



Flu Immunisation Programme 2020/21

Toolkit to improve uptake of Seasonal Influenza Vaccination amongst learning disability patients and their carers

From 2014/15, people with learning disabilities have been eligible for the NHS seasonal influenza vaccination programme.

Produced to aid increased awareness and uptake of the flu vaccination in two of the identified 'at risk' groups individuals with a learning disability and their carers (family members or support worker).

In light of the risk of flu and COVID-19 co-circulating this winter, the national flu immunisation programme will be absolutely essential to protecting vulnerable people.

It is vital to increase flu vaccination uptake rates. We need to ensure equitable uptake compared to the population as a whole and help protect those who are more at risk if they are to get COVID-19 and flu. A reminder that it is not too late to take steps to help protect vulnerable patients in your care, particularly your patients with a learning disability and include in your planning.

The Confidential Inquiry into the Deaths of People with Learning Disability (CIPOLD) found that respiratory problems were a major cause of death and recommended that people with learning disabilities should be identified as a high-risk group for inclusion in seasonal influenza vaccination programmes.

We recommend that you identify your patients with a learning disability on your clinical system and audit their uptake of the flu vaccine for the 2019/20 programme.

Why is it important?

Children and adults with learning disabilities are clearly identified as a clinically 'at risk' group, eligible for a flu jab as part of the national flu immunisation programme. Carers can also receive a free flu jab to help protect the people they look after.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccinations-for-people-with-learning-disabilities>

People with learning disabilities have poorer physical and mental health compared to others, and a lower life expectancy. Notably sepsis and pneumonia are major causes of preventable death, and people with a learning disability are particularly vulnerable. The latest [LeDeR review](#) found the top three causes of death to be pneumonia (25%), aspiration pneumonia (16%) and sepsis (7%).

Improving identification of people with a learning disability: guidance for general practice



Learning Disability
document. 101019 F

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/improving-identification-of-people-with-a-learning-disability-guidance-for-general-practice/>

Checklist for primary care

- ✓ Do you know where to find relevant searches within your system to identify eligible patients?
- ✓ Do you have “easy read” resources available in practice?
- ✓ Do you have longer appointments available for patients with additional needs?
- ✓ Do you discuss flu vaccination at patient’s annual health check?
- ✓ Are there reasonable adjustments in place to help patients access flu vaccination?
- ✓ Did you know that the nasal spray can be offered (off label, under a PSD) to patients with LD as a reasonable adjustment, if IM is not suitable?

Help promote the flu vaccine for people with learning disabilities and their carers in your Practice/ Pharmacy

Individuals with a learning disability are identified as an ‘at risk’ group and are therefore entitled to a free flu vaccine. As are their carers, whether that is a family member or paid support staff.

Please help promote the importance of individuals with a learning disability, their families and carers, getting the flu vaccination throughout winter by raising awareness with your patients / members / customers.

A short awareness video has also been produced. Access it via our YouTube channel and hear from Camilla who had her free flu jab to stop getting ill over winter.

Suggested easy read key messages to use

- Do not wait. Get the flu jab as soon you can to stay well.
- See your doctor, nurse or a pharmacist about getting your free flu jab.
- The flu jab is free because you need it. If you do not have the flu jab you could get very ill and have to go to hospital.

- The flu jab is an injection in your arm. Do not let this stop you. The doctor, nurse, pharmacist, your carers or a friend will look after you.
- The flu jab is quick and can protect you from getting very ill.
- Scared of needles? Ask your doctor or nurse about the nasal vaccine.

Eligibility

Carers (family member or support worker) of people with learning disabilities:

- Care for someone with a learning disability? Get the flu jab so you do not get ill or pass the virus on.
- Carers can have a free flu jab. Protect the person you care for and book your flu jab today.
- Care for someone with a learning disability? You, and they, can have a free flu jab. Contact your Doctor or a pharmacist today and stay well this winter.
- Does your loved one have a learning disability? They can have a free flu vaccination. Check if you qualify for a free flu vaccination too as it will help keep you and them well this winter.

Resources

There is suite of Easy Read campaign materials which you can utilise;

Flu letters

- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/national-flu-immunisation-programme-2020-2021.pdf>
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907149/Letter_annualflu_2020_to_2021_update.pdf

leaflets

- [Protect yourself from flu](#)
- ['All about flu and how to stop getting it'](#)
- [Childhood nasal flu](#)



- Audio-[Audio version](#)
- E version of the campaign leaflet ([professional print ready](#) and [web accessible](#))
- [British sign language leaflet](#)
- [Poster for care providers](#)

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Contact

If you have any questions in relation to improving uptake of the seasonal influenza vaccine in your learning disability patients or examples of good practice you wish to share please contact the **Greater Manchester Screening & Immunisation Team** england.gmsit@nhs.net

The GM Screening and Immunisation Team would like to thank the South West Screening and Immunisation Team, who created the toolkit from which this was adapted.