

To:

- Integrated Care Board chief executives
- NHS trusts chief executives
- Local government chief executives
- GP practices
- Community pharmacies
- Primary care networks
- Health and justice healthcare providers
- Directors of public health
- School-aged immunisation service providers

NHS England  
Wellington House  
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cc.

- Regional directors
- Regional directors of commissioning

Dear colleagues,

## **Flu and COVID-19 Seasonal Vaccination Programme: Autumn/ Winter 2025/26**

Thank you for your continued commitment to the flu and COVID-19 Vaccination Programmes and for the planning you have undertaken to date in readiness to deliver Autumn/Winter (AW) vaccinations. The recently published [NHS England » Urgent and emergency care plan 2025/26](#) highlights the importance of increasing vaccination rates to help deliver a better winter for both patients and staff. The plan sets out a number of ambitious steps to move from treatment to prevention and reduce demand on urgent and emergency care.

In February this year the [national flu immunisation programme 2025 to 2026 letter](#) was published. This sets out the importance of vaccination to provide direct protection to those who are at higher risk of flu associated morbidity and mortality and to reduce transmission to all age groups through the vaccination of children. The programme is critical in supporting NHS and adult social care resilience through the winter months when hospital admissions are at their peak, demand on adult social care is high, and GP practices see an increased number of patients. The letter confirmed that the eligible cohorts for the flu programme remain unchanged.

In June the Government accepted final Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice and [announced the cohort eligibility](#) regarding a COVID-19 Autumn/Winter 2025/26 vaccination programme.

## Eligibility

The announced and authorised cohorts eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine in AW 2025/26 are:

- Residents in a care home for older adults
- All adults aged 75 years and over
- Persons aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed, as defined in tables 3 and 4 of the COVID-19 chapter of the Green Book [\(here\)](#).

## Programme dates

As stated in the National Flu Immunisation Programme letter, flu vaccinations:

- Pregnant women and all eligible children will start from **1st September 2025**. For school aged cohorts, vaccination in schools should be completed by **12 December 2025** with further catch-up opportunities as appropriate.
- All other adult flu cohorts will start from **1 October 2025** and will run until the **31 March 2026**. Although, we anticipate that the majority of vaccinations should be completed by the end of **November 2025** to provide the best possible protection going into winter.
- The COVID-19 programme will run from **1 October 2025 to 31 Jan 2025**. However, the majority of COVID-19 vaccinations should be completed by **19 December 2025**.

The start date for adult flu vaccinations aligns to COVID-19 vaccinations to support co-administration of flu and COVID-19 wherever possible and provide the best possible protection as we head in to winter.

Payment for flu and COVID-19 vaccinations will only be made if they are administered from the service commencement date(s), as announced and authorised by the commissioner.

## National Booking Service (NBS)

To support preparedness and delivery:

- NBS will be opened for participating sites to post flu and COVID-19 vaccination appointments from 18 August 2025.
- It will be open for bookings from the public from 1 September 2025 for vaccination from 1 October 2025.
- The last available appointment date on NBS will be 31 January 2026 for COVID-19; NBS will remain open for flu only appointments until 31 March 2026.

## **Next steps**

### **Care homes and housebound:**

Working with primary care networks, PCN groupings and providers, regions should prioritise vaccinations of residents in older adult care homes and those who are housebound.

### **Outreach**

It is vital that in AW 2025/26 the delivery network includes outreach services to meet the needs of communities, particularly those in the most deprived areas. Providers must make every effort to make accessible offers available to the total population they serve to reduce the impact of flu and COVID-19 in the most vulnerable groups.

### **Published resources**

Updated training materials for COVID-19 vaccinations will be made available in advance of the programme. National protocols and Patient Group Directions (PGD) will be published before the start of the respective programmes.

### **Other vaccinations**

We ask systems to pay special attention to the delivery of RSV and other vaccinations alongside the seasonal programme and to co-administer vaccines where it is appropriate and clinically safe to do so. For further details please refer to [the Green Book](#). In particular, every effort should be made to ensure all those in the older adult catch-up cohort (aged 75 to 79) have been offered the RSV vaccine by 31 August 2025 and all pregnant women are offered vaccination from 28 weeks gestation.

Thank you for your ongoing support and participation in the flu and COVID-19 vaccination programme, which continues to provide protection to the most vulnerable in society.

Yours sincerely,



**Caroline Temmink**

Director of Vaccination

Primary Care, Community, Vaccinations & Screening (PCVS) Directorate

NHS England