Department of Health & Social Care

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Adult Social Care
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To:

Local Authority Chief Executives
Directors of Adult Social Services
Directors of Public Health
Adult Social Care Provider Representatives
Hospice provider representatives

29 September 2026

Help protect colleagues and people who draw on care – support vaccination ahead of this winter

Dear Colleagues,

This letter is to ask for your support in promoting vaccination ahead of this winter.

Vaccination is important to help protect all those receiving and providing care in health and care settings.

There are 4 vaccines available to help protect against respiratory illnesses.

Annual vaccinations

- Flu vaccine for eligible children, adults and health and social care workers
- Covid-19 vaccine for eligible adults and children

Year-round vaccinations

- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine for eligible older adults and pregnant women
- Pneumococcal vaccine for eligible adults

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Please use your channels and networks to cascade information to providers, managers, colleagues and those who draw on care and support. Please use the resources below to support this.

- Leaflets for social care staff and providers to support the annual flu programme, available online: Flu vaccination in the social care sector - GOV.UK
- Posters and communication toolkits, available online: Social Care Worker flu vaccination campaign | Winter vaccinations | Campaign Resource Centre

Adult Social Care locations and settings that provide CQC regulated care should receive printed copies of the flu vaccine guidance for providers and staff, and a poster, at the beginning of the flu season. If you have not received your resources by 10 October 2026, please contact the Find Public Health Resource team by email or phone line to arrange an order. Please do take the opportunity to share these materials with your staff, display the poster and discuss having the flu vaccination with your teams.

If you work for a local authority, NHS organisation, Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise organisation, or as a personal care assistant, and wish to help improve vaccine uptake, you can order extra copies for free from https://find-public-health-resources.service.gov.uk/ , or if you want larger quantities, you can call 0300 123 1002 or email publichealthresources@ukhsa.gov.uk.

Flu vaccination

Flu can be serious for people who access care, and outbreaks of respiratory illness occur every year in care settings.

Last winter in England there were thousands of deaths from flu, and the flu vaccination programme is estimated to have prevented around 100,000 people from being hospitalised, as well as preventing around 7,000 deaths.

It is important to get vaccinated every year, even if you have had a vaccine or been ill with flu before, as protection from the vaccine fades over time and flu viruses change each year.

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Getting the flu vaccine every year is the best way to help protect health and care staff, their families, and the people they care for. It also helps to reduce the spread of flu to vulnerable people during winter.

Up to 50% of confirmed flu infections do not have symptoms, meaning unvaccinated staff can unknowingly pass the virus to people accessing care and support and to colleagues. In addition to protecting ourselves, we have a professional responsibility to do everything possible to protect vulnerable people against infection by getting vaccinated.

Adults eligible for a free flu vaccination include:

- pregnant women;
- those aged 65 years and over;
- those aged 18 years to under 65 years in clinical risk groups (as defined by the Green Book Influenza);
- those in long-stay residential care homes;
- individuals staying at a voluntary managed hospice;
- carers in receipt of carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person;
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals;
- rough sleepers and those using homeless hostels or night shelters aged 16 years and over
- frontline workers in a social care setting, including:
    - those working for a registered residential care or nursing home;
    - registered domiciliary care providers;
    - voluntary managed hospice providers; and
    - those that are employed by those who receive direct payments (personal budgets) or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants.

How to access the flu vaccine

The adult flu vaccination programme starts from 1 October. We encourage those eligible to get vaccinated before winter to help protect themselves, their families and the people they care for.

If eligible staff cannot access the flu vaccine through their employer, they can get it through their GP, a participating community pharmacy or the general booking portal.

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All other eligible people can access the flu vaccine from their GP, a community pharmacy, maternity services (if they are pregnant) or a care home (if they live in a care home).

You can find a pharmacy that offers free flu vaccination online now.

You can book, change or cancel a flu vaccination appointment online or in the NHS App.

COVID-19 vaccination

The COVID-19 vaccination programme helps protect those at increased risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19.

The autumn COVID-19 vaccination programme starts on 1 October 2026 for:

- adults aged 75 years and over;
- residents in older adult care homes; and
- people aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed.

How to access the COVID-19 vaccine

Eligible people can get their COVID-19 vaccination through participating community pharmacies, their GP, or a care home (if they live in a care home).

You can book a COVID-19 vaccination appointment online or in the NHS App now.

One-off vaccines for winter respiratory protection

The following vaccines provide further protection against respiratory illnesses in the winter but are offered as a one-off year-round programme.

RSV and pneumococcal vaccinations

RSV vaccination is available for eligible older adults and pregnant women.

Pneumococcal vaccination is available for babies, adults aged 65 and over, and those at higher risk of serious illness.

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Information on how to access the RSV and Pneumococcal vaccinations can be found on the NHS website: RSV vaccine - NHS , Pneumococcal vaccine - NHS.

Thank you in advance for your continued efforts to protect our colleagues and those who draw on care this winter.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH MCCLINTON
CHIEF SOCIAL WORKER FOR ADULTS

DUNCAN BURTON
CHIEF NURSING OFFICER FOR ENGLAND