

Representing:

- Dorset LMC
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight LMC
- BaNES, Swindon & Wiltshire LMC

Supporting:

- Channel Islands

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29th October 2019

Sent to All Wessex GP's and LPC Pharmacies

Dear Colleagues

We are sure that you are all already busily engaged in this year's flu immunisation programme.

The LMC and LPC believe that patients are best served when Community Pharmacies and GP practices work together on healthcare campaigns. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that as many eligible patients as possible are immunised against flu.

Nationally, the NHS England and Public Health England communications teams have enhanced their communications campaign to make it clear that flu vaccine is important and free to eligible patients. They are also ensuring more promotional materials are available in a range of other languages and will also be promoting flu vaccination through the NHS 111 service.

Overall, influenza vaccine effectiveness in 2018 to 2019 against a laboratory confirmed infection resulting in a primary care consultation was 44.3% (95% CI 26.8% to 57.7%).

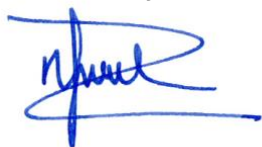
Last year, faced with the complexities of multiple vaccines and supply/delivery issues, the LMC and LPC launched a combined campaign to encourage flu vaccine uptake for eligible patients in Wessex. We also promoted the need for collaborative working between GP practices and Pharmacies in order to ensure maximum vaccine coverage for at risk populations.

Once more, this year we have been faced with multiple vaccine options and supply and delivery delays. We are concerned that certain suppliers have delayed their already staggered flu vaccine deliveries this season. This is very disappointing and will cause disruption to planned flu clinics.

We are aware of ongoing concerns that GP Practices and Pharmacies are in direct 'competition' to immunise patients. To -date there has been little evidence to suggest that this is true in terms of actual vaccination rates and income for providers. Last year across Wessex we achieved approximately 70% vaccine uptake for our over 65s and around 50% uptake for the under 65s in at-risk groups; there are plenty of eligible patients available to vaccinate.

The LMC and LPC believe that by working together we will have sufficient vaccines, even with the delays, to improve overall vaccination rates this year. By increasing immunisation up take we can ensure that more of our vulnerable patients in Wessex are protected against influenza thus reducing the ill health burden on an already stretched NHS whilst at the same time protecting a vital income stream for both practices and pharmacies.

Yours sincerely



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Chief Executive
Wessex LMCs



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Community Pharmacy
Swindon & Wilts



Mrs Debby Crockford
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Mrs Amanda Moores
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