

Guidance for GPs to access extra flu vaccines as part of expanded vaccination programme

- Vaccines are already being given to at-risk groups in GPs and pharmacies and will continue over the winter months
- Additional vaccines have been secured by government to allow providers to vaccinate the expanded eligible groups

This guidance explains the process that GPs should follow to access the government's additional vaccines from the central supply.

As part of the tried-and-tested approach to delivering vaccination at scale, should GPs deliver all vaccines from their own stock, they can place orders from mid-October with suppliers for the government-secured stock to be delivered from November. These vaccines will be provided to those at-risk groups like 65s and over, pregnant women and those with pre-existing conditions, as well as frontline health and social care workers.

GPs and pharmacies are responsible for procuring flu vaccine. However in addition to this, the government has agreed to procure over 8 million vaccines which providers can access once their own stock is empty to help deliver the vaccine to 30 million people.

Over 10 million vaccines have already been delivered, with the other 20 million scheduled for delivery in October, November and December. As flu levels generally do not begin to rise until December, people do not have to rush to get vaccinated in September or October, as the vaccination programme continues right up until and into the flu season.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jonathan Van-Tam said:

If you are in an eligible group, or if you are a frontline health or social care worker, the flu vaccination will help to protect you and your loved ones this winter. That is very important at a time when COVID-19 is an additional threat. If you're eligible for a free flu vaccine, you will be contacted by the NHS to arrange an appointment. When that happens, please take advantage of this important protection.

Dr Raj Patel, NHS Deputy National Medical Director of Primary Care, said:

Frontline NHS staff are working harder than ever to prepare for winter and have seen significant increase in demand for the flu vaccination, so access to additional supply will be very well received by GPs and patients alike. GPs and pharmacies will

continue to offer regular, timely flu vaccines to eligible groups, making particular efforts to prioritise the most vulnerable.

Those eligible for the free flu vaccine, alongside frontline health and social care workers, have already begun to receive their vaccinations. Those aged 50 to 64 will also be eligible for a free vaccine but will be invited later in the season. Once they're invited, they will be eligible to receive vaccines from the government-secured supply.

The flu vaccination programme will run throughout the winter months and into January, so anyone eligible for a vaccine will be able to receive one. The flu season tends to start in December, but vaccination at any point in the season is valuable protection.

GP guidance has been issued directly to providers.

A pre-set proportion of this additional stock will also be made available to trusts and community pharmacy, and the arrangements for them to order against this stock will be confirmed shortly.