



COVID/FLU – JOINT EMAIL FROM LPC AND LMC

9 October 2023

Dear Lloyds Pharmacy

Covid/Flu Joint Email from LPC and LMC

We are now well into the seasonal vaccination of patients for flu and Covid. This year some members from both professions will also be providing Covid vaccinations as part of the continuing booster programme, alongside flu vaccinations. Current figures show good uptake by patients to both vaccinations.

This will undoubtedly add to the workload burden for all, and we feel it is in everyone's interest to have a joint approach in promoting both flu and Covid vaccinations.

We realise that general practitioners and community pharmacists are reliant on the income generated through vaccination services, but the focus must be on enabling patients to access vaccination at times and venues which suit them, to ensure maximum uptake to reduce winter pressures, across primary and secondary care, by keeping people out of hospital this winter.

Community pharmacies and General Practices are both independent contractors to the NHS, and therefore both commercial entities. This does naturally cause tension; however, this should never spill into the patient arena. Patients should be offered the best care available on the services used at each facing. They should never feel like they're put under pressure or bribed somehow to make their free choice of provider. It's especially horrific to hear about playing on a covid fear and threat of delayed vaccination to protect a provider's profitable business interests.

Neither profession can vaccinate all these patients alone and continue to provide business as usual functions as we are contracted to provide by NHSE. Co-administration of both vaccines is being advocated by NHSE for patient convenience.

Flu and Covid vaccinations are two separate enhanced services within the NHS contract for both professions and although there is the possibility of them being co-administered with no reduction in the fees paid, they must not be used as a lever to force patient behaviours or linked in such a way to be inseparable in-patient choice.

We would encourage General Practices and Community Pharmacies to talk to each other at all levels - ICS, Place, PCN and practice - about the vaccination services they plan to offer and agree the principle that patients have the right to choose where they have their vaccinations.

Representatives of the LMC and LPC will support this at ICS and place level, and you need to do this at a local level (PCN and practice).

We need to acknowledge that we both understand our populations and have a responsibility to reduce health inequalities as such need to work together to target our under served and under vaccinated populations. Effective messaging campaigns

- Must not deter patients from using one sector over another
- Must not infer that one sector offers an inferior service to the other.

Yours faithfully

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