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**Gateway reference : 12791**

**TO:**

All Directors of Adult Social Services

**CC:**

All Directors of Children's Services

All Deputy Regional Directors of Social Care

Social Care Reference Group

Social Partnership Forum

15 October 2009

Dear Colleague,

**A (H1N1) Swine Influenza: Social Care Worker Vaccination Programme Update**

I am writing to provide you with information in order to facilitate local vaccination planning. Vaccination is the surest way in which people can be protected from swine flu, it is therefore a key component of our protection and resilience strategy for frontline social care workers. High rates of vaccination will both save lives and reduce pressure on the vital services we provide.

The second wave of the flu pandemic is under way. Current figures suggest that so far the virus is spreading more slowly than could have been the case. This is good news and gives added importance to our work to get the vaccine to as many people as we can as soon as we can.

**Financial support for vaccination of frontline social care workers**

The Department of Health has agreed to make financial support available to councils for the vaccination of independent sector workers, personal assistants and the council's directly managed social care workers. We will send more information on the funding and payment arrangements in a separate letter.

## **Who has been prioritised for vaccination?**

Frontline health and social care workers have been prioritised for vaccination, along with high-risk groups from the general population. The rationale for staff vaccination is their increased risk of exposure to the virus and increased risk of transmitting the virus to vulnerable people.

The definition of 'frontline' is as described in the annex to my letter of 13<sup>th</sup> August.

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleaqueletters/DH\\_104285](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleaqueletters/DH_104285)

## **Roles and responsibilities**

You now need to be ready to put into practice your local plans for vaccinating eligible frontline social care workers across all sectors. We know that many of you have detailed vaccination plans for eligible frontline social care workers. In your preparations we would encourage you to seek advice and support from your PCT .

You should also continue to work with your Director of Children's Services to ensure the vaccination of priority frontline staff across both adult and children's social care services.

## **What DASS' need to do to secure vaccinations for social care workers**

When they receive their vaccine supplies, PCTs are expected to assist in vaccinating frontline social care staff as well as putting in place their own plans to vaccinate NHS frontline community staff. PCTs will provide the vaccine for social care workers. Directors of Adult Social Services will therefore need to advise PCTs on quantities required to cover their eligible workforce. Ian Dalton, National Director of NHS Flu Resilience, has today written to all the NHS Chief Executives to update them on the vaccination programme.

A supply of vaccine (both GSK Pandemrix and Baxter Celvapan) will be sent to each PCT in the week beginning 26 October. After this date PCTs will be able to order additional supplies of vaccine subject to supply from manufacturers. Although the UK is now receiving supplies of vaccine, we are dependent on a biological process for manufacture and so delivery dates remain subject to change.

Directors of Adult Social Services will want to work in collaboration with local providers and partner agencies to:

1. Finalise your plans for how the vaccination programme will be undertaken, and by whom and where it will take place. This needs to include agreement with the PCT on the delivery of the vaccinations and

associated needles and syringes, and safe storage at the places where the vaccinations are to take place.

2. The emerging picture is that councils are choosing a range of methods for delivering the vaccinations. The aim should be to use existing mainstream routes used for vaccinating staff and patients so making it as easy as possible for frontline staff to receive the vaccination, taking into account the logistics of staff working in 24hr and dispersed services.

The range of approaches we have observed include

- A joint vaccination programme with the PCT for both health and social care staff, with social care accessing the same delivery route as the NHS staff.
- Seeking an agreement with GPs, or GP consortia to undertake the delivery. This may involve discussions with the local LMCs.
- The use of private sector providers who offer vaccination programmes for organisations and businesses.
- Private and third sector social care providers making their own arrangements. For example, via their own Occupational Health services or use of their appropriately qualified nursing staff in registered nursing homes
- Use of the council's own directly managed or contracted Occupational Health services.

### **Data collection on vaccinations for frontline staff**

We are considering how we will collect the data to monitor the uptake rate, the detail of which will follow in a separate letter.

### **Involvement of local staff side / Trade Unions representatives**

We would ask you to consider, if you have not already done so, the involvement of your local staff side representatives and Trade Unions to maximise staff uptake.

### **Communications resources**

Please finalise and implement your vaccination communication strategy. In order to support you we are developing a range of communications materials that can be adapted for local use. These will be added to in the days ahead and we'll share these as soon as they are finalised.

Finally, I wish to thank you all once again for all your hard work to ensure that we are all well-prepared and well protected for the winter months. I am confident that delivering an effective vaccination programme will go a long way to ensuring this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Roy Taylor  
National Director for Social Care Flu Resilience - Department of Health