

READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

DATE OF MEETING:	12 th OCTOBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	10
REPORT TITLE:	INFLUENZA [FLU] PLAN UPDATE 2018		
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This paper is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the performance of the influenza (flu) vaccine campaign in winter 2017-18 to summarise lessons learned and to inform the board of changes to the national flu programme for the coming 2018-19 flu season and how these will be implemented locally.
- 1.2 Appendices:
 Appendix 1 - National Flu Programme Letter 201819
 Appendix 2 - Berkshire seasonal influenza vaccine campaign 201718 final report
 Appendix 3 - Berkshire flu planning workshop report and recommendations
 Appendix 4 - Reading Borough Council draft communication plan 201819

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 Agree and endorse the multi-agency approach
- 2.2 Seek assurance that respective organisations are taking steps to fulfil their responsibilities as set out in the national flu plan.
- 2.3 Be flu champions - take every opportunity to promote the vaccine and debunk myths
- 2.4 Lead by example, take up the offer of a vaccine where eligible.

3. BACKGROUND

Seasonal flu is a key factor in NHS winter pressures. The National Flu Plan (see National letter - Appendix 1) 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 in 2017-18 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 clinical risk groups with at least 75% uptake

among people 65 years and over, at least 55% among clinical risk groups and 75% among healthcare workers

2017-18 was a challenging flu season, contributing to winter pressures on health and care services. The PHE report, 'Surveillance of influenza and other respiratory viruses in the UK: Winter 2017 to 2018 released on 24 May 2018, indicated that; in the 2017 to 2018 season, moderate to high levels of influenza activity were observed in the UK with co-circulation of influenza B and influenza A(H3), which is different to 2016-17 where H3N2 predominated. Indicators for GP consultation for flu-like illness in and out of hours and for NHS 111 calls were at higher levels than in 2016-17, patterns of activity were similar peaking in week 52 and peak admissions rates of influenza to hospital and intensive care were higher than seen in the previous 6 seasons.

4. MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH

Flu vaccination is commissioned by NHS England for groups at increased risk of severe disease or death should they contract flu and vaccination is provided by a mix of providers including GP practice, community pharmacy, midwifery services and school immunisation teams.

The role of local authorities 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 care. Local authorities are also 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.

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. The CCG also monitors staff vaccination uptake in Providers through the [CQUIN scheme](#).

A collaborative multi-agency approach to planning for and delivering the flu programme is taken in Berkshire, beginning with a flu workshop in June. Public Health Teams used output from the workshop to develop their local flu action plan, setting out the steps they will take to engage and communicate with local residents about flu, promote the flu vaccine to eligible groups and support partners to provide and manage the programme.

Actions taken in 2017-18 as part of this approach included but were not limited to;

- Development of local authority and CCG flu plans based on a shared approach across the in the West of Berkshire
- Participation in a twice-monthly Thames Valley Flu teleconferences led by NHS England to share flu data, best practice and ability to raise concerns with representation locally
- Participation in monthly Berkshire West Flu Action Group with representation from CCGs, NHS providers and local authority public health to monitor progress against flu plans, review uptake of the flu vaccination, assess the impact of flu activity and share good practice or concerns which could then be escalated.
- The public health team supported the BHFT schools immunisation team to engage with those schools where initial engagement was less effective
- Providers also signed up to the 'Health and Wellbeing of Staff' CQUIN which includes staff flu vaccination uptake
- In the West of Berkshire the CCG Quality Team / CCG flu lead supported low performing GP practices with practice visits and / or communications
- A flu communication pack was shared with all care homes
- Ensuring a consistent communication approach across the health and care economy by linking with the national flu campaign as well local alignment of communications between the local public health and the CCG communication teams.
- Use of targeted social media approaches to promote flu vaccination

- A collaborative approach to the management of flu outbreaks in closed settings such as care and nursing homes, Berkshire West CCGs commissioned a specific service to undertake risk-assessment and provide antiviral medication for treatment of flu and to prevent further spread to vulnerable residents
- Working with local partners and community and voluntary groups to promote flu vaccine - this included Talkback UK's *Being as Healthy* group, Older People's Working Group, Family Information Services etc.

See Appendix 2 - Berkshire seasonal influenza vaccine campaign 2017/18 final report for full details.

4.1 LOCAL UPTAKE 2017-18

In 2017-18 uptake of vaccine among GP-registered patients in Berkshire was generally similar to or higher than in 2016-17. After observing an increase in uptake in 2016-17, uptake in Slough was slightly reduced in the 2017-18 flu season, with the exception of over 65's where uptake was slightly higher.

- **Patients in clinical risk groups** - uptake was reduced by between 0.9% and 3.1% in this group, with the exception of RBWM and West Berkshire where uptake was similar to the previous season. Nationally uptake was very similar to the previous season.
- **Over 65s** - Increased uptake of flu vaccine was observed in all Local Authorities within Berkshire. Uptake in West Berkshire reached 77.6%, exceeding the national 75% uptake ambition
- **Pregnant Women** - In line with the national picture, uptake in this group was increased compared to 2016-17 with the exception of Slough where a reduction in uptake of 4.9% was observed. Bracknell Forest exceeded the national ambition of 55%, achieving 57% uptake.
- **Children aged 2 and 3** - Uptake in two year olds increased in Reading, West Berkshire Wokingham and RBWM, but decreased slightly in Slough. A reduction was also observed in Bracknell Forest compared to the previous season. The uptake ambition was not reached in any local authority in Berkshire or nationally (3.9% increase resulting in 42.9% uptake). Among three year olds modest increases in uptake were observed in Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham, with small decreases observed in Reading and RBWM. Slough experienced a larger decrease in uptake. All areas with the exception of Reading and Slough achieved a higher uptake than the national figure of 44.2%
- **Children in school years 0- 4** - this programme was again highly successful in Berkshire, the uptake ambition of 40% was exceeded in all local authorities reaching as high as 80% in at least one area.
- **Healthcare workers** - Uptake among NHS staff increased compared to the 2016-17 season in all local Trusts with the exception of Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, where uptake was slightly reduced on the previous season despite more vaccines being given. Uptake in local NHS Trusts ranged from 62.6%-72.1%

4.2 LEARNING FROM 2017-18 SEASON

- 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. Whilst uptake among school children was good, uptake in other risk groups remains below the desired level; this is in line with other areas of the country.
- There remains considerable variation in uptake between GP practices, There is scope to improve communicating vaccine 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. Other barriers may include 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.
- Uptake among front line local authority social care workers remains difficult to measure; there is scope to improve data collection in this area.
- Despite introduction of an NHS funded flu vaccine offer for frontline social care staff in nursing and residential care, local intelligence suggest uptake in this group remained low.
- Locally, CCGs and their commissioned providers responded well to flu outbreaks in care homes and closed settings following development and implementation of flu outbreak plans. Close partnership working proved key to the success of this approach and closer working at the planning stage is warranted for future success.

5. CHANGES FOR THE 2018-19 FLU SEASON

The higher burden of H3N2 among elderly people together with the lower VE of vaccines against this sub-type support the need for more effective interventions¹ and the UK Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has advised that use of adjuvanted trivalent inactivated vaccines (TIV) in those aged 65 years and older would be both more effective and cost-effective than the non-adjuvanted trivalent or quadrivalent vaccines currently in use².

In February 2018, NHS England wrote to GP Practice and Community Pharmacies advising that they should offer:

- adjuvanted trivalent vaccine (aTIV) for all 65s and over
- quadrivalent vaccine (QIV) for those age 18 to 64 at risk

Nasal vaccine will continue to be offered to healthy children aged 2 and above.

Nationally, groups eligible for vaccination are similar to previous years, with the addition of children in school year 5 to the school-aged programme. It has been confirmed that care home/nursing home/domiciliary care workers caring for vulnerable residents at risk from influenza are also eligible for a free flu vaccine again in 2017-18. In addition, this offer has also been extended to hospice workers. The eligible groups and where they can access their vaccine are shown below.

Target Group	GP	Pharmacy	Maternity	School	Workplace
Aged under 65 'at risk'	√	√			
Pregnant women	√	√	√		
Eligible children aged 2-3 years	√				
Eligible children in Reception to school year 5				√	
Aged 65 years and over	√	√			

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641162/influenza_vaccine_effectiveness_in_primary_care_1617_final.pdf

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-supporting-data-for-adult-vaccines/summary-of-data-to-support-the-choice-of-influenza-vaccination-for-adults-in-primary-care>

Carers	√	√			
NHS Healthcare workers		√			√
Frontline care home/nursing home/domicillary care workers and hospice workers	√	√			

6. LOCAL FLU PLAN FOR 2018-19

A successful flu planning workshop took place on 8th June at the Open Learning Centre, Bracknell - see Appendix 3 for further details. This was well attended by a range of stakeholders from across Berkshire and sought to bring together plans for provision and promotion of flu vaccine and preparing and responding to flu outbreaks. Following the workshop, the Shared Public Health Team developed a high level Berkshire Flu Plan which enabled Reading's Public Health and Wellbeing team to create a local flu action plan for the 2018-19 season. Reading Borough Council currently have a draft communication plan - see Appendix 4.