



Board briefing on the delivery of the seasonal flu campaign 2020/21 21 October 2020

This briefing provides an update on the delivery of the season flu campaign. It includes the background, current challenges and how we're meeting them and a set of FAQs.

This year, NHS Lanarkshire is delivering the flu vaccine to more than 300,000 people. These include:

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

We are unable to provide details of individual appointments, as this is done nationally. However, all appointments for priority patients will be issued before the end of November. Priority patients include all of the eligible groups, except the 55 to 64 years age group (unless they are included in another category).

We understand that people are anxious and want to know when they will receive their flu vaccination. We would like to reassure the public that everyone who is eligible, will receive an appointment for their vaccination. Staff are working hard to make sure everyone gets their flu vaccine as quickly and as safely as possible before the start of the flu season later in the year. So far around 35,000 members of the public in Lanarkshire have already been vaccinated.

This is the largest flu programme ever undertaken in NHS Lanarkshire and there have been a number of challenges, some out with our control, with delivering it. However, we are working to rectify these. This is a new way of working for everyone involved and we are learning and adapting our processes as we move forward.

Last week, due to a national computer system error, there were a number of clinics across Lanarkshire that were not running to full capacity. To make best use of these clinics NHS Lanarkshire took the decision to text patients who had been shielding and offer them an appointment at short notice. Members of their households were also invited to attend a clinic. These clinics were not 'drop-in' clinics as everyone received an appointment – NHS Lanarkshire is not running drop-in clinics this year as we need to manage the number of people at each clinic to ensure physical distancing.

There have been times when people who have arrived at a clinic together have received their vaccination – for example, a husband and wife where the husband has an appointment, but the wife's scheduled appointment is for a different date. Or if a carer is

attending with the person they care for. Each case is clinically assessed and, if appropriate, we are taking the opportunity to vaccinate these people as they are eligible and it is more person-centred to vaccinate them at the clinic rather than ask them to return.

However, people should not just turn up at a clinic without an appointment.

We are also aware of patients who have received their letter after their scheduled appointment. This delay may have been caused by the letters being posted second class by the national booking system. We have asked that future letters are sent first class and have received confirmation that this will now be the case from 20 October. We hope this will help in resolving this issue. As the programme progresses, we are looking at different ways to contact patients, not just by letter.

We are receiving a high number of enquiries from members of the public about this year's flu campaign, specifically about when they will receive their letter. Unfortunately, we cannot provide details of individual appointments as this is done nationally. However, we will be issuing information in the coming weeks on what to do if people haven't received their letter.

Due to these high number of calls, we are increasing the number of call handlers on our rebooking line and have also introduced a general enquiry line. However, we are asking for your support and assistance to help manage the number of calls which comes through to the lines.

We realise that elected members are receiving a large number of enquiries from members of the public. We are sharing a number of frequently asked questions with elected members which we hope will help answer the majority of enquiries they are receiving.

We are taking this opportunity to review our communications messages and are planning:

- Media release to acknowledge the challenges and what we are doing to rectify them.
- Refreshing social media messages – including a video to mirror the messaging in the media release.
- Briefing for MPs / MSPs and elected members. This will include an FAQ document to help them answer enquiries from their constituents.
- Article in the staff briefing sharing the FAQs and asking staff to familiarise themselves, as enquiries are coming in across the organisation.
- Include an update in the Chief Exec's weekly video.
- Planned local press ads – reviewed the messaging in local press ads that were planned for w/c 26 October.

Frequently asked questions

What's happening in Lanarkshire?

Due to the number of people to be vaccinated, appointments will be allocated at local community clinics. These include both health and non-health premises.

Details of cohorts to be vaccinated:

Cohort	Timescale to be vaccinated
2 to 5 years (not yet in school)	October and November
Everyone aged under 65 at risk	October and November
Everyone aged 65 and over	October and November
Young and unpaid carers	October to November
Household members of people who were shielding	October to December
55 to 64 years	December (who are not otherwise eligible, if vaccine supplies allow)
Pregnant women	At their midwife appointment
Primary school children	At school
NHS staff and social care staff with direct patient care	Through their workplace

My friend / relative in another health board has already received their vaccination – why haven't I received my letter yet?

Flu vaccination clinics started on 5 October. However, we encountered technical issues with the booking system, which delayed the programme. The issues have now been resolved and we are back on track. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Appointments

When I will hear about my flu vaccination? I'm worried as I've not heard yet?

All flu immunisations are being delivered by NHS Lanarkshire this year. GP practices are working with the health board to identify everyone who is eligible for the flu vaccination.

Invites to attend will begin to arrive with patients from w/c 21 September. There are more than 300,000 patients who need to be invited. The scheduling means you may not get your invite at the same time as others in your practice / community but you will get an invite.

You may receive your invite at a different time than you normally do. We can't tell you exactly when, but you will receive one. Thank you for your patience.

I don't know if I am meant to get a flu vaccination?

Anyone who falls into the following groups has been identified as someone who getting the vaccinations is important.

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

Visit www.nhsinform.scot/flu and use the 'How to get the flu vaccine in your area' guide.

I got an invite but I've lost it and can't remember when or when my appointment is?

Don't worry. You can call 01698 687456 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.15pm) and they will be able to help you.

I got an invite but the appointment does not suit?

With more than 300,000 people to vaccinate NHS Lanarkshire is asking people, where possible, to attend their initial appointment. If, however, this is really not possible please call the number on the invite to rearrange. This number is 01698 687456 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.15pm).

I've just realised I forgot to attend my vaccination appointment?

Don't worry everyone understands this can happen. Anyone who did not attend (and did not cancel / change) their first appointment will receive a further invite. Please attend this as getting your vaccinations is very important to keep you, your community and the NHS safe.

I know I won't get my invite because you have the wrong address

Please update your address with your GP practice. The original invite will go to your previous address and if you do not have arrangements in place to redirect mail, then call 01698 687456 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.15pm). If they have arrangements in place then no need to worry.

Invites to attend will begin to arrive with patients from w/c 21 September. There are more than 300,000 patients who need to be invited. The scheduling means you may not get your invite at the same time as others in your practice / community but you will get an invite.

I've rescheduled my appointment – why is it not in the same place as my original appointment?

Due to the number of people to be vaccinated, we encourage people to attend their original appointment. However, if you do need to rebook please be aware that the locations for rebooking clinics are limited. So you may need to attend a different venue.

My child missed their vaccination at primary school. When will they receive their vaccination?

All primary schools will be running additional sessions for children who missed their vaccination. This will be at the start of December.

Eligibility

How can I check if my name is on the list for the flu vaccine?

We are unable to provide details of individual appointments, as this is done nationally. However, all appointments for priority patients will be issued before the end of November. Priority patients include all of the eligible groups, except the 55 to 64 years age group (unless they are included in another category).

How will I know if I've been missed off the list for the flu vaccine?

Everyone who is eligible will receive a letter before the end of November. If you haven't received your appointment by then, please call 01698 687456 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.15pm).

I'm housebound – how will I get my flu vaccine?

GP practices are working with the District Nursing Teams to make sure you get your flu vaccine as you usually do.

I'm a carer, how do I get my vaccine?

You'll receive a letter in the post. Please make sure your GP practice knows that you are a carer – they can update your file to make sure you receive an appointment. Or you can attend with the person you are caring for, at their appointment, and receive your vaccination then.

I'm in Lanarkshire caring for a relative, but I don't live here. How do I get my flu vaccination?

If you are eligible, please call the rebooking line on 01698 687456 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.15pm) and they will book an appointment for you.

I live with someone who was shielding, how will I get an appointment?

You will receive a letter during the first phase of the programme (October – November) with details on how to make an appointment.

Locations / venues**I don't want to go to the clinic – just want the same as previous years / come to GP practice**

We appreciate that this is different to previous years, but this is what is happening across Scotland. It means the GP practice team can focus on other important areas of providing care while you still get your important vaccination.

I don't want to go to the clinic because of the venue / location

Locations need to be suitable to deliver the vaccine to large numbers, especially with the guidelines around physical distancing. When venues were being identified, staff looked at their transport links and accessibility, while also being able to accommodate large numbers of people and physical distancing.

I don't want to go to a large clinic because of covid-19

Please be assured that the clinics will be set up and run following strict infection prevention and control guidelines. Physical distancing and hand hygiene measures will be in place and staff will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Attending for your flu vaccination is an important appointment to keep.

Will staff be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)?

Yes. All staff working at the clinics will wear the appropriate PPE for the role they are carrying out. This will be in line with national guidance.

Do I need to wear a face covering when I attend?

Yes. This is the same as attending any other medical appointment or indoor space. Please wear a face covering for the entire time you are inside, unless you are exempt.

Vaccines

What vaccines are available in Lanarkshire?

For adults:

- Cell-based Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine (QIVc) (Flucelvax Tetra[®]) (Seqiris)
- Adjuvanted Trivalent Inactivated Vaccine (aTIV) (Seqiris)

For children:

- Quadrivalent live attenuated intranasal vaccine (LAIV) Fluenz Tetra[®]
- Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (split virion, inactivated) (QIVe) (Sanofi Pasteur Vaccines)
- Cell-based Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine (QIVc) (Flucelvax Tetra[®]) (Seqiris)

Do you have enough vaccines for everyone who is eligible?

We plan for regular deliveries throughout the flu season to make sure we have enough vaccine supplies for everyone who is eligible.

Is there an egg-free vaccine available?

Yes. Egg-free vaccines will be available at all flu clinics.

The general flu enquiry line is 01698 687456 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.15pm)

More information

There is a dedicated web page www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/flu. Information is also regularly published on NHS Lanarkshire's social media channels – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

For information on the national flu campaign visit www.nhsinform.scot/flu