu vaccinations.

We realise that general practitioners and community pharmacists are reliant on the income generated through vaccination services, but the focus must be on enabling patients to access vaccination at times and venues which suit them, to ensure maximum uptake to reduce winter pressures, across primary and secondary care, by keeping people out of hospital this winter.

This winter, from the start, flu will be available to anyone over 50 years old along with health and social care workers. The Government wants to achieve a minimum 75% uptake, for flu vaccination, across ALL eligible groups which means a significant increase in the number of flu vaccinations delivered. Neither profession can vaccinate all these patients alone and continue to provide business as usual functions as we are contracted to provide by NHSE.

This year the new Primary Care Network (PCN) Investment and Impact Fund will encourage greater uptake of flu immunisations for those 65 years and over. Immunisations given in community pharmacy will count towards this and practices will be notified of any vaccinations given in a community pharmacy.

We would encourage General Practices and Community Pharmacies to talk to each other at all levels, ICS, CCG, PCN and practice level about the vaccination services they plan to offer and agree the principle that patients have the right to choose where they have their vaccinations. Representatives of the LMC and LPC will support this at ICS and CCG level and you need to do this at a local level (PCN and practice).

We need to acknowledge that we both understand our populations and have a responsibility to reduce health inequalities as such need to work together to target under vaccinated populations. Effective messaging campaigns:

- Must not deter patients from using one sector over another
- Must not infer that one sector offers an inferior service to the other

Patient choice is the foundation of today's National Health Service; and ensuring that patients are enabled to make a choice that suits their lifestyle and meets their needs should underpin delivery of any service we offer. General Practice and Pharmacy are both private businesses and are both facing pressures to deliver services and maintain income, however if we work together to reach as many patients as possible then all services will have a successful flu season.

Many thanks,

Peter Higgins- Chief Executive, Lancashire & Cumbria Consortium of LMCs

Kath Gulson - Chief Executive Officer, Community Pharmacy Lancashire

Lynn McFarlane – Chief Officer, Community Pharmacy Cumbria