

Reimbursable vaccines and eligible cohorts for the 2022/23 NHS Seasonal Influenza (flu) Vaccination Programme

2 March 2022 Version 1

This guidance is intended to give providers and stakeholders of the seasonal flu vaccination programme information on the recommended vaccines and eligible cohorts for the 2022/23 seasonal flu vaccination programme.

The 2020/21 and 2021/22 flu vaccination seasons have been the most ambitious yet, as we sought to offer protection to as many eligible people as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. This involved increased uptake ambitions for pre-existing cohorts, as well as extension of the vaccination offer to additional cohorts at pace. We would like to extend a huge thank you to all those involved for your hard work during very challenging times which led to some of the best flu vaccine uptake rates ever achieved. This has been achieved alongside the major success of the roll-out of national COVID-19 vaccination to which many of you have contributed.

In 2022/23, the NHS flu vaccination programme will be offered to patient groups eligible in line with pre-pandemic recommendations (please refer to the section entitled 'eligibility', below).

Seasonal flu vaccination remains an important public health intervention and a key priority for 2022/23 to reduce morbidity, mortality and hospitalisation associated with flu at a time when the NHS and social care will be managing winter pressures, potentially including further outbreaks of COVID-19.

Eligibility

Eligible cohorts for flu vaccination are based on the [advice](#) of the JCVI and Department of Health and Social Care. Those eligible for NHS flu vaccine in 2022/23 are:

- those aged 65 years and over
- those aged six months to under 65 years in clinical risk groups (as defined by the [influenza chapter](#) in 'Immunisation against infectious disease' (the 'Green Book')

- all children aged two to 10 (but not 11 years or older) on 31 August 2022¹ (i.e. up to school Year 6)
- pregnant women
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals

Vaccination is also recommended for frontline healthcare workers and social care workers. This should be provided by employers as part of the organisation’s policy to prevent the transmission of infection. There are circumstances where frontline staff employed by specific social care providers² without access to employer led occupational health schemes can access the vaccine on the NHS.

Cohorts that were eligible in the 2021/22 season but that **are not included in the cohorts for 2022/23** are:

- those aged 50 to 64 years
- secondary school children in Years 7 to 11 (i.e. between 11 and 15 years of age)

The aim of the NHS flu vaccination programme for the 2022/23 season is to demonstrate a 100% offer and to achieve at least the uptake levels of 2021/22 for each cohort.

Vaccines reimbursed as part of the NHS Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme 2022/23

The following JCVI-advised vaccines will be reimbursed for adults in the 2022/23 Programme.

Those aged 65 years and over	At-risk adults, including pregnant women, aged 18 to less than 65 years
<i>Reimbursed vaccines</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aQIV / QIVr • QIVc (only where aQIV or QIVr is not available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QIVc / QIVr • QIVe (only where QIVc or QIVr is not available)
<i>Rationale / further information</i>	
<p>There are three vaccines that JCVI advised are equally suitable for use in 2022/23.</p> <p>Adjuvanted quadrivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (aQIV), High-dose quadrivalent inactivated influenza vaccine</p>	<p>Evidence from recent flu seasons indicate a clear additional benefit in the use of quadrivalent influenza vaccines in those less than 65 years of age in an at-risk group, compared with trivalent influenza vaccines. JCVI advises the use of Quadrivalent influenza cell-culture vaccine</p>

¹ Since 2013, flu vaccination has been offered to children to provide both individual protection to the children themselves and reduce transmission across all age groups to protect vulnerable members of the population.

² Registered residential care or nursing homes, registered domiciliary care providers, voluntary managed hospice providers, or direct Payment (personal budgets) and/or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants.

<p>(QIV-HD) and Quadrivalent Recombinant Influenza Vaccine (QIVr). JCVI considered the use of QIV-HD in those aged 65. However, QIV-HD is not currently available in the UK market.</p>	<p>(QIVc) and Quadrivalent Recombinant Influenza Vaccine (QIVr). JCVI supports a preference for QIVc and QIVr over QIVe in this cohort, however the QIVe can be considered if other options are not available. NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) advises that QIVc and QIVr should be prioritised for this group for the 2022/23 seasonal flu vaccination programme.</p>
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Contractual requirements for all commissioned NHS flu vaccination providers will state that to receive payment for flu vaccination and reimbursement of flu vaccine they will need to use the specific flu vaccines recommended in this NHSEI guidance.

Due to manufacturing processes and commissioning arrangements, some vaccines may only be available in limited quantities. Therefore, it is recommended that orders are placed with more than one manufacturer to ensure providers receive sufficient stock.

Please note, it is not anticipated that any stock will be centrally procured by the Department of Health and Social Care for the 2022/23 season and, therefore, we strongly urge providers to order sufficient volumes of vaccine to serve their eligible populations in order to provide coverage at least equal to and ideally exceeding 2021/22 uptake levels.

Influenza vaccines for eligible children are centrally procured by UKHSA and are supplied free of charge to providers via ImmForm. These vaccines will NOT be reimbursed as part of the NHS Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme.

Flu vaccine ordering and planning

In planning for the forthcoming flu vaccination season, all providers should identify and work closely with their NHSEI Regional Public Health Commissioning Team, to ensure the effective planning and delivery of the 2022/23 NHS Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme.

General Practices (GPs) and community pharmacies will also want to work closely with their Primary Care Networks to maximise vaccine coverage and to minimise vaccine wastage. This will also support the achievement of incentives within their respective contracts.

GPs and school-based providers must actively invite 100% of eligible individuals (e.g. by letter, email, phone call, text) and ensure uptake is as high as possible. Evidence may be requested requiring that providers demonstrate details of how and when these offers were made. The benefits of flu vaccination among all eligible groups should be communicated and vaccination made as easily accessible as possible. Please note, any national call and recall that may be commissioned again by NHSEI will only supplement, and not replace, localised call and recall as a contractual obligation for participating GPs.

Providers should align delivery of the flu vaccination with other commissioned vaccination programmes that the patient may be eligible for (for instance COVID-19, shingles, or pneumococcal vaccines) where it is clinically permissible and operationally feasible.

Timing for School Aged Immunisation Services (SAIS) vaccines

Currently, 2019/20 school-aged cohorts will be eligible for vaccination (i.e. all children in reception and school Years 1 - 6) and, therefore, the contractual requirement to vaccinate all eligible children by December 15th, 2022 will be reinstated.

Please refer to the [influenza chapter](#) in 'Immunisation against infectious disease' (the 'Green Book') for all other information regarding timing of flu vaccinations.

Links to other key documents

Document	Web Link
Green Book Influenza Chapter	www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19
Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation Influenza advice	https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation
Flu vaccine uptake figures	www.gov.uk/government/collections/vaccine-uptake
ImmForm website for ordering child flu vaccines	https://portal.immform.phe.gov.uk/Logon.aspx?returnurl=%2f