

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET MEMBER MEETING
FOR COUNCIL SERVICES**

10 August 2015

Report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources

Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Policy

1. Purpose of the Report

The Cabinet member is asked to approve the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Policy (**Appendix A**).

2. Information and Analysis

Influenza, (often referred to as flu) is an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract. For most healthy individuals it is an unpleasant but self-limiting disease with recovery after a few days.

For vulnerable individuals, however, such as those with underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease, it can be a much more serious illness, which can prove to be fatal.

Each year, the Department of Health issues their guidance for the management of flu during the autumn and winter months. The appropriate strain of the vaccines identified and the at risk groups who should receive it or listed. This list usually includes individuals over 65 or those who have underlying health conditions of asthma and diabetes. The vaccination is also recommended for front line care staff in the NHS and Local Authorities.

With DD Adult Care employees in domiciliary and residential settings, together with CAYA employees in special schools, have been offered the vaccine annually over a number of years. The uptake has been low; between 10-12% over the last 5 years and a scrutiny report in January 2015 recommended that a working group is established with the aim of increasing the uptake in the 2015 winter season. There are around 3,000 eligible employees around the county.

The resultant working group comprising members from Public Health, Occupational Health, Adult Care, CAYA and Public Relations has produced a policy, communications strategy, improved recording system and alternative methods of delivery of the vaccine. The promotional campaign will begin in September with vaccine available from October – December via 3 methods – vouchers to use in pharmacies, attending clinics with NHS employees and in dedicated clinic sessions on county council premises. Employees will also be asked to inform managers when they have the vaccine via their GP as part of the national campaign.

The uptake will be monitored, recorded and analysed at the end of the year to help inform the 2016 campaign.

3. Financial Considerations

The costs of the vaccinations around £10 per person will be paid from departmental budget.

4. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered – prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, legal, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

5. Key Decision

No

6. Is it necessary to waive the call-in period?

No

7. Officer Recommendation

That Cabinet Members approve the Seasonal Influenza Policy attached at **Appendix A**.

JUDITH GREENHALGH
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION POLICY

Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Policy

Introduction

Influenza (often referred to as flu) is an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract (nose, mouth, throat, bronchial tubes and lungs) characterised by a fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain, and fatigue. For otherwise healthy individuals, flu is an unpleasant but usually self-limiting disease with recovery within two to seven days. Flu is easily transmitted and even people with mild or no symptoms can still infect others.

The risk of serious illness from flu is higher among vulnerable groups such as infants, older people and those with underlying health conditions such as respiratory disease, cardiac disease or immunosuppression, as well as pregnant women. These groups are at greater risk of complications from flu such as bronchitis or pneumonia or in some rare cases, cardiac problems, meningitis and/or encephalitis.

Derbyshire County Council recognises that increasing flu vaccination among care staff is an effective way of reducing the risk of flu spreading to service users, visitors, colleagues and the family of individual employees, as well as protecting individual employees.

Why should frontline care staff be vaccinated?

- **Protect service users** – The impact of flu on vulnerable groups can be serious or even fatal so vaccinating staff significantly reduces the spread of infection.
- **Protect staff** - Effective immunisation amongst staff reduces staff absenteeism and also protects their friends and family.
- **Infection prevention** - The flu vaccination given to staff directly involved in care supports good infection prevention and control procedures.
- **Promotion of flu immunisation** - Care staff are ideally positioned to inform service users in the vulnerable groups of the flu vaccination programme and are a key source of advice and information. Being able to say to service users that they take the threat of flu seriously and have been vaccinated, can be a very powerful message and encourages others to be vaccinated.

Responsibilities of Derbyshire County Council

The County Council holds overall responsibility for public health in Derbyshire, and recognises the importance of having measures in place to ensure that the health of the public is effectively protected, including encouraging eligible members of staff and the general public to be vaccinated against flu.

There is a requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to undertake a risk assessment identifying significant risks; and to

put in place appropriate controls to reduce the risk to employees and others, to an acceptable level. The offer of flu vaccination and associated information will assist in helping to reduce the risk.

As a registered provider of social care services, the county council is regulated for its compliance with Part 2 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections. These are to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that frontline care staff are free of, and are protected from exposure to infections that can be caught at work. All staff should be suitably educated in the prevention and control of infections and that appropriate occupational health policies and procedures, including vaccination, are in place.

Eligibility for Seasonal Flu Vaccination

The County Council will offer a seasonal flu vaccination to staff that provide direct personal care to service users including:

- All care home staff in DCC residential care homes.
- Adult Care Social Workers and Community Care Workers.
- Day centre staff managed by the Council.
- Staff in special schools.
- Home care staff.

This is not an exhaustive list and decisions to offer the seasonal flu vaccination to staff will be based on local assessment of likely risk and exposure to flu, including risk to vulnerable service users.

Paid Time Off for Vaccination

Eligible staff are either entitled to paid time off to attend a seasonal flu vaccination appointment or will be paid to attend the appointment dependent on the service in which they are employed, in accordance with the county council's Time Off for Medical Appointments Policy.

Responsibilities of Strategic Directors and Managers

Strategic Directors and Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that a risk assessment is undertaken to identify those staff whose duties involve caring for service users who are vulnerable to infection.
- Informing and making staff aware of the vaccination programme.
- Encouraging and supporting staff to take up the vaccination.
- Allowing staff to attend for vaccination.

- Ensuring that accurate records are kept of the staff who have been vaccinated.

Responsibilities of Staff

Staff that provide direct personal care to service users have a responsibility to help protect service users from infection. The County Council strongly recommends that such workers have the seasonal flu vaccination but recognise that staff need to make informed choices about their healthcare including vaccination.

Staff who are vaccinated by their GP i.e. those who are eligible for an NHS seasonal flu vaccination due to their age or because they have an underlying health condition, should inform their manager, to enable the council to maintain an accurate record of staff vaccinated.

Toni Compai
Director of HR

