

Public Health Link

From the Chief Medical Officer for Wales

Distribution:	As Appendix 1
From:	Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer
Date:	18 October 2018
Reference:	CEM/CMO/2018/5
Category:	Immediate (Cascade within 24 hours)
Title:	Protecting those aged over 65 from flu
What is this about:	Guidance for the NHS in support of the flu vaccination programme
Why has it been sent:	For action.

Dear Colleague,

Re: Protecting those aged 65 years and over from flu

The adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine (aTIV) Fluad® is the only clinically effective vaccine for individuals aged 75 years and over, and is recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) for all those aged 65 years and over.

I am aware there are a small number of practices in Wales who did not order adequate supplies of aTIV for this flu season and so I wrote to you on the 29th August ([WHC \(2018\)037](#)) asking you to prioritise aTIV during September and October for those aged 75 years and over and those aged between 65 years and 74 years in a clinical risk group.

Yesterday, The National Record for Scotland published their report on winter mortality in Scotland during 2017/18. The level of winter mortality was the highest since 1999/2000. Overall 35% of their excess deaths in 2017/18 were caused by respiratory system diseases, including influenza and pneumonia. Their report also shows the extent to which the seasonal increase in mortality in the winter affects the elderly, particularly those aged 75 and over. The Office for National Statistics will be publishing a report on winter mortality in England and Wales during 2017/18 later in the year.

In light of the published report from Scotland and expert advice **I expect primary care and community pharmacies to work together to ensure that all those aged 75 years and over in their communities receive the aTIV.**

Should aTIV be unavailable, patients should be asked to wait for the

next planned aTIV delivery (late October or November) as that is the best clinical option for them. If the individual finds this unacceptable clinicians can offer the Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (QIV). It is important that individuals are involved in the decision regarding vaccine choice, and should they choose QIV they should be advised the vaccine provided may not be as effective as aTIV. This discussion and the subsequent decision should be documented in their personal medical records.

At national level 99% of practices have ordered aTIV and once staged deliveries through September, October and November are complete, there appears to be sufficient supply to vaccinate all those age 65 years and over this season in Wales. **If all expected stocks of aTIV do get used up within a health board and there are patients aged between 65 and 74 still unvaccinated these patients should be offered QIV.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Atherton', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Dr Frank Atherton
Chief Medical Officer / Medical Director NHS Wales**

Appendix 1

To: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership to forward to:

All General Practitioners - please ensure this message is seen by all practice nurses and non-principals working in your practice and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'.

All Community Pharmacists

Deputising services

HB Chief Pharmacists

HB Prescribing Advisers

Independent/Private clinics and Hospitals and Hospices throughout Wales

To: Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts:

Chief Executives

Medical Directors

Nurse Directors

Directors of Public Health

Hospital Principals and Chief Pharmacists

Onward distribution to:

Immunisation Leads,

Infectious Disease Departments

Medical/Consultant Physicians

Prison Healthcare Services

To: Public Health Wales:

Chief Executive

Director of Public Health Services

Consultants in Pharmaceutical Public Health

Consultants in Communicable Disease Control

Head of Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme

Consultant Epidemiologists

Microbiologists

Cc: NHS Direct Wales
British Medical Association
Royal College of GPs
Royal College of Nursing
Royal Pharmaceutical Society
Community Pharmacy Wales