



Berkshire Seasonal Influenza Campaign; 2019-20 flu activity summary, final vaccine uptake figures and plans for 2020-21

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Executive Summary

1. **Background** - Seasonal influenza (Flu) is a key factor in NHS winter pressures. The National Flu Plan aims to reduce the impact of flu in the population through a series of complementary measures. Flu vaccination is commissioned by NHS England for groups at increased risk of severe disease or death should they contract flu.

Key aims of the immunisation programme are to;

- Actively offer flu vaccine to 100% of people in eligible groups
- Immunise 65% of eligible children, with a minimum 40% uptake in each school
- Maintain and improve uptake in over 65s and clinical risk groups with at least 75% uptake among people 65 years and over and 75% among health and social care workers

2. **Role of local authorities and CCGs** - the National Flu Plan states that the role of local authorities in the flu programme is to provide advocacy and leadership through the Director of Public Health and to promote uptake of flu vaccination among eligible residents and among staff providing care for people in residential and nursing settings. Local authorities are responsible for providing flu vaccine for frontline health and social care workers that are directly employed. Local authorities may also provide vaccine to staff members as part of business continuity arrangements. The role of CCGs is to provide quality assurance and improvement which extends to primary medical care services delivered by GP practices including flu vaccination and antiviral medicines. In Berkshire, CCGs, Local Authorities, NHS England and providers work collaboratively to provide advocacy, leadership and quality assurance of the programme aiming to protect and improve the health of all residents.

3. **Local uptake –**

Uptake among GP patients aged 65 and over was higher in Berkshire LAs compared to England as a whole, except for Windsor and Maidenhead where it was marginally lower, and Slough where uptake was significantly lower..

Among under 65's in clinical risk groups, uptake was higher across most of the Berkshire LAs, however none of them achieved the national ambition (55%) in terms of flu vaccine uptake

Among pregnant women, uptake was similar to or above the England figure in all LAs with the exception of Slough. No Berkshire LA achieved the national ambition in terms of flu vaccine uptake for this group. All LAs saw an increase in uptake in this group compared to the previous group, except for Slough (where uptake was 8.5% lower than in 2018-19) and Windsor and Maidenhead. The general trend of increasing uptake is in contrast to a decrease nationally.

Uptake among children aged 2 years was higher than in 2018-19 for all Berkshire LAs. There is no figure available at the national level for 2019-20, as it is now collated nationally as a combined figure for both 2 and 3-year-olds together.

Uptake among children aged 3 years demonstrated a mixed picture. As figures are not available at the national level for 2019-20, comparison with previous years figures show that all LAs except Reading and Slough have higher uptake than England as a whole. There was a significant decrease in uptake compared to the previous year in Bracknell, West Berkshire and Wokingham which may reflect issues around access to the vaccine.

School-aged children – All LAs achieved the 40% lower ambition, with Bracknell Forest, RBWM, Wokingham and West Berkshire exceeding the 65% upper ambition

Healthcare workers – Uptake among staff in Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust, Frimley Health Foundation Trust and Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust has increased compared to the previous flu season

4. **Summary of 2019-20 campaign**

Local Authority public health teams actively promoted flu vaccination to eligible groups using a range of channels and worked with commissioners and providers during the season to identify issues.

Overall Berkshire performed well in the 2019-20 flu season, however, there remains considerable variation in uptake between GP practices, both within and between CCGs. There is scope to improve communicating uptake to practices throughout the flu season and to improve the way patients are invited for vaccination. Myths and misconceptions regarding vaccines remain an important barrier to uptake.

A key issue in vaccine delivery during the 2019-20 programme was the delay in delivery of the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), affecting both general practice and the schools flu programme. As a result, providers were only able to access the vaccine for 30% eligible cohort, forcing clinical prioritisation with high-risk children vaccinated first, followed by 2-year olds and then 3-year olds. This may account for the slight decrease in uptake by 3-year olds during the 2019-20 season. Nevertheless, increased uptake was otherwise seen in nearly all areas with the introduction of new cohorts proving successful. The introduction of e-consent in the school immunisation programme in other parts of the Thames Valley led to an increase in the number of consent forms received, more accurate data plus both time and cost savings. The Berkshire service is aiming to go live for the 2020-21 season.

Other barriers included variation in access to GP flu clinics, lack of health literacy and inclusion of porcine element in the children's vaccine making it inappropriate for some groups. Indeed, given Slough continues to have low uptake, a community survey was rolled out in attempt to understand the reasons behind this. Almost 40% of survey respondents state porcine content to be the reason for LAIV declination.

Despite continuation of an NHS funded flu vaccine offer for frontline social care staff in nursing and residential care, local intelligence suggest uptake in this group remains low. Without more robust data from the National programme it is not possible to evaluate the success of this approach. Without changes to the flu programme, provision of flu vaccine to this group remains an occupational health responsibility and is likely to remain challenging for Local Authorities and CCGs to influence. The narrow definition of this offer has been questioned by stakeholders, staff and employers.

The offer of flu vaccine to other LA staff varies across Berkshire. However, where LAs do offer vaccine feedback suggests that staff and managers are working well to promote to staff and to understand uptake and identify potential barriers.

Locally, CCGs and their commissioned providers responded well to flu outbreaks in care homes and closed settings. Close partnership working proved key to the success of this approach particularly at the planning stage.

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1. Seasonal influenza

Seasonal influenza (Flu) is a respiratory virus that is more prevalent in the UK in the winter months. It can be categorised into Flu A and Flu B. Flu A often generates more acute illness than Flu B and is associated with higher mortality rates. Different sub-strains of Flu A are more prevalent each year and certain population groups are more susceptible than others to particular strains. The annual vaccine is matched to the sub-strain thought to be most likely to be the prevalent strain each winter. However how good a match this is varies each year. For these reasons the impacts of Flu vary year on year.

Flu 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. Flu occurs every winter in the UK. The National Flu Plan aims to reduce the impact of flu in the population through a series of complementary measures. These measures help to reduce illness in the community and unplanned hospital admissions, and therefore pressure on health services generally and A&E in particular. The plan is therefore a critical element of the system-wide approach for delivering robust and resilient health and care services throughout the year. Successful local implementation of the flu plan depends on partnership working between stakeholders at National and local levels. Key stakeholders include Department of Health, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), GP practices, Community Pharmacy, Public Health England (PHE), Local Authorities and community groups.

2. Role of the local health and social care system

The National Flu Plan¹ states that;

Local authorities, through their DsPH have responsibility for:

- providing appropriate advocacy with key stakeholders and challenge to local arrangements to ensure access to flu vaccination and to improve its uptake by eligible populations
- providing leadership, together with local resilience partners to respond appropriately to local incidents and outbreaks of flu infection

Local authorities can also assist by:

- promoting uptake of flu vaccination among eligible groups, for example older people in residential or nursing care, either directly or through local providers
- promoting uptake of flu vaccination among those staff providing care for people in residential or nursing care, either directly or through local providers

CCGs are responsible for

- quality assurance and improvement which extends to primary medical care services delivered by GP practices including flu vaccination and antiviral medicines

Additionally, it is now established that 'CCGs will commission appropriate primary care clinicians to respond to flu outbreaks, by assessing exposed persons for the antiviral treatment or prophylaxis and completing a patient specific direction for this purpose'. In Berkshire, both CCGs have commissioned out of hours providers to provide this service.

GP practices and community pharmacists are responsible for;

- educating patients, particularly those in at-risk groups, about the appropriate response to the occurrence of flu-like illness and other illness that might be precipitated by flu

¹ [National Flu Plan- PHE](#)

- ordering the correct amount and type of vaccine for their eligible patients, taking into account new groups identified for vaccination and the ambition for uptake
- storing vaccines in accordance with national guidance
- ensuring vaccination is delivered by suitably trained, competent healthcare professionals who participate in recognised on-going training and development in line with national standards
- maintaining regular and accurate data collection using appropriate returns
- encouraging and facilitating flu vaccination of their own staff
- In addition, GP practices are responsible for:
 - ordering vaccine for children from PHE central supplies through the ImmForm website and ensuring that vaccine wastage is minimised
 - ensuring that all those eligible for the flu vaccine are invited personally to receive their vaccine

Locally, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust Schools Immunisation Team is commissioned to deliver the flu immunisation programme to children in school years Reception to Year 6 through a schools-based delivery model.

3. Aims of the flu immunisation programme

The aims of the immunisation programme in 2019-20 were to;

- Actively offer flu vaccine to **100%** of people in eligible groups.
- Immunise 60% of children, with a minimum **40%** uptake in each school
- Maintain and improve uptake in over 65s and 6 months to 64 years in clinical risk groups with at least **75%** uptake for those aged 65 years and over and **75%** uptake for health and social care workers
- Improve uptake over and above last season among those in clinical risk groups and prioritise those with the highest risk of mortality from flu but who have the lowest rates of vaccine uptake (i.e. immunosuppression, chronic liver and neurological disease, including people with learning disabilities); achieving **at least 55%** uptake in all clinical risk groups and maintain higher rates where they have previously been achieved.

4. Groups eligible for vaccination

Flu vaccination remains the best way to protect people from flu. People in certain groups are at increased risk of severe symptoms and deaths if they contract flu, these groups were eligible for free flu vaccine in 2019-20.

- Adults aged 65 or above
- Children aged 2 and 3 and in school years R through to 6
- Pregnant women
- Paid and unpaid carers
- Frontline health and social-care workers
- People living in long-stay residential care homes,
- Adults and children (6 months to 64 years) with one or more of the following conditions;
 - a heart problem
 - a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or severe asthma
 - kidney disease

- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment)
- liver disease
- stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- diabetes
- a neurological condition, e.g. multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy or learning disability
- Morbidly obese individuals (BMI>40)

4.1 Changes in the 2019-20 immunisation programme compared to the previous season

Children - The offer of live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) was extended to children of appropriate age for school year 6, in addition to those children in school years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. This is in line with the principle for future extension of the programme to extend upwards through the age cohorts.

Older people - Following a PHE analysis which showed that the non-adjuvanted inactivated vaccine showed no significant effectiveness in this age group over recent seasons, an adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine (aTIV) was again recommended for use in those aged 65 years and over, and particularly for those aged 75 years and over²

Residential, nursing and domiciliary care staff - NHS England continued to fund flu vaccination for residential, nursing and domiciliary care staff employed by a registered residential care/nursing home or registered domiciliary care provider, and who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients/clients at increased risk from exposure to influenza ³ (i.e., those patients or clients in a clinical risk group or aged 65 or over). The offer continued to include health and care staff in the voluntary managed hospice sector that offer direct patient/client care⁴. This offer was available through community pharmacies and most GP Practices.

5. Flu activity

5.1 National Activity

The PHE report, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-flu-reports> was published in June 2020.

In England the rate of GP consultations for flu like activity during 2019-20 was similar to that of the previous season with the peak of activity occurring slightly earlier in the season with overall rates considered to be low (Figure 1).

Compared to 2018-19 there were more reported outbreaks of flu-like illness nationally, the majority of outbreaks occurred in residential and nursing home settings in 2019-20 throughout the flu season

² Publications Gateway Number: 07648. Vaccine ordering for 2018-19 influenza season. 18.02.2018

³ <http://www.nhsemployers.org/news/2017/11/how-care-staff-can-get-free-flu-vaccine>

⁴ Publications Gateway Number: 08260. Extension of NHS seasonal influenza vaccination, 10.09.2018

which is a similar pattern to the previous year. The school related outbreaks occurred almost entirely within the peak weeks of the flu season (Figure 2)

National Laboratory data at week 19 indicates that in 2019-20 the majority of circulating flu viruses were Influenza A, which is the same as was seen in 2018-19 (Figure 3).

Uptake of vaccine in primary care, community pharmacy and among healthcare workers is monitored by Public Health England. During Flu season, NHS England commissioners of the vaccine programmes extracted and collated uptake data from GP practices on a weekly basis and nationally on a monthly basis. Data on numbers of vaccines provided to adults through community pharmacy and to pregnant women by NHS midwives was monitored by NHSE and shared with stakeholders.

Nationally, data from the annual flu report shows that the proportions of people in England who had received the 2019/20 influenza vaccine in targeted groups by 28 February 2020 were as follows:

- 44.9%% in under 65 years in a clinical risk group
- 43.7% in pregnant women
- 72.4% in 65+ year olds.

The proportions vaccinated by 28 February 2020 were: 43.4% in 2 year olds and 44.2% in 3 year olds

Uptake by frontline healthcare workers show 74.3% were vaccinated by 28 February 2019, compared to 70.3% vaccinated in the previous season by 28 February 2018.

Uptake for children of school years reception to year 6 shows;

64.3% in school year reception age,
63.6% in school year 1 age,
62.6% in school year 2 age,
60.6% in school year 3 age,
59.6% in school year 4 age
57.2% in school year 5 age
55.0% in school year 6 age.

Figure 1: GP consultations for flu-like-illness (National to week 8)

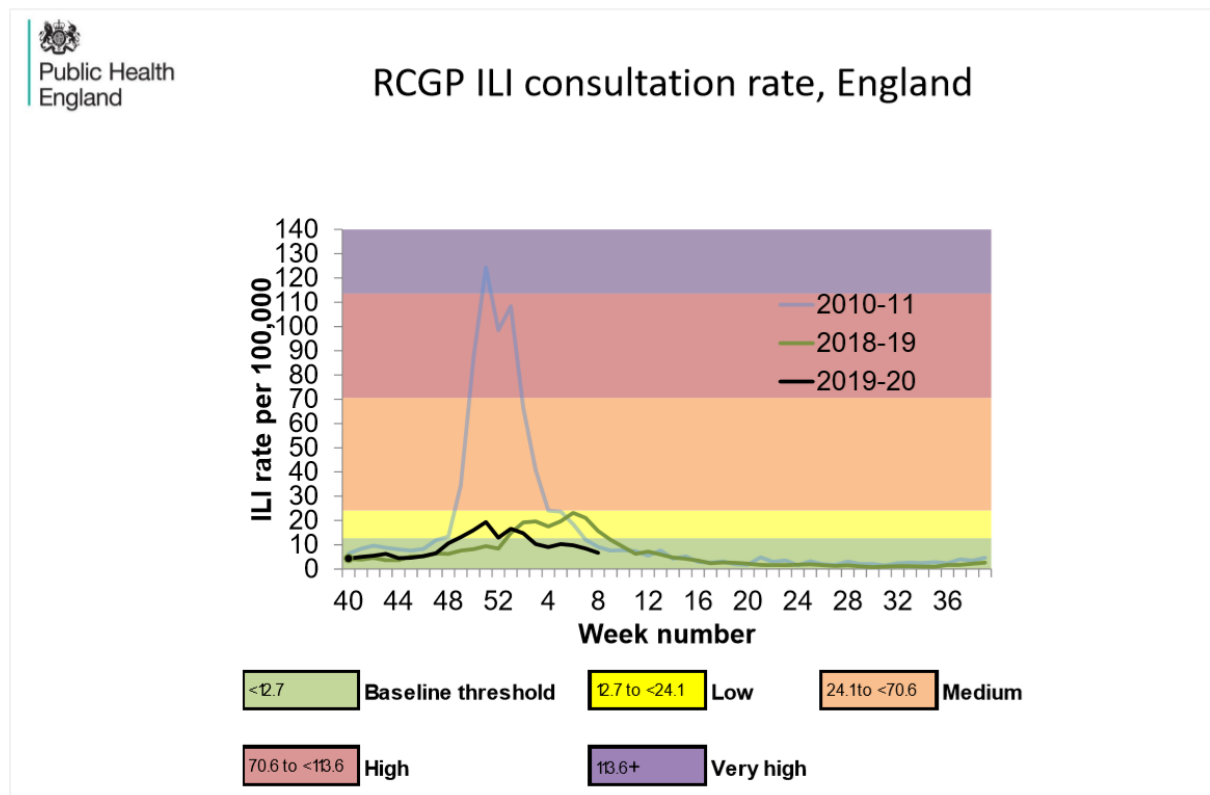


Figure 2: Reported Outbreaks (National to week 19)

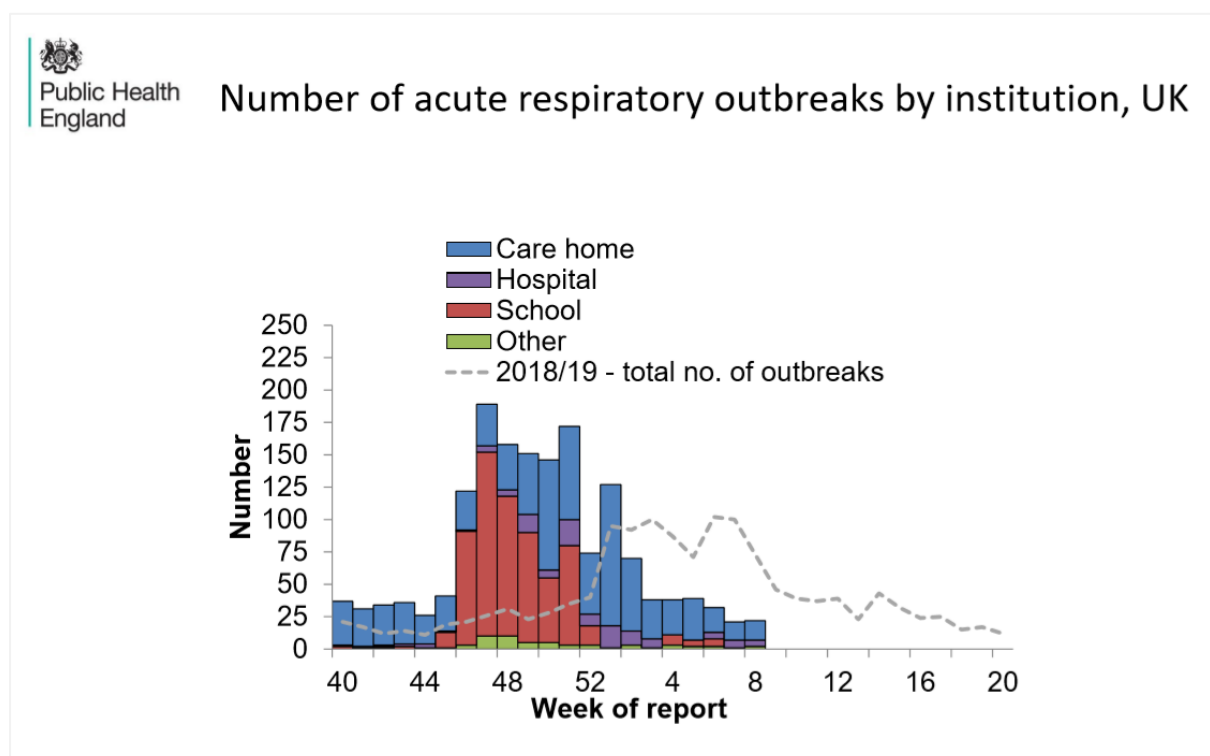


Figure 3: Number and proportion of samples positive for flu (National to week 19)

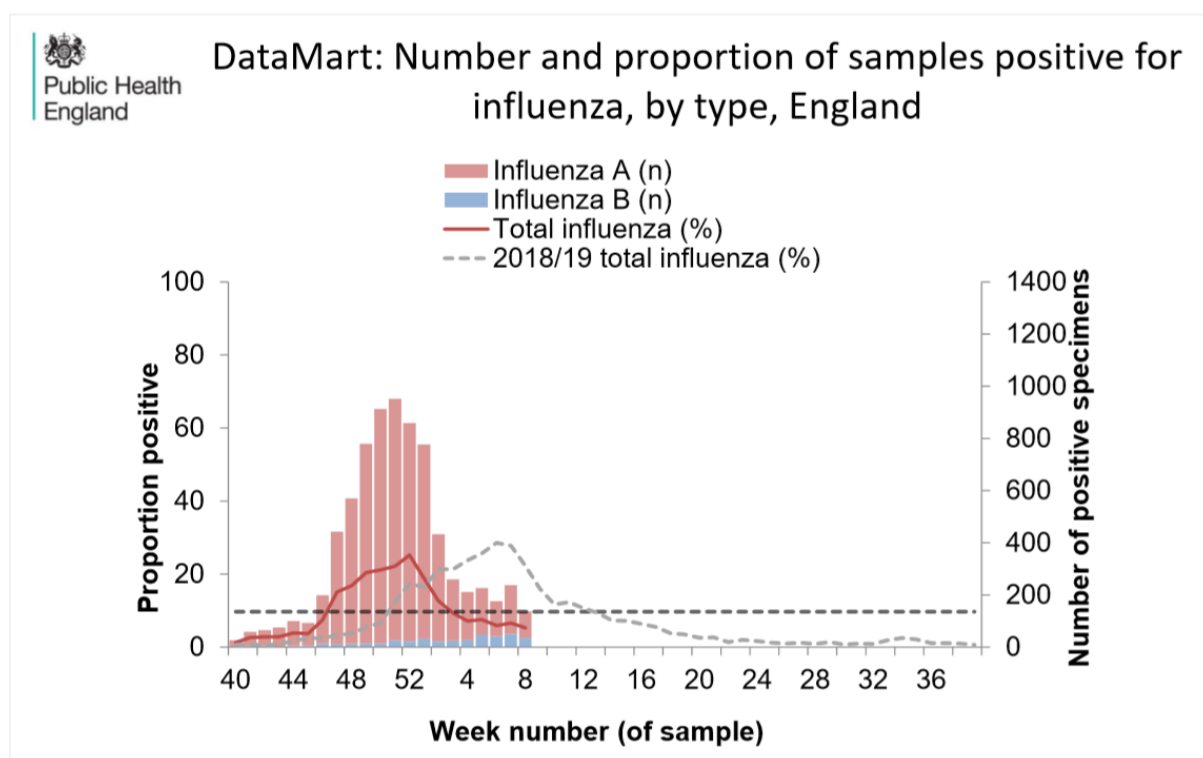


Figure taken from [National Flu Report Surveillance](#) (27th February 2020)

5.2 Local outbreaks

There were 6 outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI) reported in Berkshire between 1st September 2019 and 30th April 2020. Influenza A virus was confirmed in all 6 outbreaks requiring prophylaxis, with 5 of these occurring in Berkshire West and 1 in East Berks. A single case of Influenza A was also confirmed in a care home in East Berkshire; however, this did not require prophylaxis.

Both CCGs in Berkshire were able to respond well to outbreaks of flu in closed settings through the services commissioned for this purpose and in line with their In and Out of season flu response plans.

6. Communications and resources

In 2019-20, flu vaccine was included as a component of the jointly coordinated PHE and NHS England “Help us Help you” winter campaign. Resources were available from the online PHE Campaign Resources Centre.

Local authorities and CCGs across Berkshire used their social media accounts to enforce national messages on flu vaccine using #Fluvaccine, as well as other winter health messages. A Berkshire press release template was prepared for local modification by local authority public health teams. Leaflets and posters from the national resource centre were distributed to local venues including Children’s centres, childcare settings and local shops by local authority public health teams. Easy-read versions of the leaflet were shared with LA Learning Disabilities colleagues for use with their

clients. East Berkshire CCG placed funded advertising in the “Primary Times” - a publication sent to thousands of parents of young children across Berkshire. They also ran a campaign on a local radio station which contained key messages in both English and Punjabi. Flu vaccine was promoted to carers during National Carer’s Rights Day and to those over 65 or living with long term conditions as part of National Self-Care Week.

In line with the NHS-funded offer of flu vaccination, local authorities and CCGs communicated directly with local care providers to raise awareness of the offer for residential, nursing and domiciliary care staff and encourage staff to get vaccinated against flu through the development and sharing of a Berkshire ‘Care Home Flu Pack’ via email and by working with the Berkshire Care Association.

7. Local delivery of flu vaccination programme

Across Berkshire, residents were able to access flu vaccine during 2019-20 in a number of ways (Table 1).

Table 1: Access to flu vaccine for eligible groups

Group	Provider
Children aged 2 and 3	Primary Care
Children in School Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	School based programme delivered by Berkshire Healthcare Trust
Special Schools	School based programme delivered by Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
Adults aged 65 or above	Primary Care or Community Pharmacy
Adults in clinical risk groups	Primary Care or Community Pharmacy
Children in clinical risk groups	Primary Care (or through special school programme)
Paid and unpaid carers	Primary Care or Community Pharmacy
Pregnant Women	Maternity Unit at Royal Berkshire Hospital, Wexham Park Hospital or Primary Care or community pharmacy
Health and social care workers	Via occupational health arrangements and for nursing, residential and domiciliary care workers via GP and Pharmacy following the National announcement

A stakeholder workshop was held in Summer of 2019 with Berkshire local authority Public Health teams from Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead, West Berkshire and Wokingham and PHE South East, Thames Valley Health Protection Team.

Participants from a range of stakeholder organisation attended, including representatives from East Berkshire and Berkshire West CCGs, GP practices, NHS provider organisations, Public Health England, Residential and Nursing Care providers and public health teams across Berkshire.

The aims of the workshop were to;

- review and reflect on 2018-19 flu season
- understand commissioning intentions for 2019-20
- draw on learning to put in place actions to improve uptake
- review care home preparedness and identify ways to support settings to prevent, prepare for and respond to outbreaks

8. Berkshire Vaccine Uptake in 2019-20

8.1 GP registered patients by Local Authority

Uptake among GP patients aged 65 and over was higher in Berkshire LAs compared to England as a whole, except for Windsor and Maidenhead where it was marginally lower, and Slough where uptake was significantly lower. In Wokingham, uptake reached the 75% national ambition whilst in West Berkshire (78%) the target was exceeded. All LAs saw an increase in uptake compared to 2018-19, in line with the national trend.

Among under 65's in clinical risk groups, uptake was higher than the England figure in all Berkshire LAs except for Slough where it was marginally lower. No Berkshire LA achieved the national ambition (55%) in terms of flu vaccine uptake, with West Berkshire coming closest (53.9%). Whilst both Slough and West Berkshire reported decreased uptake compared to 2018-19, all other LAs boasted an increase, bucking the overall national trend.

Among pregnant women, uptake was similar to or above the England figure in all LAs with the exception of Slough. No Berkshire LA achieved the national ambition in terms of flu vaccine uptake for this group. All LAs saw an increase in uptake in this group compared to the previous group, except for Slough (where uptake was 8.5% lower than in 2018-19) and Windsor and Maidenhead. The general trend of increasing uptake is in contrast to a decrease nationally.

Uptake among children aged 2 years was higher than in 2018-19 for all Berkshire LAs. There is no figure available at the national level for 2019-20, as it is now collated nationally as a combined figure for both 2 and 3-year-olds together.

Uptake among children aged 3 years demonstrated a mixed picture. As figures are not available at the national level for 2019-20, comparison with previous years figures show that all LAs except Reading and Slough have higher uptake than England as a whole. There was a significant decrease in uptake compared to the previous year in Bracknell, West Berkshire and Wokingham which may reflect issues around access to the vaccine.

Table 2: Flu vaccine uptake among GP registered patient by LA - Sept 1 2019 to Jan 31 2020 in comparison to 2018/19 time-point

	Risk Group				
	65 and over	Under 65 (at-risk)	All Pregnant Women	2 Years old	3 Years old
Bracknell Forest 2019-20	72.8	52.3	53.9	55.5	52.8
2018-19	71.2	50.9	47.6	52.3	56.4
Variation	1.6	1.4	6.3	3.2	-3.6
Reading 2019-20	72.6	49.2	48.8	46.5	44.7
2018-19	70.7	45.5	44.6	43.8	43.6
Variation	1.9	3.7	4.2	2.7	1.1
Slough 2019-20	68.5	44.5	37.5	40.1	37.1
2018-19	66.9	45.5	46	33.2	36.9
Variation	1.6	-1	-8.5	6.9	0.2
West Berkshire 2019-20	78.0	53.9	54.9	58.4	57.9
2018-19	76.6	54.3	50.5	60.9	64.2
Variation	1.4	-0.4	4.4	-2.5	-6.3
Windsor and Maidenhead 2019-20	72.2	47.1	43.8	54.8	53.1
2018-19	70.4	45.2	46	50.8	52.5
Variation	1.8	1.9	-2.2	4.0	0.6
Wokingham 2019-20	75.0	47	53.9	57.6	54.9
2018-19	73.3	45.8	51.4	56.8	60.9
Variation	1.7	1.2	2.5	0.8	-6
England Total 2019-20	72.4	44.9	43.7	-	-
2018-19	71.2	46.7	44.8	43.0	45.0
Variation	1.2	-1.8	-1.1	-	-

(-) = The figure for 2/3 year olds has now been combined so individual figures not available.

8.2 School aged children

In Berkshire, the children's quadrivalent live attenuated intra-nasal vaccine (LAIV) was delivered in primary schools by a team of school immunisation nurses from Berkshire Health Foundation Trust.

The Berkshire school aged immunisation team offered the nasal flu vaccine to children in schools across Berkshire from the 7th October 2019. Between October and December 2019 (49 working days) the team vaccinated 57,226 children across 341 schools (visiting an average of 7 schools per day). Any child who was absent or unwell were offered a community catch up clinics, which were offered in every locality until February 2020. Saturday clinics were offered in Slough, throughout the flu season, as these have been found to be better attended than midweek clinics. Uptake was highest in West Berkshire at almost 80% overall and lowest in Slough. All LAs achieved the 40% lower ambition, with Bracknell Forest, RBWM, Wokingham and West Berkshire exceeding the 65% upper ambition; see Table 3.

Table 3a: Uptake for school year R to 6 children, by local authority 2019-20

National Child Flu Programme (Reception to year 6)	Local Authority	Cohort	Total no of eligible children offered influenza (visited schools only)	Total no of influenza doses given	% children vaccinated in LA (Target by end of December 49%)
	BRACKNELL FOREST	10992	10992	8116	73.8%
	SLOUGH	17278	16378	6997	40.5%
	ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR, ASCOT AND MAIDENHEAD	14019	13950	9574	68.3%
	READING	13985	13972	8993	64.3%
	WOKINGHAM	16831	16196	12436	73.9%
	WEST BERKSHIRE	14057	14056	11208	79.7%
		87162	85544	57324	66.8%

Table 3b: Uptake for school programme 19/20 compare to previous years

Local Authority	2016/17 No of doses given	2016/17	2017/18 No of doses given	2017/18	2018/19 No of doses given	2018/19	No of doses given up to 31st Dec 2019	% in the LA geography vaccinated (target end of Dec 48.75%)	% vaccinated in schools up to 31st December 2019
Bracknell	3327	69.40%	5556	70.20%	6787	72.40%	8116	73.8%	73.8%
RBWM	3657	62.10%	6392	65.60%	7877	68.70%	9574	68.3%	68.6%
Slough	3152	42.10%	5475	44.10%	6619	44.70%	6997	40.5%	42.7%
Reading	3774	60.90%	6246	61.10%	7769	64.10%	8895	63.6%	63.7%
Wokingham	4931	71.70%	8583	73.20%	10781	75.20%	12436	73.9%	76.8%
West Berks	4567	73.40%	7788	76.60%	9562	79.40%	11208	79.7%	79.7%
Totals	23408	63.30%	40040	65.10%	49395	67.40%	57226	66.6%	67.6%

8.3 Pharmacy Campaign for adults

As in previous years, in 2019-20 pharmacies signed up to the National Advanced Service could offer flu vaccine to the following groups;

- People aged 65 and over.
- Pregnant women
- Adults in clinical risk group
- Residential, nursing and domiciliary care staff employed by a registered residential care/nursing home or registered domiciliary care provider directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients/clients at increased risk from exposure to influenza

National data from the Pharmoutcomes and Sonar Informatics, available through the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee indicates that at least 1.5 million doses were delivered in pharmacies as part of the National Advanced Service. This data shows that the majority of those receiving a flu vaccine in community pharmacy were aged over 65, (61.6%). The remainder of vaccine were given to adults in clinical risk groups, people with diabetes accounted for 8% and those with chronic respiratory disease accounted for 12.5% of doses. Further breakdown of the risk groups receiving their vaccine in community pharmacy is given in Table 4.

It should be noted that this data shows the eligibility groups of patients who have been recorded as receiving flu vaccination in community pharmacy. Some Pharmacy contractors are not able to use or have decided not to use electronic systems to record administration of vaccines. Therefore, this data does not cover all patients vaccinated in community pharmacy during the 2019-20 flu season and the true number of patients vaccinated by community pharmacists under the National Flu Vaccination Service will be higher than the numbers presented.

Data from Pharmoutcomes indicates that Pharmacies in Berkshire provided at least 23,300 doses of vaccine (Table 5), an increase of more than 6,000 compared to the number of doses recorded in the previous flu season. Most Berkshire pharmacies used the Pharmoutcomes system to record their activity

Table 4: Flu vaccinations given in Community Pharmacy in England in 2019-20, by risk group

Vaccination eligibility group	PharmOutcomes	Sonar	Total
65 years and over	812,815	125,584	938,399 (61.6%)
A weakened immune system	35,555	8,668	44,223 (2.9%)
Adult household contact of immunocompromised individual	14,508	1,890	16,398 (1.1%)
Adults in long-stay residential care home/care facility	4,205	746	4,951 (0.3%)
Adults who are in receipt of carers allowance	32,099	11,416	43,515 (2.9%)
Asplenia or splenic dysfunction	2,294	423	2,717 (0.2%)
Chronic (long term) respiratory disease	159,099	31,192	190,291 (12.5%)
Chronic heart disease such as heart failure	31,763	8,863	40,626 (2.7%)
Chronic kidney disease	5,061	995	6,056 (0.4%)
Chronic liver disease	2,766	585	3,351 (0.2%)
Chronic neurological disease	17,653	3,347	21,000 (1.4%)
Diabetes	92,400	31,487	123,887 (8.1%)
Health and social care staff	48,291	1,555	49,846 (3.3%)
Hospice worker	3,144	402	3,546 (0.2%)
Morbid obesity	3,299	568	3,867 (0.3%)
Pregnant woman	23,512	8,058	31,570 (2.1%)

<https://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/advanced-services/flu-vaccination-service/flu-vaccination-statistics/flu-vaccination-data-for-2019-20/>

Table 5: Berkshire Pharmacies and Flu vaccine doses 2019-20 compared with 2018-19

Period	CCG	Vaccines Claimed By CCG		Vaccines Claimed in Berkshire	
		2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
September	East Berkshire	1,342	2,435	2,767	5,206
	West Berkshire	1,425	2,771		
October	East Berkshire	3,074	4,725	7,437	11,016
	West Berkshire	4,363	6,291		
November	East Berkshire	1,872	1,891	4,505	4,458
	West Berkshire	2,633	2,567		
December	East Berkshire	738	807	1,401	1,671
	West Berkshire	663	864		
January	East Berkshire	247	151	475	405
	West Berkshire	228	254		
February	East Berkshire	86	60	121	323
	West Berkshire	35	263		
March	East Berkshire	66	163	160	223
	West Berkshire	94	60		
TOTAL		16,866	23,302	16,866	23,302

8.4 Healthcare workers (NHS Flu Fighters)

Frontline HCWs involved in direct patient care in acute trusts, ambulance trusts, mental health trusts, foundation trusts, primary care, and independent sector health care providers are encouraged to receive seasonal influenza vaccination annually to protect themselves and their patients from influenza.

PHE coordinated and managed a seasonal influenza vaccine uptake survey of all 246 NHS organisations (acute, ambulance, mental health, primary care, local NHS England teams and foundation trusts) in England and produced monthly provisional data on vaccinations

allowing the National Health Service (NHS) and Department of Health (DH) to track the progress of the programme.

Nationally, uptake among healthcare workers with direct patient care (based on 98.8% of NHS Trusts) was 74.3%, an increase from the 2018-19 figure of 70.3%%.

Uptake for frontline healthcare workers in Berkshire overall and by staff group is outlined in **Error! Reference source not found..** Uptake in Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust, Frimley Health Foundation Trust and Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust has increased compared to the previous flu season.

It should be noted that requirements for the CQUIN data collection state that staff leavers must be removed from the denominator data removing, addition of new starters and addition of students, bank, agency and third-party organisation staff that have patient contact into the denominator data. This requires the denominator data to be updated each month prior to submission to reflect the dynamic nature of the workforce being vaccinated. As a result, percentage uptake each month could go down as well as up as the campaign progressed.

Table 6: Vaccine uptake among frontline healthcare workers

Organisation	2018-19			2019-20		
	All HCWs in direct patient care	Seasonal flu doses given since 1 Sept 2018	Vaccine uptake (%)	All HCWs in direct patient care	Seasonal flu doses given since 1 Sept 2019	Vaccine uptake (%)
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust	5,059	3,123	61.7	4,792	3,010	62.8
Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust	3,309	2,206	66.7	3,118	2,191	70.3
Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust	7,579	4,345	57.3	7,886	5,135	65.1
South Central Ambulance Trust*	-	-	-	-	-	-
England	1,051,851	739,187	70.3	1,040,360	772,872	74.3

* Organisation is recorded as a “Non-Responder” at the time the provisional data was published

8.5 LA Health and Social Care staff and others

NHS England funded flu vaccination for workers employed by a registered residential care/nursing home or registered domiciliary care provider who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients/clients at increased risk from exposure to influenza. This is a specific cohort of workers who may be at risk of transmitting flu to vulnerable residents in a closed setting.

There is currently no data available regarding the uptake of this offer as no definitive denominator population data is available. Data on the numbers of doses provided to workers under this scheme in GP practices and pharmacies may become available at a later date.

Most of the residential care provision in Berkshire is through privately run care homes and nursing homes. Employers are still responsible for providing flu vaccine to their employees under occupational health arrangements, this means that care homes, nursing homes and local authorities are responsible for providing flu vaccine for frontline health and social care workers that they employ. Local authorities may also provide vaccine to staff members as part of business continuity arrangements.

During the 2019-20 flu season, some Berkshire LAs provided flu vaccine to their directly employed social care workers and to some other groups of staff for business continuity reasons. An outline of how schemes were funded and delivered together with uptake or doses given is show in **Error! Reference source not found.**

9. Flu Programme 2020/21 – How Will It Be Different?

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously had an impact on the planned 2020-21 immunisation programme. Co-infection with both Flu A and COVID-19 will lead to more severe disease and the impact on the health system of a con-current second wave of COVID-19 and heavy flu season could be extremely challenging. Therefore the Influenza Programme has been updated accordingly for the 2020/21 season. The primary changes include expansion of eligibility criteria, delivery of the vaccination programme and ambition to significantly increase uptake.

9.1 Expansion of Eligibility Criteria

Under the NHS flu vaccination programme, the following groups will be offered vaccination during the 2020/21 season*:

- All children aged from 2-11 on 31st August 2020
 - **Year 7 children in secondary schools (aged 11 on 31st August 2020)**
- Adults aged 65 years or older as of 31st March 2021
- Those aged from 6 months to 65 years of age, in an at-risk clinical group
 - Chronic respiratory/heart/kidney/liver/neurological condition
 - Weakened immune system (splenic dysfunction, HIV/AIDS, chemotherapy or other immunosuppressant medication)
 - Diabetes
 - Learning disability
 - Morbidly obese (BMI 40 or above)
 - Any other condition which a clinician feels may be exacerbated by influenza infection or hospitalisation
- Pregnant women
- **Household contacts of those on NHS Shielded Patient List** or immunocompromised patients – those who expect to share living conditions on most days so contact will be unavoidable
- People living in long-stay residential care homes or other long-stay care facilities where rapid spread following introduction of the infection is likely to lead to high morbidity and mortality
- Those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if their carer falls ill
- Health and social care staff, employed by a registered residential care/nursing home or registered domiciliary care provider, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza
- Health and care staff, employed by a voluntary managed hospice provider, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients at increased risk from exposure to influenza
- **Health and social care workers employed through direct payment (personal budgets) and/or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants, to deliver domiciliary care to patients and service users**
- All frontline health and social care workers

Subject to vaccine supply and following prioritisation of the above eligible groups, vaccinations may also be offered to the following individuals:

- **Adults aged between 50-64 years**

*New eligible groups added for the 2020/21 NHS flu vaccination programme are denoted in bold

The reasons for expanding the eligibility criteria for the upcoming influenza season include the following:

1. **Protect vulnerable people** – wider vaccine coverage will help reduce health risks, especially given emerging evidence that co-infection with influenza and COVID-19 may result in a more severe illness with higher morbidity and mortality
2. **Reduce pressure on NHS services** – the cyclical increase in demand for health services during winter may be exacerbated by COVID-19, therefore it is paramount we minimise the impact of influenza
3. **Accurate contact tracing and COVID-19 surveillance** – given the similarity between the presenting symptoms of influenza and COVID-19, increased uptake of influenza vaccination will avoid complications in tracking the current pandemic

9.2 Programme Delivery

The delivery of influenza vaccinations during the 2020/21 season must be adapted in line with current local guidance designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The following factors should be considered:

- Planning appointments to minimise waiting times and maintain social distancing
- Piloting of “drive-in” vaccination models
- Domiciliary visits for individuals on the NHS Shielded Patient List
- Routine offering of vaccinations to women at maternity appointments and all other patients in at-risk groups during inpatient and outpatient encounters
- Offer inactivated vaccine if parents refuse live attenuated vaccine due to porcine gelatine content

In order to ensure that all eligible patients are aware and encouraged to get a vaccine, a national call and recall service will be introduced alongside existing local services. In line with contractual obligations, all frontline health and social care workers should have a vaccine supplied by their employer. Community pharmacy and registered GP services will continue to provide vaccinations.

9.3 Uptake Targets

In addition to expanding eligibility criteria and modifying vaccination delivery, it is crucial that we achieve high uptake rates. The aim is to meet the following targets:

Eligible Groups	Uptake Ambition
Aged 65 years and older	At least 75%
At-risk clinical group	At least 75%
Pregnant women	At least 75%
Children aged 2-3 years	At least 75%
All primary school aged children and Year 7 aged secondary school children	At least 75%
Frontline health and social care workers	100% offer

Additional supply of vaccinations has been procured to match the anticipated increased demand, whilst increased vaccine uptake should be particularly encouraged in deprived areas and amongst BAME communities.

9.4 Vaccine

The following vaccines are recommended for the different flu risk groups

Eligible Group	Type of Vaccine
At risk children aged 6 months – 2 years	Offer QIVe LAIV and QIVc not licenced for use in children <2 years old
At risk children aged 2 -18 years	Offer LAIV If LAIV contraindicated or otherwise unsuitable then offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QIVe to children <9 years old • QIVc to children >9 years old • QIVe if QIVc unavailable QIVe acceptable if vaccine administered in a school setting
Children 2 and 3 years and 4 – 11 years on 31/08/20	Offer LAIV If LAIV contraindicated as child at risk, see above If parent refuses LAIV and child not in at risk group, QIVe or QIVc may be offered
At risk adults (aged 18-64 years) including pregnant women	Offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QIVc • QIVe (as an alternative to QIVc)
Aged 65 years and over	Offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aTIV considered to be more effective than standard dose non-adjuvanted trivalent and egg-based quadrivalent vaccines • QIVc suitable if aTIV not available

LAIV = Live attenuated vaccine

QIVc = Quadrivalent influenza vaccine (cell-based)

QIVe = Quadrivalent influenza vaccine (egg-grown)

aTIV = Adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine

9.5 Local delivery arrangements

Both the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Berkshire have established multi-agency groups to oversee the vaccination programme in 2020-21. These have already started meeting regularly to ensure cohesion to the programme during the course of the flu season. Significant adaptation has been required by providers to ensure that vaccination delivery is conducted in “COVID-19 secure” ways. For different providers this includes measures such as; appropriate use of PPE, pre-booked appointments, longer appointment times, more frequent flu clinics, expanding school visits to secondary schools.