

**Gateway reference number: 14384**

**TO:**

All Directors of Adult Social Services  
All Directors of Children's Services  
Social Care Reference Group

**CC:**

All Deputy Regional Directors of Social Care  
Social Partnership Forum  
Care Quality Commission  
Health Protection Agency  
National Centre for Independent Living  
SHA Flu Lead Directors

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Dear Colleague

**The Influenza Immunisation Programme 2010/11**

This letter contains information for all commissioners and providers of social care services about the annual seasonal flu immunisation programme 2010/11.

The Interim Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Nursing Officer and the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer wrote jointly to the NHS on the 28th of May 2010 giving details of the target groups for this year's programme. As in previous years, these include a number of clinical at risk groups and frontline health and social care workers. A copy of the letter is available at [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Professionalletters/Chiefmedicalofficerletters/DH\\_116507](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Professionalletters/Chiefmedicalofficerletters/DH_116507)

In order to protect the individuals who their services support, commissioners and providers of social care will want to ensure that the availability of the vaccination to those who fall within the clinical at risk groups is promoted.

The risk groups include those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill. This should be given on an individual basis at the GP's discretion. They also include all those aged 65 years and over and those living in long-stay residential care homes or other long-stay care facilities where rapid spread is likely to follow introduction of infection and cause high morbidity and mortality.

In addition, employers of frontline social care workers in all sectors will want to consider making the vaccination available to their staff.

As in previous years responsibility for funding of the seasonal flu vaccine and its administration to staff other than those that are in the clinical at risk groups lies with employers. The Department of Health funding for the vaccination of frontline social care workers was only available for the (H1N1) swine flu vaccine during 2009/10 and does not continue for seasonal flu.

Employers may wish to commission a GP, PCT or pharmacy to supply and administer the seasonal flu vaccination to their staff on their behalf

The updated Code of Practice for Health and Adult Social Care on the prevention and control of infections<sup>1</sup>, and related guidance, reminds both NHS and social care bodies of their responsibilities. These are to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that health and social care workers are free of, and are protected from exposure to, communicable infections during the course of their work, and that all staff are suitably educated in the prevention and control of infections.

The influenza immunisation given to social care workers who are employed to provide personal care acts as an adjunct to good infection control procedures. As well as reducing the risk to the person of infection, the reduction of influenza infection among staff and reduced staff absenteeism have also been noted as benefits.

We are aware of social care employers who have achieved good rates of uptake of seasonal flu immunisation in previous years and we would encourage them to continue with this important work.

Deciding which social care staff should be offered vaccination is a matter for individual employers. The Department of Health would particularly encourage the vaccination of those staff who provide personal care.

Should you require further information please contact [dhmail@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dhmail@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

Thank you for your continuing efforts to protect both those you work to support and your employees.

Yours sincerely



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