

NHS begin winter vaccinations this week

NHS Scotland has begun its winter vaccination programme by vaccinating more than 3,500 people in Lothian on the first day, Monday.

Everyone who is eligible has already been sent an invitation to book or attend an appointment for a flu vaccine. This would arrive in a white NHS Scotland envelope or by email or text.

Flu and Covid vaccines will be offered to the most vulnerable and where possible will be delivered at the same appointment. Everyone aged 65 and over will be offered both vaccines now in addition to other groups as set out below.

To prevent the spread of flu and Covid-19, the advice remains to stay home with any respiratory symptoms and to wash hands regularly.

Pat Wynne, Nurse Director for Primary and Community Care who oversees the delivery of the winter vaccines programme in Lothian, said:

“Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 and flu this winter. Flu vaccines are available to 50 to 64s, people aged 18 to 49 with an eligible health condition and health and social care workers now.

“There are a variety of clinics across Lothian covering evenings and weekends, and we strongly encourage you to book or attend your appointment when invited.

“Coming forward as soon as you’re invited will ensure you’re protected and help alleviate pressures on the NHS over the challenging winter months.”

More information can be found at www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines

The groups below are eligible for their flu vaccines this winter, with appointments starting from 4 September:

- aged 50 years and over
- aged 18-49 with an eligible flu health condition
- frontline health and social care workers
- carers (including unpaid and young carers)
- Teachers and support staff
- Prison population and prison staff

Those eligible for the childhood and school flu vaccination programme include:

- All children aged from 6 months to 2 years in clinical risk groups (children must be aged 6 months or above on 1 September 2023)
- All children aged 2-5 years, not yet at school (children must be aged 2 years or above on 1 September 2023)
- All primary school children (primary one to primary seven) at school
- All secondary school pupils (S1 up to and including S6) at school

The flu vaccine is given as a painless nasal spray for children and starts to provide protection within 10-14 days.

The groups below are eligible for their flu and Covid-19 vaccines this winter:

- Frontline health and social care workers (appointments begin 4 Sept for this group)
- Residents and staff in care homes for older adults
- Those aged 65 and over
- Those aged 6 months to 64 years of age who are at higher clinical risk from Covid-19 and flu
- Pregnant women
- Carers aged 16-64
- Household contacts of those with a weakened immune system aged 12-64