



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Health Department

Dear Colleague

ROUTINE FLU IMMUNISATION FOR POULTRY WORKERS IN 2006-07

I am writing to inform you of the arrangements for vaccinating poultry workers in 2006-07.

Background

As you will already know, poultry workers were added to the target groups for routine flu immunisation as a precautionary public health measure, last year. This was as a result of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommendation that poultry workers should be given seasonal flu vaccination to minimise the theoretical public health risk of avian influenza mixing with seasonal flu and possibly mutating into a pandemic flu strain. As a result of this recommendation, poultry workers were added to the target groups for the free influenza vaccination.

Action

NHS Boards are required to arrange for all identifiable poultry workers in their area to be offered the current seasonal flu vaccination once they are confident that all priority groups, see Table 1 in Annex A have been completed. **Current details of holdings with poultry broken down by NHS Board area are attached at Annex B. Guidance to assist in the definition of poultry workers is attached at Annex C.**

A possible draft letter that could be used by NHS Boards (if appropriate to local arrangements) is enclosed at Annex D.

A leaflet for use by NHS Boards to give to poultry workers is being developed. Supplies of this material will be distributed to NHS Boards, by the end of December.

The NHS Helpline will support the Flu Immunisation programme by handling calls and providing information to the public. In order to ensure callers are directed to the appropriate local services, **NHS Boards should ensure they provide details of their local arrangements to the NHS Helpline. Details should be forwarded prior, to the issue of letters of notification to registered poultry holdings, to isabelle.laing@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk.**

From the Chief Medical Officer

**Dr Harry Burns MPH FRCS(Glas)
FRCP(Ed) FFPH**

St Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
Telephone 0131-244 2241
Fax 0131 244-2835

7th December 2006

CMO(2006)14

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Community Pharmacists
Chief Pharmacists
Immunisation Co-ordinators
CPHMs
Directors of Public Health
Medical Directors, NHS Boards

For information

Directors of Nursing, NHS Boards
Specialists in Pharmaceutical Public Health
General Practitioners
Practice Nurses
Health Visitors
Infectious Disease Consultants
Consultant Physicians
CHP Managers
Clinical Director, HPS
Chief Executive, Health Scotland
NHS 24
SAS
SGPC
SPGC

Further Enquiries

Policy Issues

Mr John Froggatt
3ES, St Andrews House
john.froggatt@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Medical Issues

Dr Elizabeth Stewart
2N.14 St Andrews House
dr.elizabeth.stewart@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Poultry Holdings Register

Ms Nia Ball
Room 358 Pentland House
Nia.Ball@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Further details are enclosed in this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harry Burns', written in a cursive style.

Dr Harry Burns
Chief Medical Officer

Annex A

Vaccine Supply

The latest available information from NHSS indicates that there will be sufficient vaccine in circulation, once all deliveries have been made to cover the immunisation of poultry workers. In the event of any difficulties in vaccine supply, please contact Mr Edward Mallinson, Vaccine Supply Monitoring Group on email Edward.mallinson@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk.

Prioritisation for seasonal flu vaccine

NHS Boards are reminded of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on prioritisation as outlined in [CMO letter \(2006\) 8](#). This advice is to ensure prioritisation of those aged 65 years and over and those in the clinical risk groups.

As advised by JCVI, vaccine should be used for all those in Category 1 first, and then the following groups in order as vaccine becomes available.

Table 1

Rationale	Priority Group	Description
Individual risk	1	All those aged 65 year and over
	1	All those aged over 6 months in the JCVI recommended clinical risk groups only
	2	Those living in long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facilities where rapid spread is likely to follow introduction of infection and cause high morbidity and mortality (this does not include prisons, young offenders institutions, or university halls of residence)
Public health risk	3	Carers (using revised 2006 definition)
	4	Healthcare Workers
	5	Poultry Workers (This group will be immunised through a separate programme outside of the seasonal flu programme)
	6	Demand from any other groups

[http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO\(2006\)08.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2006)08.pdf)

Funding

As last year, SEHD will reimburse NHS Boards costs in implementing the vaccination of poultry workers. As a result local NHS Boards have flexibility to determine the most appropriate way to achieve this aim in their area.

If appropriate it may be necessary for NHS Boards to negotiate a Local Enhanced Service (LES), noting that some poultry workers may have already been vaccinated under existing DES arrangements.

Payments will be made retrospectively by Practitioner Services Division (PSD). A claim form will be issued from PSD shortly and separate guidance, including timescales to explain the claiming process. Any further queries in respect of payment should be made to your local PSD Regional Office or to Iain Young at Iain.Young@psdaberdeen.csa.scot.nhs.uk.

Identifying Defined Poultry Workers

To assist NHS Boards in identifying poultry workers in their area, we will arrange through the Register of Poultry Holdings and through communication with farming organisations to inform the industry of this initiative and that information on local arrangements will follow from the NHS Board. In addition a possible draft letter which could be issued by Boards to poultry workers is attached at Annex C.

June Census 2005

[

HEALTH BOARD	Holdings
Argyll and Clyde	312
Ayrshire and Arran	275
Borders	319
Dumfries and Galloway	500
Fife	167
Forth Valley	181
Grampian	944
Greater Glasgow	33
Highland	1,067
Lanarkshire	205
Lothian	175
Orkney	322
Shetland	246
Tayside	344
Western Isles	417
Scotland	5,507

NB – these include all holdings with poultry and more definitive information will shortly be available on identifying those commercial premises with more than 50 birds.

Definition of Target Population

The key groups to be immunised before the end of April 2007, are:

1. those who work in poultry units (including those with game birds) with 50 birds or more;
2. those carrying out a series of ancillary processes in such units which involve coming into contact with live or dead birds e.g. catchers, poultry processors and those involved in the slaughter of birds;
3. Veterinarians or researchers associated with such poultry units e.g. State Veterinary Service;
4. Cullers and others involved in disposing of dead poultry from such units.

Those involved in units with less than 50 birds or domestic owners of poultry or those who have direct contact with birds in pet shops, aviaries or zoos or members of poultry workers' families are assessed as being at lower risk. If they seek immunisation, they should not be turned down but neither should they be proactively approached.

Seasonal flu vaccine will also be offered to those engaged in supporting surveillance for avian influenza in wild birds. A relatively small number of staff across Scotland are involved in this and specific arrangements for them will be put in place.

DRAFT TEXT OF POSSIBLE LETTER TO BE SENT TO REGISTERED POULTRY HOLDINGS

Dear

I am writing to you, as a registered poultry/game keeper of more than 50 birds, to advise you that you and your workers at your poultry/game holding are entitled to a free seasonal flu jab as part of the Scottish Executive's Annual Flu Immunisation Campaign.

The free flu vaccination is available to all poultry workers working in registered premises. It will give you and your fellow workers some personal protection against normal seasonal influenza, which typically occurs over the winter months. It might also contribute as a public health measure to prevent a new pandemic strain of influenza from developing. It is thought a new strain of influenza which can be transmitted readily from human to human could occur if the usual human seasonal flu and bird flu viruses are around together allowing the viruses to mix.

Please note that this flu vaccine only offers some protection against normal seasonal human flu, and offers no protection against bird flu. There is currently no human vaccine to protect against bird flu.

Seasonal flu is an illness caused by a virus. Because flu viruses are always changing, people need the new vaccine each year. You are recommended to have your free flu jab **before the end of April 2007**. This is because after April we will be moving into the next flu season and the strain will be slightly different to the strain you will be vaccinated against just now.

If you or your fellow workers wish to proceed with flu vaccination please contact [insert local arrangements]. I attach for your information a leaflet "Insert title", which you may find useful. For any further information on the free flu immunisation, please call the NHS Helpline free on 0800 22 44 88 between 8am and 10pm, 7 days a week.

Yours faithfully