

## Executive Director of Public Health

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Date: 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Care Home Managers

### **Re: Flu and Covid-19 vaccinations – autumn 2023**

This autumn's flu and COVID-19 vaccine programmes will start earlier than planned as a precautionary measure following the identification of a new COVID-19 variant. (see separately attached letter from the Department of Health and Social Care).

While the new variant is not currently classified as a variant of concern, advice from the UKHSA suggests that speeding up the autumn vaccine programme will deliver greater protection, supporting residents who are at greatest risk of severe illness and reduce the number of staff from becoming unwell.

Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations for residents and staff working in care homes and other front-line social care staff, will now begin next week, on Monday 11 September. The expectation is that all residents in care homes will receive their vaccinations by Sunday 22 October. This will ensure that those most vulnerable to serious complications from Covid and Flu are protected as soon as possible. This includes younger adults in residential care settings.

Vaccination teams will be in contact with individual homes over the coming days to arrange visits. We ask that care home staff now commence the consenting process for residents, if this has not already begun so that care homes are fully prepared for their visit. In most cases, flu vaccinations and COVID-19 booster vaccinations will be delivered at the same time.

Care home staff can have their vaccinations done in the workplace if they choose. Those not able to get their vaccinations at work, can also book an appointment for a COVID-19 booster at a local pharmacy or GP through the National Booking Service or by calling 119 from 18 September. We are strongly advise all staff to take up the offer of Covid and flu vaccinations this year in order to protect themselves and the vulnerable people they work with from these viruses and prevent them from having to take time off from work due to these illnesses.

Materials to help care home managers promote vaccinations for staff including Q&A leaflets, posters, and stickers are available to order by registering at:  
<https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/winter-vaccinations/>

A webinar in conjunction with HCPA is being planned for mid-September and details will follow in due course.

Yours Sincerely



Geraldine Bruce, Head of Health Protection, Public Health  
Hertfordshire County Council