

REPORT TO: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date of Meeting: 25th July 2017
Report of: Fiona Reynolds, Director of Public Health
Subject/Title: Seasonal flu vaccination for front line social care workers

1 Report Summary

1.1 Flu vaccination of front line health and social care workers is an important Public Health action to protect vulnerable groups. The report outlines the programme approach for the flu season 2017/18 for front line social care staff within the Council workforce. It sets out how the Council's responsibilities will be met.

1.2 The wider seasonal flu vaccination programme is not considered within this paper. For information:

- NHS England commissions the flu vaccination programme from GP practices, for their registered eligible patients.
- Community pharmacies are also commissioned to provide the vaccine to those eligible who are aged 18 years and over, primarily to increase uptake in those aged under 65 and in at-risk groups.
- Children aged 2 to 7 years are also eligible either via their GP or school health provider.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the HWBB supports the Council's aim to achieve year on year increases in flu vaccination uptake amongst their front-line social care employees, (estimated to be around 20-30% over the 2016/17 season).
- 2.2 That the HWBB endorses the Council's approach to provide a combination of opportunities to access flu vaccination – via the current Occupational Health provider service (PAM – People Asset Management), and also via a service commissioned through local community pharmacies. It is anticipated that the split between the two could be 25% via PAM and 75% via community pharmacy provision with an expectation that at least 30% of our eligible social care employees are vaccinated against flu in the 2017/18 programme.

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3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Although the uptake may be considered low/ unambitious, our aim should be to build upon the baseline and increase uptake amongst our frontline care staff year by year. Nationally there is no target expected of Local Authorities for the vaccination of their social care staff, and other councils have informally reported similarly low uptake not least due to difficulties in recording.
- 3.2 NHS trusts are expected to achieve 75% uptake, and there have been financial incentives to reach that target. Despite this, some health trusts, particularly in London and SE England, are continuing to report uptake of between 20-30%. Locally, performance has ranged from 35%-75%.
- 3.3 The previous system, used by Cheshire East Council, of offering “pre-paid” vouchers to eligible staff is felt to be unwieldy and bureaucratic, without sufficient assurance that staff are vaccinated nor adequate information about uptake.
- 3.4 Using the Council’s occupational health service could be the most cost effective option. However this would require co-ordination of attendance for vaccination at current clinic locations. It would also need to be balanced with the opportunity cost of occupational health appointments that would need to be diverted from standard occupational health provision to become appointments for flu vaccination.
- 3.5 Commissioning provision via Community Pharmacies has worked successfully elsewhere, including Bradford and Cheshire West and Chester, and it is believed that this approach would have the support of the Local Pharmaceutical Committee.
- 3.6 NHS England are also using this service to provide vaccination to eligible adults (e.g. the over 75s and adults with long term health conditions). A system called PharmOutcomes is used to manage payments and track numbers of staff attending.
- 3.7 As this contract would be offered to all local community pharmacies it would be classed as spot purchasing, and hence no formal procurement process is likely to be required.

4 Impact on Health and Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

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- 4.1 Flu vaccination of front line care staff supports the aims of the HWBB which includes “enabling people to be happier, healthier, and independent for longer”. Flu vaccination is one of a number of approaches that helps reduce the spread of flu virus infection, by reducing the risk that care staff could unknowingly pass the virus to our most vulnerable residents.
- 4.2 This work also fits with the Councils Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020 Health – Safeguarding the vulnerable and providing appropriate care that helps people live well and for longer

5 Background and Options

5.1 National Context

- 5.2 Each year a national flu plan is published. As in previous years, the version for winter 2017/18 expects employers to offer vaccination to all frontline health and social care workers as part of their occupational health responsibility for the prevention of transmission of infection (influenza) to protect patients, service users and staff. In addition, front line health and social care workers have a duty of care to protect their patients and service users from infection.
- 5.3 NHS England is responsible for commissioning vaccination programmes for vulnerable groups within the general population. The role of the Council includes the promotion of the flu vaccination programme, providing supportive national campaign materials designed to encourage all those eligible to be vaccinated. Employees, particularly those working in adults and children’s services, are asked to champion the promotion of the flu vaccination programme amongst their service users. Members of the Public Health team link into the Extreme Weather/ Winter Wellbeing Group.
- 5.4 Public Health Teams are responsible for providing information and advice to relevant bodies within their areas to protect the population’s health. The assurance role involves providing independent challenge of the arrangements of NHS England, Public Health England, and providers in the delivery of the flu vaccination programme. This role will be achieved through the Health Protection Forum as a sub group of Cheshire East’s Health and Wellbeing Board

5.5 Local Approach

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- 5.6 Last year the Corporate Health and Safety Team administered and purchased Flu Vaccination vouchers from a pharmacy chain for Council employees who work directly with service users. Overall uptake was poor, although it was not possible to accurately monitor the number of staff who were vaccinated.
- 5.7 The total number of vouchers purchased and issued last year was 399, with a total voucher cost of £2,993 (£7.50 per voucher). This cost does not include the administration involved by the Health & Safety team, and Team Managers of front line teams. However, due to the way the scheme works, 40 of those vouchers returned without being taken up by staff, and only 63 staff told their managers that they'd attended for vaccination. It is not possible to trace whether the vouchers are used by staff as they could attend a number of different pharmacies across a wide area.
- 5.8 Proposed Approach
- 5.9 People Asset Management (PAM) is the provider of Occupational Health Services for the Council. A contract variation could be used to add the delivery of the flu vaccination programme for 2017/18. PAM has experience of delivering a flu vaccination programme elsewhere. The vaccination cost would be £7.50 for each vaccination and the programme could be delivered through their clinic bases where capacity allows (Crewe Municipal Building, Macclesfield Town Hall and Westfields, Sandbach). They would also have an option of attending team bases for an additional £220 plus vaccination costs.
- 5.10 We have sought confirmation from Children and Adult services on the maximum workforce numbers who would be eligible to access the flu vaccination programme, the estimate being 1210. Based on last year's uptake, (including evidence from elsewhere), and actual use of any flu vaccination vouchers given out, we would recommend working to a minimum uptake percentage figure of 20-30%.
- 5.11 Based on estimated numbers of social care staff who are working in eligible front-line roles (approximately 1200) and an uptake of 30% that has been achieved elsewhere this would result in 360 staff being vaccinated.
- 5.12 The potential cost is in the region of £4050. That is based on the cost of 90 staff vaccinated by the PAM occupation health provision being £675 (£7.50 x 90) plus the cost of 270 staff being vaccinated via a service commissioned by community pharmacies being £3375 (£12.50 x 270).

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- 5.13 We have consulted with colleagues at Cheshire West and Chester Council to discuss its learning. It has managed its workforce flu vaccination delivery by commissioning pharmacies to fulfil their vaccination programme for the last three years (2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17). Last winter approximately 400 staff exchanged their CWaC voucher for a flu vaccination. Based on a £12.50 per vaccination, the overall spend was £5000. Again this does not include the administration involved by the Public Health team and operational teams. There was also Public Health capacity to undertake the health promotion aspects of the flu vaccination programme for the workforce.

6 Access to Information

- 6.1 The national flu immunisation programme 2017/18 guidance and Flu Plan: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flu-immunisation-programme-plan>

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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