**Seasonal Influenza Immunisation Programme 2020-21 in Scotland**

The seasonal flu immunisation programme helps to protect the most vulnerable and alleviate pressure on the NHS. This will be more important than ever this year, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.As well as considering those who are most at risk from the seasonal flu; for this year’s vaccination programme, we must also consider who would be most at risk from concurrent infection of Covid-19 and flu.That is why eligibility is expanding for the free seasonal flu vaccine to:

* + Social care workers who provide direct care,
	+ Household members of individuals who were shielding, and
	+ Those aged 55 and over (who are not already eligible)

The Scottish Government will look to extend the programme to those aged 50-54 if vaccine supplies allow. Further information on this year’s programme can be found in the [Chief Medical Officer letter](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO%282020%2919.pdf) issued on 7 August.

A whole system response, bringing in other parts of the health and social care system, is required if a successful programme is to be delivered this year. Health Boards and Integration Authorities are already planning to support or deliver the adult elements of the flu programme.

Whilst the Scottish Government and SGPC’s direction of travel is to ultimately remove delivery of vaccinations from general practices, practices’ participation in this season’s programme as part of a pan-NHS response will be essential to the successful delivery of the programme.

On this basis, Scottish Government and SGPC are developing an agreement that health boards and integration authorities will take the lead role in providing flu immunisations for 2020, with practices providing support to the equivalent amount of clinician time they would have spent on immunisation in previous years. As part of this agreement, the income that practices would otherwise have received from participation in the immunisation programme will be protected at an agreed level. Health Boards will require all necessary data from practices to support the delivery of the programme and its uptake. Further details of this agreement will be announced shortly.

Delivering the seasonal flu immunisation is one of the key ways that we can support recovery and protect one another this winter. We are both grateful for the practices’ ongoing support in this important endeavour.

 

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The Scottish Government Scottish GP Committee (SGPC)