



**Frontline Health and Social Care Worker seasonal
influenza vaccine campaign**

**Regional Peer Vaccinator Training
Recommendations for
Influenza Vaccine**

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Introduction

As highlighted in the CMO letter (31 July 2020), there is evidence that co-infection between flu and COVID-19 leads to poorer outcomes for those who are infected. It is therefore more important than ever that we achieve as high an uptake of flu vaccine in Healthcare workers as possible to help protect our staff, their families and their patients. Healthcare practitioners from a wide diversity of professional backgrounds give immunisations in many different settings. In recent years the flu vaccine has been administered to frontline Health Care Workers (HCWs) by other health care workers that work in the same Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust or organisation (**Peer Vaccinators**). Evidence shows improved uptake with the use of peer vaccinators due to increased accessibility of the vaccine. Peer vaccinators need to be appropriately qualified and trained so that they are confident, knowledgeable and up to date as this is important in achieving high vaccine uptake.

The [Public Health England \(PHE\) National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Immunisation Training](#), approved for use in Northern Ireland, sets out standards and essential topics that should be incorporated into immunisation training for registered healthcare practitioners with a role in immunisation. PHE have also recently published [Flu immunisation training recommendations for 2020-2021](#) These new PHE guidelines for flu training are incorporated in our regional guidelines for peer vaccinators. New and update training is recommended for those delivering seasonal flu vaccines and should be tailored to suit the immunisers' specific area of practice and the vaccine(s) delivered.

The purpose of this document is to provide clear advice to HSC Trusts on minimum training requirements for Peer Vaccinators in Northern Ireland to enable delivery of flu vaccine to other staff working in the same Trust. These are regional recommendations by the PHA Immunisation Team as there are no nationally agreed training standards specifically for Peer Vaccinator during the seasonal flu programme. However, the PHE document recommends that "*training should cover all the topics in the core curriculum but be context and vaccine specific*". Each topic from the core curriculum has therefore been adapted in the context of the flu

programme. Resources that will enable achievement of the competencies are included at the end of the document. Once this training has been completed peer vaccinators only need to complete annual updates on flu (slides updated annually by PHA) and any other areas where updates are required e.g. anaphylaxis training (as per local Trust agreement). It is important that vaccinators' knowledge and practice remains current.

Peer vaccinator training should be provided at local level by the HSC Trust so that it captures local variation in programme implementation, clinical governance and record-keeping. Training can be a combination of e-learning, face to face and self-directed reading.

With social distancing measures currently in place however, it is likely that many of the usual planned face to face classroom-based training sessions will not be able to take place for the forthcoming flu season. In addition to this, with potential expansion of the immunising workforce in order to maximise uptake, there may be more new immunisers this season who have not previously undertaken any flu immunisation training.

Training arrangements are well-established and Trust plans are being made to adapt training so that what cannot be delivered as a face to face session will be modified to an online meeting or webinar. Any existing training organised at local level should be utilised and those responsible for organising or providing training should consider how training can be delivered most effectively within their locality. There are multiple benefits in offering local training where possible as it allows both for any specific local needs or arrangements to be covered and the potential for smaller group interactive online learning which could incorporate a question and answer session.

Peer Vaccinator training requirements for working in Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts

Core knowledge topic	Learning objectives (LO)	Resources that will achieve LOs:
1. Aim of immunisation and national flu vaccine policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain aims of immunisation • describe national and regional flu vaccine policy • describe history of flu vaccine programme, including when frontline HCWs were included in programme • understand why and how the flu vaccine uptake is monitored in local Trusts and in Northern Ireland • access relevant professional materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHA Seasonal Flu training PowerPoint slides for 2020/2021 • E-learning for Healthcare (e-LfH) immunisation programme module '<i>national immunisation policy and programmes</i>' • Flu chapter in Green Book • Annual seasonal flu programme letter
2. Immune response to vaccines and how vaccines work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand immune response to vaccines • describe how vaccines provide individual and herd immunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-LfH immunisation programme module '<i>immunology</i>'
3. Influenza disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe and recognise main features of influenza, the nature and frequency of acute and long-term complications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHA Seasonal Flu training PowerPoint slides for 2020/2021 • Flu chapter in Green Book
4. Types of flu vaccine, their composition, indications and contraindications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of different types of flu vaccines used, including those not offered to HCWs • know flu vaccine composition • indications and contraindications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHA Seasonal Flu training PowerPoint slides for 2020/21 • Annual seasonal flu programme letter • Flu chapter in Green Book
5. Current issues in immunisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general awareness of current issues and controversies in immunisation and the impact they can have on uptake • be familiar with issues related to flu vaccine (mismatch, vaccine effectiveness, reduced response in elderly) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHA Seasonal Flu training PowerPoint slides for 2020/21 • Flu chapter in Green Book
6. Communicating with HCWs about vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand factors that influence decision-making • Communicate key facts about flu vaccines and be able to respond to questions/concerns • Tailor the information to the individual • Provide information leaflets and direct to reliable sources of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHA Seasonal Flu training PowerPoint slides for 2020/21 • e-LfH immunisation programme module '<i>communicating with patients</i>'

7. Legal issues in immunisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain principles of valid consent • Reason for good communication and documentation • Explain Patient Group Directions (PGDs) and Patient Specific Directions (PSD) • licensing of vaccines and off-label use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-LfH immunisation programme module '<i>legal aspects</i>' • HSC Clinical Education Centre, anaphylaxis and PGD training
8. Storage and handling of vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what cold chain is and why important • Understand and follow correct procedures for storage and handling of vaccines • Manage breakdowns of cold chain – who to inform and action to be taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-LfH immunisation programme module '<i>vaccine storage</i>' • Trust cold chain policy
9. Correct administration of vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate selection and preparation of flu vaccine • Safe practice in checking the vaccine to be administered • Ability to check suitability for vaccination prior to administration • Correct administration technique for the vaccine to be given (intra-muscular) • Knowledge and practice of infection prevention & control • Sharps management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHA Seasonal Flu training PowerPoint slides for 2020/21 • E-learning module '<i>vaccine administration</i>' • Trust IPC & waste disposal training • Assessment of vaccine technique competency assessed locally.
10. Anaphylaxis and adverse reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anaphylaxis and level of life support training according to Trust policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSC Clinical Education Centre, anaphylaxis and PGD training • Trust anaphylaxis policy
11. Documentation, record keeping and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requirements and importance of accurate documentation • where and why vaccine should be recorded and reported • local Trust policy for reporting and recording vaccine errors and incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-learning module '<i>vaccine administration</i>' • Trust agreement of recording of vaccines • Trust incident reporting policy
12. Strategies for optimising immunisation uptake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barriers and obstacles that can prevent uptake • understand factors affecting uptake - accessibility, attitudes of staff to vaccination • <i>understand critical importance of healthcare professional confidence in vaccination</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHA Seasonal Flu training PowerPoint slides for 2020/21

Resources

Public Health Agency website

Seasonal Flu training PowerPoint slides for 2020/21

Available at: [pha.site/seasonal-influenza](https://www.pha.gov.uk/seasonal-influenza)

Influenza immunisation programme 2020/21 factsheet for healthcare practitioners

[pha.site/seasonal-influenza](https://www.pha.gov.uk/seasonal-influenza)

Department of Health annual seasonal flu programme guidance 2020/21

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/letters-and-urgent-communications-2020>

Immunisation against Infectious Diseases, the 'Green Book'

Chapter 19 (Flu chapter) and other chapters

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/796886/GreenBook_Chapter_19_Influenza_April_2019.pdf

PHA Flu Page

Available at: [pha.site/seasonal-influenza](https://www.pha.gov.uk/seasonal-influenza)

E-learning for Healthcare (e-LfH)

This general immunisation e-learning programme has been written by Public Health England, in collaboration with Public Health Agency. It is compatible with Health and Social Care email addresses. It consists of knowledge sessions with assessment.

Those new to immunisation should complete sessions:

- National immunisation policy and programmes
- Immunology
- Communicating with patients and parents
- Legal aspects
- Vaccine storage
- Vaccine administration

Available at: www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/flu-immunisation/open-access-sessions/

HSC Clinical Education Centre website

Anaphylaxis Management and Patient Group Direction (PGD) Awareness

Anaphylaxis and PGD Update- e-learning route

Available at: <http://cec.hscni.net/>