

Eligible people urged to get vaccinated as flu season officially under way

- All eligible people – including those in at risk groups, pregnant women, and aged 50 or over – urged to get their free flu vaccine
- Many schoolchildren and 2 and 3-year-old preschoolers are eligible for nasal spray flu vaccines
- UKHSA indicators have been met in England leading to the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Pharmaceutical Officer authorising antiviral medicines on prescription in primary care settings, in line with pre-pandemic seasons
- Flu is now circulating at higher levels than recent seasons

All those eligible for the flu vaccine have been urged to come forward as cases rise to levels not seen since before the pandemic.

So far this year, flu vaccine uptake in eligible groups is similar to the last couple of years, although there is a particular need for pre-schoolers, pregnant women and those in the health and social care workforces to take up the offer.

Latest UKHSA data shows there have been jumps in emergency department flu attendances and hospital admissions in the last week. The intensive care admission rate is now higher for flu than for Covid.

In the week 14 to 20 November 2022:

- The hospital admission rate for flu increased to 24 per million population, up from 15 per million the previous week. The highest rates were in the under 5s followed by the 75 years plus group. The Covid rate was 44 per million population.
- The intensive care and high dependency care for influenza increased to 21 per 10 million population compared to 13 per 10 million population in the previous week. The highest rates were in the under 5s followed by the 65 years plus group. The Covid rate was 17 per 10 million population.

Those aged 2 and 3 years old are eligible for nasal spray flu vaccines, with parents and guardians also urged to book appointments to ensure the younger age group is protected.

With both flu and Covid cases both circulating this winter, it is also vital all those eligible get both vaccines as soon as possible.

Due to the increase in levels of flu circulating in the community, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has recommended that it is now appropriate for antiviral medicines to be prescribed in primary care settings.

Those eligible for antivirals if they have flu include patients in clinical at-risk groups as well as any who are at risk of severe illness and complications from flu if not treated. This includes people in those groups who present with symptoms of flu and those who have been exposed to flu-like illnesses from someone they live with, including residents of care homes.

As has happened in flu seasons before the pandemic, following an UKHSA recommendation, the Chief Medical Officer together with the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer have issued an alert to the NHS notifying the healthcare system that antiviral medicines can now be prescribed and supplied for cases of community acquired influenza.

Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, said:

Flu and Covid are both circulating. We are currently seeing higher rates of flu at this time of year than usual.

It is important those eligible have their flu jab as soon as they can. Vaccines are the best defence against these viruses. The most effective approach is to get vaccinated before it is circulating at very high rates.

As flu cases have risen and in order to protect the most vulnerable – in line with pre-COVID flu seasons antiviral medicines can now be prescribed in primary care settings such as GPs and pharmacies to those eligible who are most at risk to the complications of flu.

Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

Flu is a serious virus and, while we haven't seen the number of cases we're used to over the last couple of years, it is starting to circulate at high levels this season.

Thankfully we have the tools to protect those most at risk to flu. Thanks to our fantastic vaccination campaign, more than 17 million flu jabs have been given in England this season already.

For all those eligible who have not yet come forward for their free winter vaccines for flu and Covid, please do not delay in coming forward for your jab. It could not be easier.

In England, the first weekly winter update shows there were an average of 344 patients a day with flu in hospital last week, more than ten times the number seen at the beginning of December last year.

In October, a new country-wide marketing campaign urging millions of eligible people to get their flu and Covid booster vaccines to top up their immunity was launched.

Building on the success of the 2021/22 Covid vaccination campaign, the campaign stressed that the protection provided by vaccines wanes over time, so everyone eligible should boost their immunity by getting both vaccines ahead of a difficult winter.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Director for Immunisation & Programmes at UKHSA:

Our surveillance shows recent increases in laboratory and clinical influenza indicators across England, particularly NHS emergency department attendances, hospitalisations and intensive care. Alongside older adults, flu rates are rapidly rising in younger children. Vaccination remains critical and I urge everyone eligible to take up the offer.

Flu antivirals are effective in helping to keep people out of hospital and preventing the virus spreading to other more vulnerable household and family members. Now that we are seeing flu increasing it's important that GPs consider the possibility of flu in respiratory patients and the use of antivirals in line with national guidance, particularly if they have ruled out COVID-19.

Professor Sir Stephen Powis, NHS national medical director, said:

The first weekly data this year shows that flu is already with us as we enter what could be the most challenging winter in NHS history, with hundreds of beds a day already occupied with patients with flu.

Flu can be extremely serious for lots of people, so pharmacies and GPs will now be able to prescribe antivirals to those most at risk of its complications to help people avoid the need for hospital care.

But the best way people who are eligible can protect themselves is by getting vaccinated without delay – there are thousands of sites across the country offering flu and covid jabs so please book in today if you haven't already.

The alert concerning flu antiviral medicine has been issued to primary care settings including GPs and community pharmacies in England.

The Department of Health and Social Care continues to work closely with the manufacturers of antiviral medicines, used in the treatment of flu, to monitor stocks and ensure that there are adequate supplies of these medicines available to meet UK demand.

The prescription and supply of antivirals in primary care settings is in line with NICE guidance.

- Antiviral medicines do not work like a vaccine which helps to stop you from getting the flu, but they can reduce the severity of the disease if you are treated early.
 - Antiviral medicines may be prescribed at any time in the secondary care setting for patients with suspected seasonal influenza infection. In primary care, once it has been confirmed that flu is circulating in the community, antiviral medicines may be prescribed for patients in “clinical at-risk groups” as well as any who are at risk of severe illness and/or complications from flu if not treated.
 - This alert is issued based on advice from UKHSA, which monitors the level of flu circulating in the community based on a range of different indicators. This includes the number of positive tests for flu, the number of acute respiratory outbreaks reported, hospital admissions, and the number of GP consultations for flu like illness.
 - The alert can be found here:
<https://www.cas.mhra.gov.uk/ViewandAcknowledgment/ViewAlert.aspx?AlertID=103217>
 - Link to latest weekly UKHSA national flu and Covid surveillance report can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports-published>
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Update to Forestry Commission Non-Executive Commissioners

Press release

One appointment and three reappointments have been made to Non-Executive Commissioner roles at the Forestry Commission



New appointment and three reappointments made to Non-Executive Commissioner roles at the Forestry Commission

By Royal Warrant, four new appointments and reappointments have been made to Non-Executive Commissioner positions at the Forestry Commission. His Majesty King Charles III appointed Ross Murray as a Non-Executive Commissioner and the late Queen reappointed Julia Grant, Jennie Price, and Peter Latham as Non-Executive Commissioners.

Ross Murray has been appointed for a three-year term which commenced on 1 October 2022. Julia Grant has been reappointed for a third term of two years from 1 November 2022 until 31 October 2024. Jennie Price and Peter Latham have been reappointed for a second term of three years from 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2025.

These appointments have been made in accordance with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments. All appointments have been made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The time commitment is expected to be up to 30 days per year and the daily rate for each Commissioner is £409.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. None of the appointees have declared taking part in any significant political activity in the past five years.

The Non-Executive Commissioners play a pivotal role in establishing a strong, sustainable future for the organisation. The Forestry Commission (FC) is a non-Ministerial Government department that has a key role in helping the Government achieve its tree planting objectives. The Forestry Commission is responsible for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands to society and the environment.

Biographical details

Ross Murray

- Ross is the current Non-Executive Chairman at Knight Frank Rural and Senior Trustee of Llanover Estate.
- Previously he has been National President for The Country Land and Business Association.

Julia Grant

- Julia has held a range of leadership roles in global consulting firms, financial services and the not-for-profit sector over a 30-year career span.
- She has extensive non-executive and board experience including previous Ministerial Appointments at the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Surrey Learning and Skills Council.
- She is a Non-Executive Forestry Commissioner, a Non- Executive Member of the Investment and Delivery Committee at the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office and a Member of the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee at the Rural Payments Agency.
- Julia is also currently a Trustee at Education Development Trust and is a previous trustee at Shelter and the Community Foundation for Surrey.

Jennie Price

- Jennie has been the Chief Executive Officer of Sport England and Chief Executive Officer of WRAP, a DEFRA-supported environmental organisation specialising in recycling and resources management.
- She has also been the Chair of the International Tennis Integrity Agency and Chair of Trustees of The Scouts in the UK. Jennie is also a Trustee of the Canal and River Trust.

Peter Latham

- Peter is a Director at Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux (ATIBT)
- He is a Trustee of the William Robinson Gravetye Charity and of the Commonwealth Forestry Association.
- He was previously Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Timber Distributor James Latham Plc., and also previously Chair of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification International (PEFC).

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[Rear Admiral Andy Kyte CB announced as the next Chief of Defence Logistics](#)

and Support

News story

His Majesty the King has approved the appointment of Rear Admiral (RAdm) Andy Kyte CB as the next Chief of Defence Logistics and Support (CDLS), in the rank of Vice Admiral, from September 2023.



Rear Admiral (RAdm) Andy Kyte CB has been announced as the next Chief of Defence Logistics and Support (CDLS), in the rank of Vice Admiral.

RAdm Kyte has had a notable career in logistics covering posts in the Royal Navy, the Defence Support organisation and wider Defence. He will step into the role of CDLS and lead the organisation forward as it seeks to modernise and integrate how Support is delivered.

CDLS heads up the Defence Support organisation, under Strategic Command. As CDLS, RAdm Kyte will be responsible for overseeing the continued implementation of the Defence Support Strategy, the delivery of strategic military logistics and support advice, and as the Functional Owner developing, cohering and assuring support across Defence.

General Sir James Hockenhull, Commander United Kingdom Strategic Command said:

“I am pleased to announce RAdm Andrew Kyte’s appointment as the next Chief of Defence Support and Logistics, Defence Support organisation, in the rank of Vice Admiral. He will bring a unique insight as he steps into the role with a broad range of experience. Defence Support is a vital part of Strategic Command and wider Defence. I look forward to working with Andy going forward.”

Current CDLS, Lt Gen Richard Wardlaw, said:

“Having played a central role in the creation of the Defence Support organisation and been intimately involved in the development of the Defence Support Strategy, RAdm Kyte’s appointment as the next Chief of Defence Logistics and Support is to be celebrated. Andy will bring an innate

appreciation of the challenges faced and as part of Strategic Command, the insights and experience required to drive forward the continued modernisation of Support”.

On his appointment, RAdm Kyte CB said:

“I am delighted and incredibly proud to have been selected as the next Chief of Defence Logistics and Support. It is a huge honour to be able to lead the organisation into the future and take forward Defence Support’s ambitious agenda as it seeks to modernise the delivery of Support”.

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Staffordshire anglers prosecuted for fishing illegally

- Two offences land Tamworth angler with fines totalling £751
- Stoke fisherman pays £191 for illegal fishing
- Cases heard at Northampton magistrates court on 21 November 2022

At Northampton magistrates on 21 November 2022, Lee Whitehead, 32, of French Avenue, Mile Oak, Tamworth, pleaded guilty to fishing illegally and to refusing to give his name and address to an officer from the Environment Agency.

Whitehead’s offences took place at Stubby Leas Carp Fishery, Lichfield, on 19 June 2022. He was fined £220 for each offence and ordered to pay costs of £135 and a victim’s surcharge of £176.

The case of Lucian Blaga, 37, of Bartholomew Road, Stoke, was also heard by the magistrates. He was fined £40 and ordered to pay costs of £135 and a victim’s surcharge of £16 for fishing illegally on the River Dove at Uttoxeter on 19 June 2022.

Following the verdict, a spokesperson for the Environment Agency, said:

We’re pleased how seriously the courts take these offences. Lee Whitehead has been rightly punished for his offences.

He did not have a valid licence, but he was also unhelpful when questioned by our officers.

We will not tolerate abusive behaviour towards our officers who routinely undertake licence checks.

All of the money raised from rod licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries for the benefit of anglers. For those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

Every year across the country, thousands of anglers are prosecuted for not having a fishing licence.

As well as cheating other anglers, fishing illegally can carry a hefty penalty.

Getting caught without a licence could land a fine of up to £2,500.

Income from rod licence sales is used to fund [Environment Agency](#) work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence to fish. A 1-day licence costs from just £6, and an annual licence currently costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 to 16-year-olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and the Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency incident hotline 24/7 on 0800 807060 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Background

Lee Whitehead was charged with the following:

- On 19 June 2022 at Stubby Leas Carp Fishery, Lichfield, in a place where fishing is regulated fished for freshwater fish or eels by means of an unlicensed fishing instrument, namely rod and line. Contrary to Section 27 (1) (a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.
- On 19 June 2022 at Stubby Leas Carp Fishery, Lichfield, when fishing, failed, when required to do so, to state his name and address to a water bailiff of the Environment Agency having power to make such a request contrary to Section 35 (3) of and Schedule 4 to the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Lucian Blaga was charged with the following:

- On 28 June 2022 on River Dove at Uttoxeter in a place where fishing is regulated fished for freshwater fish or eels by means of an unlicensed fishing instrument, namely rod and line. Contrary to Section 27 (1) (a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Formal approval for revised package design

News story

Through collaborative working with Sellafield Ltd, we've come up with a solution to safely transport contaminated chemicals.



Nuclear Waste Services continues to work with customers to safely dispose of legacy radioactive waste.

Customers can now safely transport contaminated chemicals after licensing approval was given for its TC14 drum to be used as a combination package.

Packaging Services Technical Manager, Wayne Jones, was involved in initial discussions. He said:

We were approached by Sellafield Ltd as they had large volumes of contaminated chemical waste in stores on their site. There was no compliant way to transport these containers to a suitable disposal facility in the condition they were in, so we needed a new approach.

We realised that the widely used TC14 drum would be the best solution, but some additional testing and rework of the current safety case was needed before it could be licenced as a combination package.

The TC14 was already licenced as a single package, but not a combination. After extensive testing, the redesigned TC14C drum has been licensed to carry inner containers of plastic, metal, or glass.

For Sellafield, this means greater efficiencies – they are able to pack more into the TC14C containers, and the approach will significantly reduce the time it will take for them to dispose of these chemicals.

Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer at Nuclear Waste Services added:

This is a great example of what can be achieved through collaborative working – it's another benefit of the One NDA approach that we've adopted over the last few years. Sellafield has a pressing need to consign surplus and degraded chemicals for treatment and disposal and we can now facilitate that with the TC14C drums. I don't underestimate the team effort it takes to deliver the service our customers expect and thank everyone involved in this significant project.

Wayne added:

This is a great result all round. We'll be sending all the relevant documents to Sellafield so they can start shipments to the final disposal site as soon as possible, and in the longer term we hope that other customers will realise the potential of the TC14C combination drum.

If you would like more information, please contact our [customer team](#).

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