



Dear Colleagues

## ADULT FLU IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME 2020/21

1. I am writing to provide you with information about the adult seasonal flu immunisation programme.
2. I would like to begin by thanking you for all the hard work you are doing as part of the seasonal flu vaccination Programme 2020-21, particularly in the context of delivering this during the global Covid-19 pandemic. I know that this has been an extremely challenging time for staff across the health and social care sector.
3. Given the potential impact of Covid-19 on society, it is imperative that we do all that we can to reduce the impact of seasonal flu to those most at risk and those who provide care for others.
4. Referring to my letter of 7 August 2020, the Scottish Government has set out that health care workers and social care workers who provide direct personal care are eligible to receive the free seasonal flu vaccine. I understand that different health boards have different definitions of 'health care worker', which rightly allows Boards to tailor their vaccine allocation to their local circumstances. It has been brought to the attention of the Scottish Government that there has been some disparity across different NHS Scotland Boards as to whether hospice workers are being treated as health care workers, for the purposes of receiving the seasonal flu vaccine.
5. High rates of staff vaccination will help to protect individual staff members but also reduce the risks of transmission of the flu virus within hospices which will contribute to the protection of individuals who will be vulnerable and likely to have weakened or suppressed immune response systems. Furthermore, it will help to maintain the workforce and minimise disruption to services that provide

**From Interim Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Gregor Smith**

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### **For action**

Chief Executives, NHS Boards  
Medical Directors, NHS Boards  
Primary Care Leads, NHS Boards  
Directors of Nursing & Midwifery, NHS Boards  
Chief Officers of Integration Authorities  
Chief Executives, Local Authorities  
Directors of Pharmacy  
Directors of Public Health  
General Practitioners  
Practice Nurses  
Immunisation Co-ordinators  
CPHMs  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
Occupational Health Leads

### **For information**

Chairs, NHS Boards  
Infectious Disease Consultants  
Consultant Physicians  
Public Health Scotland  
Chief Executive, Public Health Scotland  
NHS 24

### **Further Enquiries**

**Policy Issues**  
Vaccination Policy Team  
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### **Medical Issues**

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St Andrew's House  
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### **Pharmaceutical and Vaccine Supply Issues**

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patient/client care by aiming to reduce staff sickness absence.

6. I understand that this issue was discussed at the Scottish Immunisation Programme Group, with Immunisation Co-ordinators from Health Boards on 19 August 2020. At that meeting it was agreed that it would be possible for Boards to vaccinate hospice workers. Therefore, I would like to clarify the Scottish Government's position is that hospice workers are health care workers for the purposes of eligibility for the free seasonal flu campaign.

Yours sincerely,

*Gregor Smith*

Gregor Smith  
Interim Chief Medical Officer