

Executive Director of Public Health

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Date: 5th September 2023

Dear Supported Living 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 service users and social care staff will now begin next week, on Monday 11 September. This will ensure that those most vulnerable to serious complications from Covid and Flu are protected as soon as possible. This includes those living in long-stay residential care homes or other long-stay care facilities including those with severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), Down's syndrome, including all those on the learning disability register.

Vaccination teams will be in contact with individual settings soon to arrange visits. We ask that you now commence the consenting process for service users, if this has not already begun so that you are fully prepared for their visit. In most cases, flu vaccinations and COVID-19 booster vaccinations will be delivered at the same time.

Social care staff can 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 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.

Yours Sincerely

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