

Report to: Staffordshire Health & Wellbeing Board

To be held on: 06/09/18

Report Title:	Seasonal Flu Plan and Campaign					
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Report prepared by:	Emma Sandbach					
Board Sponsor:	Alan White					
Report Type:	System Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Statutory Duties	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendations / action required:						
<p>1. The Board is asked to actively support the seasonal flu campaign and promote it across all of the organisations represented at the Board by promoting flu vaccination among their staff and to the public including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Acting as local leaders to support the flu vaccination campaign, taking part in local media campaigns, and by having the flu vaccination. b. Acting as advocates for vaccination of their staff where eligible and emphasising the importance of this on overall system resilience. 						

Brief Report Summary

Flu occurs every winter in the UK and 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. Therefore, it is important to ensure that certain groups in the population who are considered a higher risk from complications due to flu are vaccinated.

The 2018-19 Seasonal Flu Plan is currently being updated and this sets out various actions that are required. Two of the key areas that are included in the plan are to improve the uptake of flu vaccinations in frontline staff and to develop local promotional campaigns to encourage uptake in at risk groups across the population of Staffordshire.

Vaccination uptake rates in Staffordshire in the previous flu season (2017-18) were lower than the national figures in people aged 65+ years and the at risk population. Historically uptake of vaccinations by front line staff has also been low, which can undermine the resilience of services being delivered to vulnerable people.

It is therefore important that the Health and Wellbeing Board actively support the seasonal flu campaign and promote it across all the organisations they represent.

Main Body of the Report

Background/Introduction

1. Flu occurs every winter in the UK and 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. A 2010 report by the Co-op pharmacy estimated that flu costs the UK economy £1.35 million per year. Much of this cost is due to sickness absence which can also undermine provision of services and how resilient health and social care systems are due to lack of staff. Conversely, the International Longevity Centre UK has estimated that £28.9 million is saved by staff having vaccinations which save costs from sick days.
2. Vaccination uptake rates in Staffordshire in the previous flu season (2017-18) were lower than the national figures in people aged 65+ years and the at risk population. Therefore, it is important to improve the uptake of flu vaccinations. Historically uptake of vaccinations by care staff has also been low, which can undermine the resilience of services.

The flu vaccination programme

3. The flu vaccination programme is commissioned by NHS England who are also responsible for monitoring the flu vaccination services provided by GP practices and community pharmacies to ensure compliance with service specifications.
4. The local NHS, local authorities and other agencies can assist by:
 - a. Supporting local arrangements to ensure access to flu vaccination and to improve its uptake by eligible populations;
 - b. Promoting uptake of flu vaccination among staff providing care;
 - c. Providing leadership and support to respond appropriately to local incidents and outbreaks of flu.
5. The following groups in the population are considered to be at the highest risk of complications from flu and they are included in the NHS flu vaccination programme:
 - a. People aged 65 years or over: *Uptake 2017/18 71.4%*.
 - b. People aged from 6 months to less than 65 years of age with a serious medical condition: *Uptake 2017-18 – 48.2%*

This includes conditions such as:

 - i. Respiratory, cardiac, renal or liver disease.
 - ii. Chronic neurological disease, including those with learning disability.
 - iii. Diabetes or splenic dysfunction.
 - iv. A weakened immune system due to disease.
 - v. Morbidly obese (defined as BMI of 40 and above).
 - c. All pregnant women (including those women who become pregnant during the flu season): *Uptake 2017-18 49.1%*.
 - d. All those aged two and three by their GP practice: *Uptake for 2 year olds 47.6% and 3 year olds 50.3% for 2017/18*.

- e. All children in reception class and school years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
 - f. People 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. This does not include, for instance, prisons, young offender institutions, or university halls of residence.
 - g. People 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.
 - h. Household contacts of immunocompromised individuals, specifically individuals who expect to share living accommodation on most days over the winter and therefore for whom continuing close contact is unavoidable.
6. NHS and other care staff who provide care to people in these groups are also eligible.

Current Activity

7. The 2018-19 Seasonal Flu Plan is currently being updated and this sets out various actions that are required. Two of the key areas that are included in the plan are to improve the uptake of flu vaccinations in frontline staff and to develop local promotional campaigns to encourage uptake in at risk groups across the population of Staffordshire.
8. The flu vaccination services are undertaken by GP practices and community pharmacies; this includes ordering, storage and delivery of the vaccine by trained health professionals and maintaining accurate data on the number of patients that have been vaccinated. Their role also includes educating patients about the appropriate response to flu-like illnesses. The CCGs will proactively monitor flu vaccination uptake rates throughout the flu season in order to support increasing uptake in sections of the at risk population where is it low.
9. The County Council and CCGs are developing a system wide communications campaign that will promote the national flu campaign to increase vaccination rates amongst the population. This will include promotional materials being displayed in GP practices, pharmacies, local authority premises and other locations, as well as production of joint press releases and social media messaging. Arrangements are being made by NHS providers to offer flu vaccination to their care staff and by the County Council to directly employed as well as contracted care staff.