

**From the Chief Medical Officer
Professor Sir Michael McBride**



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

HSS(MD) 35/2024

BY EMAIL

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/HSC Trusts/NIAS
(for onward distribution to all relevant staff)
Chief Operating Officer, SPPG
*(for onward distribution to all relevant staff and
Community Pharmacists)*
GP Medical Advisers, All General Practitioners and GP
Locums *(for onward distribution to practice staff)*
OOHs Medical Managers *(for onward distribution to staff)*
Chief Executive RQIA *(for onward circulation to relevant
staff independent sector health and social care providers)*

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST
BT4 3SQ

Tel: 028 9052 0563

Email: Michael.McBride@health-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: HSS(MD) 35/2024

Date: 21 October 2024

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST

Dear Colleague

**SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION PROGRAMME 2024/2025 - EXTENSION
TO ALL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKERS**

ACTION REQUIRED

Chief Executives should ensure all staff are actively encouraged to receive the influenza vaccine and ensure adequate access to vaccination is provided for staff.

Introduction

1. The HSS letter ([HSS\(MD\)33/2024](#)), which issued on 12 September 2024, set out the details for this year's Influenza Vaccination Programme. This letter is to advise of an extension of the offer of an Influenza vaccination to **all** Health and Social Care staff that work directly for an HSC organisation or independent contractor providing and/or delivering services on behalf of the HSC Trusts. At present this will only apply to the 2024-25 Influenza Vaccination Programme.
2. It is anticipated that the extension will allow maximum usage of the influenza vaccine that has already been procured to facilitate the vaccination of all Health and Social Care Workers (HSCWs), thereby helping to reduce potential vaccine wastage.

3. It is hoped that this approach will enable Trusts to include clear messaging in their local vaccination promotion campaigns, and ensure a high uptake rate can be achieved across frontline and non-frontline staff
4. Under the extension, non-frontline staff will include non-clinical ancillary staff who may have social contact with patients but are not directly involved in patient care. This includes roles such as:
 - receptionists,
 - ward clerks,
 - porters, and
 - cleaners.

Programme Monitoring and Evaluation

5. Routine monitoring and reporting of vaccination uptake during the Influenza season will take place as before but should now also include stratifying reporting of vaccine uptake by frontline and non-frontline HSCWs.
6. Evaluation of inclusion of non-frontline HSCWs will be carried out after the end of the 2024/2025 influenza programme by the Public Health Agency to help inform planning arrangements for future years.
7. It is well recognised that winter puts pressure on the HSC system as more people become ill, patient numbers increase, and a greater demand is placed on services. It is hoped that by extending the vaccination to non-frontline HSCWs this season will help to:
 - further reduce transmission of influenza to patients at a time when the service continues to experience pressures, and
 - reduce sick absences among staff, thereby helping to reduce pressures within teams.

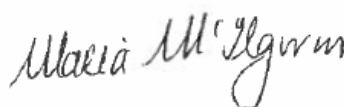
Conclusion

8. We would like to express our continuing and sincere thanks to you all for your commitment and dedication in planning and delivering our 2024/2025 seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme.

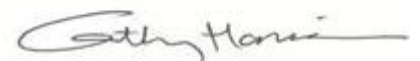
Yours sincerely



Professor Sir Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



Ms Maria McIlgorm
Chief Nursing Officer



Professor Cathy Harrison
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Circulation List

Director of Public Health/Medical Director, Public Health Agency (*for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff*)
Assistant Director Public Health (Health Protection), Public Health Agency
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, SPPG (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*)
Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts
Director of Social Care and Children, SPPG
Family Practitioner Service Leads, SPPG (*for cascade to GP Out of Hours services*)
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Consultants, Occupational Health Physicians and School Medical Leads*)
Directors of Nursing, Midwifery and AHPs , HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Community Nurses, and Midwives*)
Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts
RQIA (*for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals*)
Joe Brogan, Assistant Director, Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) (*for onward distribution to SPPG Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team and community pharmacists*)
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust
Kenda Crozier
Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery QUB
Professor Neal Cook, Head of School of Nursing, University of Ulster
Heather Finlay, CEC, Maurice Devine (OU) Open University
Professor Paul McCarron, Head of School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, UU
Professor Colin McCoy, Head of School, School of Pharmacy, QUB
Postgrad. Pharmacy Dean NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development, QUB
Michael Donaldson, Head of Dental Services, SPPG (*for distribution to all General Dental Practitioners*)
Raymond Curran, Head of Ophthalmic Services, SPPG (*for distribution to Community Optometrists*)
Trade Union Side
Clinical Advisory Team
Louise McMahan, Director of Integrated Care, SPPG
Dr Camille Harron, NIMDTA
Prof Pascal McKeown, QUB
Prof Alan Smyth, QUB
Prof Louise Dubras, Ulster University

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>