



Free flu vaccinations for social care and hospice staff

Flu can be a serious illness, particularly for the elderly or those with other health conditions. Care workers are working with some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, so it's important that they help protect themselves and those receiving care and support against flu.

[NHS England](#) will provide **free flu vaccinations** for social care staff, as well as health and care staff in the voluntary managed hospice sector, who provide direct patient care.

[You can read their letter for the 2018/19 flu season here.](#)

Are you eligible?



Health and social care staff, employed by a registered residential care/nursing home or registered domiciliary care provider, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza. Vulnerable means those patients/clients in a clinical risk group for flu or who are aged 65 years and over.



Health and care staff, employed by a voluntary managed hospice provider, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients/clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza. Vulnerable means those patients/clients in a clinical risk group for flu or who are aged 65 years and over.



For further information and support contact flufighter@nhsemployers.org

#

Jabathon

Don't forget to join in with this year's **#jabathon** from 8-12 October 2018. Run by the NHS flu fighter team, join the conversation about the importance of getting your flu jab!

What are the benefits?

Immunisation of care workers has been shown to protect them, provide indirect protection to those receiving care and is cost-effective. Staff flu vaccination plays a key part of an effective infection prevention and control strategy. Potential benefits are a reduction in:

- disease spread and patient mortality in long term elderly patients
- staff absenteeism (ensuring business continuity)
- the costs of providing cover for absent staff
- the healthcare costs of managing a flu outbreak.

The vaccination is required every year

Flu viruses can change over time. The vaccines are made in advance of the flu season and protect against the strains of the virus that are most likely to circulate that year.

Flu viruses usually circulate from around late December to late March or even early April. Health and social care workers should receive the vaccine as soon as possible once it's available, usually in September or October. Immunisation is the single best way to protect from flu and prevent its spread.

The vaccination is safe and effective

The flu vaccine has a good safety profile. The injectable vaccine doesn't contain any live viruses and so cannot cause flu.

During the last ten years the vaccine has generally been a good match for the circulating strains. The flu vaccine is less effective with advancing age, so vaccination of staff is an important strategy in providing indirect protection for elderly residents and clients.

What if I don't meet the criteria?

There are further options available if you don't meet the criteria for a free vaccination:

Occupational health - larger providers may have access to services.

Local contracts with healthcare providers - employer contracts with local community providers such as GPs, pharmacies or nursing services. The healthcare provider visits the workplace to provide immunisation.

Staff flu vouchers - employer makes agreement with community pharmacies to provide flu vaccination to staff.

Staff reimbursement - employee pays for vaccine and claims money back from employer.

Peer vaccinators - employer purchases the flu vaccines and staff vaccinate each other.