

NHS Board Meeting
28 October 2020

Lanarkshire NHS Board
Kirklands
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SUBJECT: FLU VACCINATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide Board Members with an update in relation to the Flu vaccination programme.

For approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	For assurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	To note	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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2. ROUTE TO THE BOARD

This paper has been prepared by Dr Mark Russell, Associate Medical Director Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire.

In addition a Board briefing on the delivery of the seasonal flu campaign has also been appended.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

Background

This year, more than 300,000 people across Lanarkshire are eligible for the flu vaccine.

These include:

- 2 to 5 years (not yet in school) and primary school children
- Everyone aged under 65 at risk
- Everyone aged 65 and over
- People who have been shielding and members of their households
- Health and Social Care Workers
- Pregnant women
- 55 to 64 years (who are not otherwise eligible, if vaccine supplies allow later in the programme)

All appointments for priority patients will be issued before the end of November, however the nature of the Scottish Immunisation Recall System (SIRS) being used for this means that we are unfortunately unable to tell people when they will be vaccinated until the system generates their appointment.

Priority patients include all of the eligible groups, except the 55 to 64 years age group; unless they are included in another category. We are using the details from GP practice lists to identify who is eligible. Anyone who has previously received the vaccine from their GP and whose medical situation has not changed will be on the list to receive it this year.

Due to the number of people eligible for the flu vaccine, and also the need to adhere to Covid-19 precautions, the delivery of this year's flu programme is different to other years.

We have been reassuring members of the public and stakeholders that staff are working hard to make sure everyone gets their vaccination as soon as possible.

We need to deliver the vaccine in large community clinics – this means that we can offer more flexible clinic times (8am to 8pm), vaccinate more people while ensuring physical distancing and adherence to other Covid-19 guidelines.

Venues were identified for their accessibility and transport links for the majority of people – however, we understand that some people will have to travel further for their vaccine. NHS Lanarkshire has also worked closely with both councils to develop plans for the use of large council venues. Although council recovery plans have restricted the choice of venues at times.

Vaccination of both Health and Social Care staff is a key part of this year's campaign, and is led by Salus Occupational Health which delivers staff Seasonal Influenza Immunisation programme on behalf of NHS Lanarkshire to both staff employed by NHS Lanarkshire and North and South Lanarkshire Council staff. This programme will feature a combination of peer immunisation and mass vaccination approaches.

Children at primary school are being vaccinated by the school immunisation team, and pregnant women are being vaccinated within antenatal clinics, with additional clinics being added to ensure that all women are offered the opportunity to be vaccinated as soon as possible. District nursing teams will continue to vaccinate housebound residents at home and care home residents will be prioritised for delivery of vaccine. They will be vaccinated by the nursing team in their home.

Challenges and mitigating actions

Workforce

Workforce is a significant challenge. Approximately 100 whole time equivalent vaccinators will be required, with a similar number of administrative staff both directly involved in clinics, in scheduling of staff and patients, and in coding and support roles. A workforce plan to support this is being implemented, and an update will be provided at the Board meeting on the numbers of staff recruited at that point. The Corporate Management Team has agreed that, given the priority of delivery of flu vaccine this year, a whole system approach will be taken with all available registered staff who are able to do so assisting with the delivery of the campaign, regardless of current role. Multi-professional staff from primary care, acute services and mental health are participating. Arrangements have been made with independent contractor groups including general practice and optometry to provide support.

Localisation challenges

There is a tension between the mass vaccination approach which the Covid-19 environment necessitates and the previous experience of the population of a very local delivery method through GP surgeries. There is a balance to be struck between offering time-based flexibility and location based flexibility. Each locality has attempted to strike this balance within the venues available. These decisions are now largely fixed for the main part of the programme due to lead times for appointment generation, but analysis of differential vaccination uptake rates will form part of the planning process for the mop-up campaign in December. A rebooking helpline has been setup within the Referral Management Service to offer as much flexibility as possible.

Scheduling difficulties

SIRS is a legacy system run by ATOS on behalf of NHS National Services Scotland. It is being used in the recall of all groups for whom a mass vaccination approach is being taken. There have been a number of issues with its reliability, specifically around the “at-risk” cohort, which have caused delays to the issuing of appointments and in a relative small number of cases, the issuing of appointment letters to people who did not fall within eligible cohorts. Any patients attending clinics in these circumstances have been vaccinated, however it is clearly important for both public confidence and the appropriate use of vaccine supply to ensure these issues do not recur. NHS Lanarkshire staff liaise with NSS staff on a daily basis to ensure that any issues are promptly resolved and we have been working closely with Scottish Government to ensure that the risks are fully understood.

Contingency planning has taken place within NHS Lanarkshire to ensure that local fall-back options are in place should a significant issue occur, and thus far these have been invoked on one occasion. The opportunity was taken to prioritise the shielding population and their households, which it is not possible to do via SIRS. It is believed that the issues which caused this have been fully resolved by NSS.

The Corporate Management Team has been engaged in assessing the risks posed and has formed the view that continuing with scheduling via SIRS is the preferred option, with thorough contingency planning continuing in case of any further issues.

Communication

In light of the above there is significant and growing levels of public interest and associated/anticipated political and media interest around the flu vaccine.

There are pronounced challenges around incoming enquiries, correspondence and social media activity from members of the public, some of the latter in particular being very challenging. Additional staff have been recruited to work in the Referral Management Centre to respond to calls from concerned members of the public.

To mitigate this, clear public messaging has been developed and some of the foregoing activities include:

- Briefings to MPs/MSPs and locally elected members
- Regular and ongoing social media posts – targeted to demographic as well as general messages
- Prominent bus adverts and train adverts.
- Regular press releases planned as the programme progresses – including flu uptake rates.
- Case studies from clinics (will be sought and actively pushed to our media contacts)
- Local press adverts
- An animation
- A toolkit has been produced for stakeholder to ensure messages are consistent
<https://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/download/flu-toolkit/>
- The above also includes guidance for GP practices to support with patient enquiries
- Clear information is also prominent on NHS Lanarkshire’s website.

Helpline update

NHS Inform has set up a flu vaccine enquiries line but the volume of queries has being significantly

in excess of their capacity. This has resulted in a significant number of general enquiries being dealt with by Patient Affairs, Public Health, locality and central management teams and RMS. In particular this has compromised the ability of RMS to respond timeously to rebooking calls. In response to this, a general enquiries line has been set up to provide a central resource and staff are currently in training.

Additionally, many patients are calling their own GPs and this is also adding significant pressure to the respective GP practice ability to manage all incoming calls.

NHS Lanarkshire will launch a helpline and email address next week (w/c Monday 19 October) for general flu enquiries.

4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This paper links to the following:

Corporate objectives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AOP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Government directive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Statutory requirement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AHF/local policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Urgent operational issue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

5. CONTRIBUTION TO QUALITY

This paper aligns to the following elements of safety and quality improvement:

Three Quality Ambitions:

Safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Effective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Person Centred	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Six Quality Outcomes:

Everyone has the best start in life and is able to live longer healthier lives; (Effective)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
People are able to live well at home or in the community; (Person Centred)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Everyone has a positive experience of healthcare; (Person Centred)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff feel supported and engaged; (Effective)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare is safe for every person, every time; (Safe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Best use is made of available resources. (Effective)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

6. MEASURES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The service is working closely with NHS National Services Scotland on improving the call system.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT/MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is a significant reputational risk to the Board, but the mitigation in place should allow the programme to be completed as planned and on time.

9. FIT WITH BEST VALUE CRITERIA

This paper aligns to the following best value criteria:

Vision and leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Effective partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance and accountability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Use of resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Performance Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT / FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

Not applicable. At risk groups of patients are being targeted first in accordance with national clinical priorities.

11. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

12. ACTIONS FOR THE BOARD

Approve	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Identify further actions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Note	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accept the risk identified	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask for a further report	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Board is asked to

- Note the update and the assurance around the mitigation is place to address the challenges faced to date.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about any aspect of this paper, please contact:

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