

Briefing to Health Scrutiny

Date: 13th October 2020

Subject: Delivery of the Flu Vaccination Programme 2020/21

For Information:

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1. Summary of Issues

- 1.1 Every year flu is associated with high rates of morbidity, seasonal mortality, and increased pressures on NHS and social services.
- 1.2 Flu is a highly contagious, acute viral illness of the respiratory tract. For most healthy individuals it is self-limiting. However, vulnerable groups such as older people, the very young, pregnant women and those with underlying health conditions such as respiratory or cardiac disease, or those who are immunosuppressed, are at increased risk of severe illness and death.
- 1.3 This year COVID-19 is expected to co-circulate with flu, and those who are at increased risk from flu are also vulnerable to COVID-19. The national flu programme is therefore more important than ever to prevent illness and reduce demand on NHS services.
- 1.4 The development and implementation of the flu programme is likely to be more challenging this year in view of the disruption caused by COVID-19, and the additional safety and social distancing measures that will need to be in place.
- 1.5 This report is to brief the Health Scrutiny on the Flu programme currently being delivered across Oldham.
- 1.6 Additional key actions for 2020/2021 are:

Under 65 years in clinical at-risk groups

- A commissioned service for the homeless population of Oldham will receive their flu vaccination at our homeless shelter and Hunters Lane. Go to Doc, the provider, will be supported by public health to ensure maximum uptake. This is commissioned by NHS England (NHSE).
- Oldham Cares will work closely with district partnerships to raise awareness and increase uptake in BAME and hard to reach communities.
- Oldham Cares will work with the communications team to ensure a clear message regarding the importance of flu vaccine.
- Provision of joint sessions with public health and learning disability nurses to offer education and a flu vaccine to people attending day centres.

2-3 Year Olds

- A locally commissioned service, to vaccinate 3-year olds in nurseries attached to schools near the end of the flu season, using surplus stock of vaccine. Intrahealth will be commissioned to deliver this service.
- Oldham's approach will be to work with health visitors to raise awareness of the flu vaccine through the 2-year developmental review.

School Aged Children

- A pilot scheme with some low uptake schools where teachers are offered a free influenza voucher, to act as role models and promote the benefits of the vaccine, in order to increase uptake in pupils and lower rates of absence.
- The approach in Oldham will provide support to Intrahealth to address the challenges around the lack of returned consent forms and new porcine gelatine offer, through communications across multiple channels, especially pictorial leaflets and/or posters.
- Work with Intrahealth to develop myth-busting information for both parents and teachers surrounding flu vaccination, in a poster format, also covering COVID-19 related concerns.

Health and Social Care Workers

- Coordinate, alongside the STICH team, the community pharmacies to vaccinate residential care/nursing home staff in the home setting in one visit. As part of the Oldham approach, the employees of the first response team, frontline Community Health and Adult Social Care (CHASC) workers, and CCG/GMSS staff will be offered a flu vaccine.

- 1.7 The Health Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the additional recommended actions in order to increase flu vaccination uptake rates for 2020/2021.

2. National Flu Programme

- 2.1 Each winter the national flu programme aims to prepare for flu season through vaccinating those most at risk. The flu vaccination programme is known to be one of the most effective interventions for reducing pressures on health and social care systems, by reducing GP consultations, hospital admissions and A&E attendances.
- 2.2 Last year according to PHE data 7990 deaths were associated with flu in England, and flu remains a leading cause of death. The national flu programme saves thousands of lives each year.

- 2.3 This year several changes have been made to the eligibility criteria to expand the national flu programme. This includes those groups previously eligible:
- All children aged 2 to 10
 - Under 65 years in clinical at risk groups
 - Pregnant women
 - Aged 65 years and over
 - Residents of long-stay care homes
 - Carers
 - Close contact of immunocompromised individuals
- 2.4 With the addition of:
- Household contacts of those on the NHS Shielded Patient list. Specifically, individuals who expect to share living accommodation with a shielded person on most days over winter.
 - Children of school year 7
 - Health and social care workers employed through Direct Payment and/or Personal Health Budgets.
 - Further extension in November and December to include aged 50-65yrs subject to vaccine supply, and to be prioritised in terms of risk.
- 2.5 As in previous years, flu vaccination is also recommended for frontline health and social care workers. This should be provided by their employer as part of the organisation's policy for the prevention of the transmission of flu, to help protect both staff and those they care for.
- 2.6 For those providers who do not have established occupational health schemes, NHS England will continue to provide vaccination of frontline social care (Care Home and domiciliary staff) and hospice workers through community pharmacy or their registered general practice.
- 2.7 National targets for flu vaccination uptake are more ambitious this year due to the need to achieve maximum coverage. New targets aim for a minimum of 75% uptake across all eligible groups, and an offer of 100% to frontline health and social care workers.
- 2.8 This year, an alternative vaccine will be offered to children whose parents decline the live vaccine due to porcine gelatine contents.
- 2.9 Further changes have been made to allow community pharmacies to vaccinate both residents and staff of care homes in the home setting, as a single visit, to reduce footfall within care homes.

3. Oldham's Annual Work Programme

- 3.1 Every year in Oldham a work programme is developed to implement the national flu programme at a local level. A multi stakeholder operational flu group is established and meets twice a month. The team use an action log to record outcomes and monitor progress.

3.2 The programme operates under joint leadership with Oldham CCG and the GM screening and immunisations team (GM SIT). This year the flu group is chaired by the Executive Nurse at the CCG. Stakeholders include GM SIT, Local Authority, Intrahealth (commissioned to vaccinate school children), Primary Care Networks and Learning disabilities services.

3.3 This group reports on performance to the Governing Body in the CCG and the Health Protection Sub-group of the Health & Wellbeing Board in the council. The group endeavour to achieve national targets required by Public Health England and the Department of Health, and therefore reviewing uptake performance, and any learning from previous years is continually taken into consideration in forward planning.

4. **Oldham's Influenza performance for 2019/2020 (see Appendix: Data)**

4.1 Uptake in **the 65yrs and over group** remained high at 73.4%, which is similar to previous years. This is in line with national and GM uptake figures.

4.2 Last season uptake in those **under 65 with clinical risk** factors fell from 54% to 49.7%. This is the lowest that uptake has been over the last 3 seasons, but remains above the national average uptake which is 44.9%

4.3 There was a slight increase in uptake in **pregnant women** from 51.9% to 53.1%, possibly due to work with maternity services to ensure that midwives offer the flu vaccination to pregnant women and inform GPs promptly. This is well above the national average of 43.9%.

4.4 Results have increased slightly in **the 2-3 years age group**, increasing from 40.9% to 42.9%. This group have the lowest uptake figures, whilst previously the uptake ambition was also lower this year it is the same as other groups at 75%.

4.5 Uptake of the **school aged programme** has fallen from 55.6% to 52.6%. Across all year groups the uptake percentage is below the GM and national average. The total uptake is 9% lower than GM average. However, there is wide variations across the borough (5.58%-85.44%).

4.6 Uptake of **health workers** has decreased across all local trusts and is lower than GM and England average.

4.7 Conversely, frontline **Health & Social Care Staff** who either worked for or who are commissioned by the Local Authority, have had a year on year increase in uptake but percentages remain low.

5. Oldham's Priority Actions 2020/2021

- 5.1 This year it is more important than ever to strive to achieve national targets in all at risk groups. The operational flu group within Oldham have defined 3 areas of priority; this is guided by the GM Health and Social Care Partnership. These areas are:
- the at-risk population under 65 years,
 - people with learning disabilities and
 - children aged 2-3 years.

6. Under 65 years in clinical at-risk groups

- 6.1 This year a modified approach is in place across primary care to ensure the safety of staff and patients whilst maintaining accessibility. To increase uptake in some harder to reach groups, more targeted approaches have been taken across the borough.
- 6.2 A service has been commissioned to ensure that people who are homeless have access to a flu vaccine. Go to Doc will be the provider for Oldham. The provider will offer flu vaccine at our homeless shelter at Shaw Road (A Bed Every Night) and Hunter's Lane. It is estimated that there will be 50 plus service users that will be offered the flu vaccination. The approach in Oldham will be to supply campaign materials from PHE, and to deliver directly to ABEN provision.
- 6.3 The flu vaccine will also be offered by Oldham's drug and alcohol service (Turning Point) to their eligible population.
- 6.4 People with HIV, who access services at Virgin Care will be offered the flu vaccine during clinics as an alternative to attending their GP.
- 6.5 Northern Care Alliance will offer flu vaccines to inpatients as part of the extended national offer.

- 6.6 Campaign material and those specifically aimed at Learning Disability services will be distributed in Libraries. Campaign materials will also be distributed to children's centres, life-long learning, district partnerships, day centres, care homes, homeless services, looked after children and hard to reach communities.
- 6.7 Flu champions will be rolled out in every GP practice to encourage uptake.
- 6.8 The approach in Oldham will be to ensure we work closely with district partnerships to raise awareness and increase uptake in BAME and hard to reach communities.
- 6.9 Oldham will work closely with the communications team to ensure clear messages regarding the importance of the flu vaccine being available to all.

7. Learning Disabilities

- 7.1 According to the Learning disabilities mortality review, respiratory diseases are the most common cause of death in people with learning disabilities (LD), and the flu vaccine is highlighted as an important preventative step. In Oldham, LD services will be working with primary care networks (PCNs) in order to increase flu vaccination uptake. PCNs will work with their LD link nurse to align GP records with the LD case load. This will ensure that more people with LD are known to the GPs, and therefore receive an invitation for their vaccination. PCNs and LD link nurses can also work together to increase flu vaccination uptake using measures such as reasonable adjustments to communications and access, and the nasal spray as an alternative offer.
- 7.2 This year, Pennine Care Foundation Trust (PCFT) have signed up to the GM flu vaccination programme offer, allowing the LD team to offer flu vaccinations to their clients. The team plan to train 2-3 nurses who will vaccinate individuals who are unable to access the vaccine through their GP. The trained nurses will also act as flu champions and vaccinate other employees within their service.

7.3 The approach in Oldham will be to discuss with the LD services the possibility of hosting flu events in day centres, however this will be subject to COVID-19 restrictions. Where possible, collaborative events with public health and LD nurses will be run delivering both an educational element and flu vaccination sessions at the same time.

8. Aged 2-3 years

8.1 The biggest impact in driving this year's priorities will be a targeted approach to improving uptake on the poor performance of the past 2 years' figures. (see Appendix Table 1).

8.2 Sending NHS promotional leaflets and posters to all Oldham Nurseries and Childminding services to target pre-school children.

8.3 The GM SIT team will also be targeting the lowest performing GP Practices to increase their uptake in this cohort.

8.4 GPs are the sole provider and are nationally commissioned to vaccinate all 2 and 3 year olds through an additional and enhanced service agreement in the GP contract. The vaccine is procured nationally and allocated and distributed on an eligible registered practice population basis where GPs order the vaccines that they require through the ImmForm platform. The national team will not accept any vaccine orders for this cohort from other organisations and stepping outside of this directive without prior agreement could jeopardise the national supply of vaccines.

8.5 However, the success of utilising a locally commissioned service to support General Practice in reducing uptake variation of 2 and 3 year olds and narrowing the gap across GM is an alternative model that Oldham would like to continue to build on in 2020/21. Therefore, Oldham will:

- Seek the backing of the CCG for the LA to support general practices in low uptake areas;
- In order to increase the uptake of the 3 year olds, the approach in Oldham will be to commission Intrahealth to go into nurseries attached to schools near the end of the flu season by using **surplus stock** of influenza vaccines, in order to improve uptake in this cohort.

8.6 To increase the uptake of 2 year olds, Health Visitors will raise awareness of the flu vaccine at the health visitor 2-year developmental review, and any follow-up reviews, so that parents are encouraged to go to their GPs for their vaccine. The approach in Oldham will be to distribute leaflets to Bridgewater community centre to include in the 2-years review packs.

9. Pregnant Women

9.1 Pregnant women will be able to receive the vaccine in antenatal classes and during antenatal appointments as well as at their GPs;

9.2 Myth busting information leaflet specifically for pregnant women will again be made available to all pregnant women who attend midwifery services. Oldham's approach will be to distribute these leaflets to the provider.

10. Primary School Children

10.1 Closer work with Headteachers across the borough is required to ensure engagement with the vaccination programme. This will help to contribute to a healthy school environment, reduce school absences, and indirectly protect teachers as they are less likely to catch flu from their pupils. A targeted approach with specific schools where uptake is low is therefore key and will need a coordinated approach from all partners.

10.2 Oldham's approach will also be to undertake a pilot with some of the low uptake schools who could sign up to a free influenza voucher scheme for teachers in order for them to be role models and promote the benefits of the vaccine. The scheme will be evaluated by the public health team, to ascertain whether there was a higher uptake among pupils and lower rates of absenteeism.

10.3 Other actions will include:

- Addressing the challenges faced by Intrahealth with the lack of returned consent forms whereby using events to help with completion where parents may find the forms challenging.
- providing flu information through school media channels and the community, including raising awareness of the alternative to the porcine gelatine containing vaccine,
- sending educational leaflets on flu to parents alongside consent form.
- Work with Intrahealth to provide parents and schools with myth-busting information, including information surrounding COVID-19 and flu themes.

11. Over 65s

11.1 Modified models of delivery will be used across Oldham's care homes to reduce footfall and risk of infection during the flu vaccination programme. This will involve a collaborative approach with either GP surgeries, pharmacies or STICH vaccinating whole care homes during one visit.

12. Maximising uptake in Frontline Health and Social Care Workers

12.1 All Frontline Health & Social Care Staff commissioned by the council will be eligible for a free flu vaccination funded by NHSE.

- 12.2 The Community Pharmacy Seasonal Influenza Advanced Service Framework has been amended to enable community pharmacies to vaccinate care home staff in the home setting in a single visit to increase uptake rates and offer further protection to vulnerable residents. This will need to be well coordinated and both the STICH team and Public Health will help facilitate this approach.
- 12.3 Ensuring that all NHSE promotional flu resources are sent out and utilised by Frontline Health & Social Care providers.
- 12.4 Ensure that Heads of Service promote, encourage and monitor their staff attendance at any flu sessions being offered.
- 12.5 As part of the Oldham offer, employees of the first response team, frontline CHASC workers, and CCG/GMSS staff will be offered flu vaccination.
- 12.6 In preparation, influenza vaccine awareness training will be offered to all frontline staff in Care Homes, Home Care and the hospice via Teams and hard copies of flu resources (staff posters, NHS campaign material, Myth buster Posters, information pack on 'Tips on how to increase uptake to frontline staff') will be posted in September.
- 12.7 The PHE Award Flu Vaccination Scheme will be emailed to all Health & Social Care Providers and promoted in the September.
- 12.8 All IP&C Audits will ensure that providers have an Influenza Policy and undertakes an employee immunisation risk assessment which should include influenza on all frontline/ancillary staff;
- 12.9 Partner with Comms to develop an article in Borough Life Sept Edition called 'Get your flu jab' which will include Frontline Health & Social Care workers;
- 12.10 Ensure that CHASC Heads of service promote, encourage and monitor their staff uptake of flu vaccinations.
- 12.11 There will be a requirement to explore and identify gaps on all Oldham Trust (NCA, Bridgewater and Pennine Care Foundation Trust) Health Care Workers (HCW) flu programme for 2020/21.

13. Fit for Oldham (Local Authority HR Dept)

- 13.1 This year Fit for Oldham plan to extend their offer and aim to double their flu vaccination uptake rates. Since many people are working from home this year, a blended approach is planned, offering flu vaccine vouchers to most workers, with some face to face vaccination sessions for those with restricted computer access, working in public facing roles. Those who are eligible for a free NHS vaccine, including those over the age of 50, people with pre-existing health conditions, frontline health and social care staff or pregnant individuals, will be encouraged to access the vaccine from their GP or pharmacy via a direct communications message. All other staff will be offered a vaccine from Fit for Oldham.

14. Summary Table of Key actions for 2020/2021

Action	Key Actions
1	A commissioned service for homeless population of Oldham to receive their flu vaccination at our homeless shelter and Hunters Lane. Go to Doc will be supported by public health to ensure maximum uptake.
2	Flu Champions will be rolled out in every GP practise
3	Work closely with district partnerships to raise awareness and increase uptake in BME and hard to reach communities
4	Provide joint sessions with LD nurses to offer education and a flu vaccine to people attending day centres.
5	Commission Intrahealth to vaccinate 3-year-olds who attend nurseries attached to schools near the end of the flu season, by using surplus stock of influenza vaccines.
6	Work with health visitors to raise awareness of the flu vaccine through the 2-year developmental review.
7	A pilot scheme with some low uptake schools where teachers are offered a free influenza voucher, to act as role models and promote the benefits of the vaccine, in order to increase uptake in pupils and lower rates of absence.
8	Support Intrahealth to address the challenges around the lack of returned consent forms, and new porcine gelatine offer, through communications across multiple channels.
9	Work with Intrahealth to develop myth-busting information for both parents and schools surrounding flu vaccination this year, particularly themes around COVID-19.
10	Offer the flu vaccine to employees of the first response team, frontline CHASC workers, and CCG/GMSS staff.
11	Coordinate, alongside the STICH team, the community pharmacies to vaccinate residential care/nursing home staff in the home setting.

15. Conclusion

- 15.1 Oldham has successfully managed to improve uptake of the influenza vaccination amongst its residents and frontline health & social care workers in 2019/20 through strong and dedicated partnership working. This past programme of work has enabled a good foundation on which to build on in 2020/21, through clear actions, a focus on reducing variation and planning to support even more people across Oldham next year in being protected against influenza.
- 15.2 Health Scrutiny Committee are therefore asked to note Oldham's approach of the priority groups and give their support to the additional actions.

Appendix: Data

Primary Care Programme

Table1: Influenza vaccination uptake in different risk groups in primary care, current and previous season, comparing Oldham to Greater Manchester (GM) and England. Registered GP patients (1 Sept 2019 -29 Feb 2020)

Risk Groups	2019/2020			2018/2019		
	Oldham	GM	England	Oldham	GM	England
Aged 65 or over	73.4↑	74.7	72.4	73.1	74.5	72
Aged 6 months - under 65 years in a clinical at-risk group	49.7↓	48.6	44.9	54	51.6	48
Pregnant women	53.1↑	50.2	43.7	51.9	49.8	45.2
All aged 2-3 years	42.9↑	45.4	43.8	40.9	43.8	45.4

Source: [Seasonal flu vaccine uptake in GP patients: winter 2018 to 2019](#), [Seasonal flu vaccine uptake in GP patients: winter 2019 to 2020](#)

School Programme

Table 2: Primary school aged children influenza vaccine uptake in Oldham, Greater Manchester and England (1 Sept 2019 -31 Jan 2020)

	Year Group	Region		
		Oldham	GM	England
2019/2020	Reception	56.0↓	64.4	64.3
	Year 1	54.6↓	64.5	63.6
	Year 2	55.1↓	63.5	62.6
	Year 3	52.9↓	61.7	60.6
	Year 4	52.7↓	60.9	59.6
	Year 5	50.4↓	59.3	57.2
	Year 6*	47.2	56.3	55
	All year groups	52.6↓	61.5	60.4
2018/2019	Reception	59.4	64.1	64.3
	Year 1	59.4	64.4	63.6
	Year 2	56.8	62.3	61.5
	Year 3	54.2	60.8	60.4
	Year 4	52.8	59.8	58.3
	Year 5	51.1	57.2	56.5
	Year 6			
	All year groups	55.6	61.7	60.8

*Year 6 added to the programme 2019/2020

Source: [Seasonal flu vaccine uptake in children of primary school age: winter 2018 to 2019](#), [Seasonal flu vaccine uptake in children of primary school age: winter 2019 to 2020](#)
GM data from 2018/2019 from Flu Briefing paper 2019/2020

Health and Social Care Workers

Table 3: Influenza vaccination uptake in health workers in local, Greater Manchester and England NHS trusts

	2019/2020	2018/2019	2017/2018
Pennine Acute NHS Foundation Trust	61.5% ↓	75.4%	78.7%
Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust	44.8% ↓	73.5%	59.4%
Bridgewater Community Health NHS Foundation Trust	50.5% ↓	58.8%	71.5%
Greater Manchester	72.2% ↓	72.6%	69.3%
England	74.3%	68.9%	67.6%

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-flu-vaccine-uptake-in-healthcare-workers-monthly-data-2019-to-2020>

Local Authority commissioned Health and Social Care Workers

Table 4: Influenza vaccination uptake in health and social care workers who either work for or are commissioned by the Local Authority in Oldham

Source: *Local Authority Public Health*

	2019/2020	2018/2019
MioCare Ltd	27% ↑	21%
Social Workers/ Child Health	64% ↑	56%
First Respond Team	56% ↑	55%
Care Home Staff	43% ↑	42%

National Uptake Ambitions (2019/2020)

NB: For the 2020/2021 season the national ambition target has increased to 75% across all eligible groups, and 100% offer to Health and Social care workers.

Eligible Group	National Uptake Ambition (2019/2020)
Over 65 years	75%
Under 65 years in a clinical at-risk group	≥55%
Pregnant women	≥55%
All 2-3 year olds	≥50%
Primary school children	≥65%
Health and Social Care workers	≥75%

Legends

↓ =met the 2019/20 target/ decrease in uptake

↑ =met the 2019/20 target/ increase in uptake

↓ =did not meet the 2019/20 target/ decrease in uptake

↑ =did not meet the 2019/2020 target/ increase in uptake

↑ =maximise uptake/ increase in uptake