

Briefing for pharmacy teams – the NHS Seasonal Vaccination Services (COVID-19 and Adult Flu) 2026/27

This Community Pharmacy England Briefing provides information for pharmacy teams on the NHS Seasonal Vaccination Services for 2026/27.

It is commissioned as an Advanced service and via this service, pharmacy owners can offer both COVID-19 and adult flu vaccinations, or just adult flu vaccination if they wish.



It supports the administration of COVID-19 vaccinations to eligible patients as part of Spring COVID-19 vaccination campaigns (between April and June) and the vaccination of eligible patients against COVID-19 and adult flu or solely adult flu during the autumn/winter season.

Aim of the service

- Protect people at greatest risk of serious illness or death should they develop COVID-19 and/or flu;
- Increase vaccination uptake through community pharmacies, including co-administration of the two vaccines together, where appropriate;
- Improve patient access and convenience to receive the vaccinations.

Who is eligible?

Those eligible for a **COVID-19 vaccination** are:

- Adults aged 75 years and over;
- Residents in care homes for older adults; and
- Individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed. (The minimum age for vaccination in the pharmacy is 5 years old and children can only be vaccinated where locally agreed with the Integrated Care Board.)



People eligible for a **flu vaccination** include those who are:

- Aged 65 or over (including those who will be 65 by 31st March 2027);
- Aged 18 to 64 and have certain long-term health conditions;
- Pregnant (during any stage of pregnancy);
- Living in a care home or long-stay residential home;
- The main carer for an older or disabled person, or receiving a carer's allowance;
- Those who live with someone who has a weakened immune system;
- Aged 18 or over and sleeping rough or staying in a homeless hostel or night shelter; and
- Frontline health and social care staff working at a registered residential care or nursing home, registered domiciliary care providers, voluntary managed hospice providers and those that are employed by those who receive direct payments (personal budgets), or Personal Health budgets, such as personal assistants, who are unable to get a vaccine through their employer.



Overview of the service

- The **Autumn/Winter 2026 COVID-19 campaign** commenced on **1st October 2026** and **ends on 31st January 2027**.
- The **adult flu programme** started on 1st September 2026 for pregnant women and **from 1st October 2026** for the main adult cohorts. Flu vaccinations run until **31st March 2027**.
- The aim is to vaccinate most people by the end of November to protect as many people as possible ahead of the winter months.



- The service can be provided by a pharmacist or a pharmacy technician or any other health care professional able to vaccinate under a Patient Group Direction. Alternatively, the service can be provided under a Vaccine Group Direction with vaccines administered by any suitably trained staff with a pharmacist or pharmacy technician operating as the clinician. 
- Every year, flu vaccine manufacturers update the flu vaccines in line with the World Health Organization's recommendations to give protection against the strains of flu that are most likely to be circulating. The choice of vaccine is based on a person's age and their medical history.
- COVID-19 vaccines are also updated forms of the vaccine used in previous campaigns and patients are offered the vaccine that is appropriate for their age and medical history.
- Adult flu vaccines are ordered by the pharmacy directly from manufacturers or wholesalers. Whereas COVID-19 vaccines will be ordered from NHS central stocks.
- Patients and carers who want to have a vaccination can [book an appointment online](#) or in the [NHS App](#). Your pharmacy will also offer walk-in vaccinations at certain times of the week. Speak to your pharmacy manager to confirm your pharmacy's plans.
- Vaccines are mainly given as an injection into the upper arm.
- If a patient is eligible for a free COVID-19 vaccine as well as a flu vaccine, they can get them at the same time if your pharmacy provides both vaccines.
- Patients who want both COVID-19 and flu vaccines can use the [Find a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination](#) webpage to identify pharmacies that are providing the service. Those that just want a flu vaccine can use the [Find a pharmacy that offers free flu vaccination](#) webpage.
- Once vaccinated, information relating to the vaccination(s) will be shared electronically with the patient's general practice.
- Pharmacy owners must have a standard operating procedure (SOP) in place for this service and all pharmacy staff involved in any aspect of provision of the service must be familiar with and adhere to the SOP.

Frequently asked questions

Q. What role can I play in the service?

The whole pharmacy team can be involved in promoting this service and can highlight the availability of the service to parents and carers who visit the pharmacy. Pharmacy team members can also be involved in agreeing the date and time of a patient's vaccination and can assist with booking an appointment.



Q. If a patient was previously eligible for a COVID-19 or flu vaccine but is currently no longer in a risk group, can they still receive a vaccine?

No. Some patients may have been eligible for a vaccine under the COVID-19 or Flu Vaccination Services during previous campaign periods whilst in an at-risk group but may no longer be in that group. Examples could include women who were pregnant during the last flu season but are no longer pregnant, or people who were immunocompromised during the last COVID-19 campaign but are no longer immunocompromised or patients who were taking regular inhaled steroids during last flu season but are no longer taking them.

Providing these patients are not in any other risk group, as detailed in the service specification, they would not be eligible for a vaccination this year under the NHS services. Your pharmacy may instead be able to offer them private vaccinations.

Q. Can a patient who lives in one of the other home countries, for example, Wales or Scotland, have an NHS COVID-19 and/or flu vaccine at a pharmacy in England?

Yes. There are no geographical restrictions placed on the provision of the service to eligible NHS patients.

Further information on the Seasonal Vaccination Service can be found at cpe.org.uk/SeasonalVacs.