

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride

HSS(MD)23/2019



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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FOR ACTION

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and Social
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Our Ref: HSS(MD)23/2019
Date: 27 September 2019

Dear Colleague

MANAGEMENT OF SEASONAL FLU 2019/20

Action Required

Chief Executives must ensure that all those who are involved in the response to seasonal flu in Northern Ireland make themselves familiar with the contents of this paper and ensure that they are prepared to respond accordingly.

The HSCB must ensure that this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners and Practice Managers for onward distribution to all primary care staff involved in the seasonal flu vaccination programme.

1. Seasonal Influenza is an annual occurrence, although the exact timing, severity and extent of spread vary from year to year. For this reason, plans to manage seasonal flu should form part of wider planning for the winter months, rather than being regarded as a crisis each year.
2. The attached paper sets out the arrangements for management of seasonal flu in 2019/20 and builds on previous experience and lessons learnt during past influenza seasons.
3. It is important to note that the paper refers to the broad policy issues and has been agreed with the Public Health Agency (PHA) and Health and Social Care Board (HSCB).

4. The PHA and HSCB will work with Trusts, Primary Care and other providers on more detailed operational aspects of the response to flu.

Conclusion

5. While the 2018/19 flu season was a relatively mild season once again Northern Ireland delivered a very successful seasonal flu vaccination programme despite the additional work caused by the staggered delivery of the adjuvanted vaccine aimed at those aged 65 years and over.
6. While it is impossible to predict what might happen over the winter of 2019/20, the aim of this paper is to ensure that we are as well prepared as possible and to reduce avoidable pressure on health and social care services.

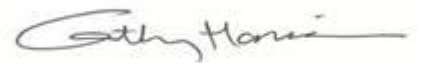
Yours sincerely



Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



Professor Charlotte McArdle
Chief Nursing Officer



Mrs Cathy Harrison
Acting Chief Pharmaceutical
Officer

Enc

This letter is available on the DoH website at

www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications

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