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Frontline Health and Social Care Workers in care homes 2019/20 seasonal influenza vaccine campaign: guidance on data collection of vaccine uptake

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Version Number	Change Details	Date
V02	Online care home data collection form and hyperlink	06 September 2019
	Reporting dates of data collection to the PHA 2019/20	
	Frequently asked questions updated	

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Introduction

Respiratory infections are recognised as a preventable cause of severe morbidity and mortality in care home populations (Rainwater-Lovett et al., 2014). Transmission of influenza and other respiratory infections is increased in closed community settings such as care homes, due to increased susceptibility of the vulnerable population and the likelihood of increased transmission caused by close contact between residents and staff (Bridges, Kuehnert, & Hall, 2003). Flu vaccination of residents and staff is the most effective preventive measure against influenza (Talbot, Libster, & Edwards, 2012).

The 2018/19 flu season was characterised by lower levels of activity than those observed in previous years, there were 12 confirmed influenza outbreaks in Northern Ireland. Two thirds of these outbreaks occurred in care homes. More information on last year's flu season can be found at <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/seasonal-influenza>

Uptake of flu vaccination in health and social care workers (HSCWs) across Northern Ireland has been low over the years and the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has highlighted the importance of increasing uptake rates.

All frontline HSCWs working in your care home for any period of time between 1 September 2019 and 31 March 2020 should be offered the flu vaccine at the earliest opportunity and by early December before flu generally starts to circulate. This includes bank and agency staff.

There are a number of ways care home staff can avail of the vaccine which are detailed in appendix 1. Further information can be found in the CMO policy letter, '[Seasonal influenza vaccination programme 2019/20](#)'.

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Measuring uptake of flu vaccine in frontline HSCWs working in care homes

The Public Health Agency (PHA) is responsible for monitoring influenza vaccine uptake of frontline HSCWs on behalf of Department of Health (DoH). Currently the PHA publishes vaccine uptake for HSCWs from the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS).

The DOH has requested that the PHA better understands the percentage of the care home workforce vaccinated against influenza. As a result, the PHA flu surveillance team has developed this guidance to enable all care homes in Northern Ireland to collect data to determine the percentage of all frontline HSCWs vaccinated that are working/worked in care homes at any point between 1 September 2019 and 31 March 2020 (during the 2019/20 influenza season). The PHA flu surveillance team will use this data to determine vaccine uptake (see box below).

$$\text{Vaccine Uptake of frontline HSCWs (\%)} = \frac{\text{No. working in care home that received vaccine at any time in 2019/20 (numerator)}}{\text{No. working in the care home at any time during 2019/20 (denominator)}}$$

The PHA is collecting data from care homes at two points in the season – December 2019 and March 2020 (end of season). The PHA piloted data collection in care homes during the 2018/19 influenza season and is encouraging all care homes to continue to participate this year, to support ongoing efforts to increase vaccine uptake in care home HSCWs.

Care homes should submit this information using the online data collection form (appendix 2) by the agreed collection deadlines to enable PHA to accurately monitor vaccine uptake.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide clear instruction to care homes on data collection requirements for the 2019/20 flu season, and thus ensure standardised data collection across all care homes.

Whilst care homes are likely to offer the flu vaccine to all staff, the PHA will only collect data on the number of frontline HSCWs vaccinated (as defined in this guidance).

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This guidance includes information on:

1. definition of frontline health and social care workers (HSCWs)
2. identification of all staff eligible for the vaccine at the start of the season
3. collection of numbers throughout the season
4. online data collection form
5. data submission dates

At the end there are general questions and answers on common problems with recording the data.

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Instructions

1. Categorise care home staff according to the following definitions

Frontline Health and Social Care Workers (HSCWs):

- provide health-related services and/or social care services in independent sector care homes that are in direct contact with patients
- Table 1 outlines the definitions that should be included in the data returns to the PHA

Non-frontline care home staff:

- any member of staff directly involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation and its infrastructure but not involved in direct patient care
- Table 2 outlines non-frontline staff that should NOT be included in the data returns

Care homes may need to use a degree of judgement for some staff members on whether or not to include (see FAQs for further information).

Table 1: Definitions of staff groups that are FRONTLINE HSCWs in independent sector care homes

Staff Group	Definition
All qualified nurses employed by independent sector care homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• qualified staff nurses• includes nurse consultants, nurse managers• bank/agency nurses¹• nursing students¹
Support staff employed by independent sector care homes	Staff with direct patient care working in direct support of clinical staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nursing assistants• health care assistants• social care workers• activity therapists

¹ Not employed by independent sector care homes. However, if you have data available on the total number working in the care home during the flu season (e.g. bank/agency staff) and the number that have been vaccinated, please provide this in the form as 'other' (see data collection form – appendix 2).

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Table 2: Definitions of staff groups that are NON-FRONTLINE HSCWs ²

Staff Group	Definition
Staff working in central functions	Central functions include personnel, finance, and general management support services. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receptionist• Clerical Officers• Care home Manager
Staff working in Estates	Estates include areas such as laundry, catering, domestic services and gardens. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintenance Officers• Estates Officers• Domestics / laundry• Catering – Cooks• Security Officers• Chaplin• Drivers• Caretakers• Outside services brought in for resident activities e.g. hairdresser• Labourers

² The listed staff are considered non-frontline and therefore numbers do not need to be submitted to the PHA for monitoring purposes. However, you may wish to offer the flu vaccine to all staff that you employ. Judgement may also have to be used to determine whether any listed staff would be frontline in your organisation. Please see General Questions and Answers (page 10) for further information.

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2. Identify all staff eligible for the vaccine at the start of the season

Care homes should identify the total number of frontline HSCWs in their home from the start of the season (1 September 2019). Whilst care homes may offer the vaccine to all employed staff, the PHA will only collect data on those that are defined as frontline HSCWs. This number is called the '**baseline denominator**'. Table 3 summarises the frontline HSCWs that should be included in the baseline denominator.

Each care home should send their baseline denominator to the PHA before the first reporting date (14 December 2019).

Table 3: Frontline HSCWs in care homes included in baseline denominator

Staff Group	Baseline Denominator
All frontline HSCWs and support staff working in care home on 1 September 2019 (table 1)	Include
All nursing students working in care home on 1 September 2019 ³	Include only if available
All agency/bank staff working in care home on 1 September 2019 ³	Include only if available
Any staff working in non-frontline roles (table 2)	Do <u>not</u> include
Staff out of the care home for the whole flu vaccination period (1 September - 31 March 2020) e.g. maternity leave/sick leave	Do <u>not</u> include

³ If accurate denominator data is known for frontline HSCWs that are not employed directly by the care home (e.g. students, agency/bank staff), please report this separately (see collection form in appendix 2).

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3. Collecting numbers throughout the season

Care homes should collect and record the total number of frontline HSCWs employed by the home that have received the flu vaccine. This is called the '**numerator**'. Care homes should also update the baseline '**denominator**' to take into consideration frontline HSCWs who start work (starters) during the flu season, i.e. after 1 September 2019. Care homes should report both to the PHA. Table 4 clarifies individuals that should and should not be included in the numerator and denominator at both collection dates.

Table 4: Frontline HSCWs that should be included in December and April updates of numerator and denominator figures

Staff status	Criteria	Numerator	Denominator
Working at the start of season in care home (1 September 2019)	All frontline HSCWs and support staff (table 1)	Include	Include
	All nursing students and agency/bank staff working in care homes	Include if available	Include if available
	Staff that decline vaccine (any reason)	Do <u>not</u> include	Include
	Staff that have received vaccine elsewhere e.g. GP	Include	Include
	Staff on maternity or sick leave during <u>entire</u> flu vaccination period	Do <u>not</u> include	Do <u>not</u> include
Starters	Staff arrive in care home during vaccination period and receive vaccine	Include	Include
Leavers	Staff vaccinated in care home but leaves during vaccination period	Include	Include

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4. Data collection form

The PHA are asking care homes to collect and submit data on the number of frontline HSCWs vaccinated, using the online care home data collection form found at <http://phaforms.hscni.net/care-home-form-collection-form/> (appendix 2).

5. Data collection submission dates

All care homes should complete the online care home data collection form found at <http://phaforms.hscni.net/care-home-form-collection-form/> (appendix 2) within the time frames outlined in table 5.

Table 5: Data collection dates for care homes to report to the PHA

Reporting month/s	Number of new vaccinations in reporting period	Date care homes should submit data to PHA by
September/October – November	1 September 2019 – 30 November 2019	12 December 2019
December – March	1 December 2019 – 31 March 2020	14 April 2020

Once data is submitted by care homes, the PHA flu surveillance team will validate the data and query any possible anomalies. Uptake figures will be collated and reported at the end of the flu season. This information will be utilised to support ongoing efforts to increase vaccine uptake in care home HSCWs.

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General questions and answers

Do I have to submit?

PHA will be collecting vaccine uptake data in frontline care home HSCWs between 1 September 2019 and 31 March 2020. Information collected will provide an understanding of the percentage of the care home workforce vaccinated against influenza. It will also enable appropriate development of resources and assistance in relation to improving vaccine uptake in care home HSCWs.

Why are we not collecting data for other support services such as those working in catering and domestic services?

The role of catering and domestic service staff across care homes differs, with some having direct patient contact and others not. It is therefore not possible to standardise data collection for these groups across all care homes and so a decision has been taken not to include these groups as frontline for PHA monitoring purposes only. However, in care homes where these staff are considered to have patient contact they should be offered the vaccine in the same way as other frontline staff.

Are we collecting data on clerical and administrative staff that work in care homes?

Administrative and clerical staff mostly do not have direct patient contact therefore the decision has been taken not to include any administrative and clerical staff as frontline for PHA monitoring arrangements only. However, in care homes where these staff do have patient contact they should be offered the vaccine in the same way as other frontline staff.

Why do you not remove leavers from the care home?

The information PHA is interested in is the number of frontline HSCWs that were vaccinated when they worked in the care home at any point during the flu season, even if this is only one day or shift. Even if the person leaves during the flu period they should still be captured in both the numerator and denominator.

Contacts

If you have any queries regarding the seasonal influenza vaccine uptake data collection process that are not address in this guidance or the CMO policy letter, please email: FluSurveillance@hscni.net

If you have any general queries regarding the seasonal influenza programme for HSCWs, please email: Pha.immunisation@hscni.net

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References

Rainwater-Lovett et al. (2014) Influenza outbreak control practices and the effectiveness of interventions in long-term care facilities: a systematic review. *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses* 8(1), 74–82.

Bridges CB, Kuehnert MJ, Hall CB. Transmission of influenza: implications for control in health care settings *Clin Infect Dis*. 2003 Oct 15;37(8):1094-101.

Talbot HK, Libster R, Edwards KM. Influenza vaccination for older adults. *Hum Vaccin Immunother*. 2012 Jan;8(1):96-101.

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Appendix 1 Methods of Vaccination

There are a number of methods by which care home staff can avail of the vaccine:

1. Frontline independent sector (nursing and residential) care home staff can receive the vaccine via the Occupational Health Service in their local Trust. Details of the available clinics will be circulated by RQIA to all care homes before the start of the flu season.
2. Staff in one of the recommended clinical risk groups can attend their GP for vaccination. Clinical risk groups identified for 2019/20 are detailed in the CMO policy letter, [‘Seasonal influenza vaccination programme 2019/20’](#).
3. Privately from community pharmacies.
4. Any other vaccination schemes that care homes as a provider, or agency employers, have in place to offer flu vaccination to the workforce.

Further details can be found in the CMO policy letter, [‘Seasonal influenza vaccination programme 2019/20’](#).

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Appendix 2 Care home online data collection form

Please complete the care home data collection form at <http://phaforms.hscni.net/care-home-form-collection-form/>

Care Home Form Collection – Flu Vaccinations

Please complete and submit the form below by the agreed dates outlined [pdf of guidance]

The form should only take a few minutes to complete.

If you have any queries regarding the seasonal influenza vaccine uptake data collection processes that are not addressed in this guidance, please email: FluSurveillance@hscni.net

If you have any general queries regarding the seasonal influenza programme, please email: Pha.immunisation@hscni.net

Collection Period *

- 1 September 2019 – 30 November 2019
 1 December 2019 – 31 March 2020

Care Home Name *

0 of 50 max characters

Contact Person *

Name of the contact person for the care home

0 of 50 max characters

Contact Email

Enter the contact person's email address. An email confirmation that we have received the form will be sent to this address (if provided)

Group (if applicable)

Which group does the care home belong to ?

0 of 50 max characters

Postcode *

First part of post code for the care home - just enter the number eg 25 if BT25

Care Home type *

Select one from the list below

- Nursing Home
 Residential
 Other

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Care Home employed frontline health and social care workers (HSCWs)

Number of nurses *

(total number of Nurses that work in the Care Home)

Please enter a number from 0 to 99.

Number of nurses vaccinated *

(number of Nurses that received flu vaccine during reporting period)

Please enter a number from 0 to 99.

Number of support Staff *

(total number of Support Staff that work in the Care Home)

Please enter a number from 0 to 99.

Number of support staff vaccinated *

(number of Support Staff that received flu vaccine during reporting period)

Please enter a number from 0 to 99.

Frontline HSCWs not employed directly by the Care Home (0 should be entered if not applicable)

Others total *

(total number of Support Staff that work in the Care Home) eg student nurses (if not applicable enter zero - 0)

Please enter a number from 0 to 99.

Others vaccinated *

(number of other staff that received flu vaccine during reporting period) - if not applicable enter zero - 0

Please enter a number from 0 to 99.

Please note that the number entered as the number vaccinated (numerator) must be lower than the total number of staff (denominator), if data is entered incorrectly the error message below will appear at the bottom of the form. If the form is submitted containing errors please contact: FluSurveillance@hscni.net

Error: the number of vaccinated staff should not be greater than the number of staff in the group. Please check and correct this before you Submit the form

If you have any queries regarding the seasonal influenza vaccine uptake data collection processes that are not addressed in this guidance or the CMO policy letter, please email: FluSurveillance@hscni.net

If you have any general queries regarding the seasonal influenza programme for HSCWs, please email: Pha.immunisation@hscni.net