



To: PCT Chief Executives
LPC's
SHA Flu leads

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Dear Colleague

SWINE FLU: Eligibility of Pharmacists and pharmacy staff for flu vaccine

The letter from Ian Dalton, National Director for NHS Flu Resilience dated 13 August, to all NHS Chief Executives, explained that frontline health and social care workers would be offered the swine flu vaccine. The rationale for this, as detailed in the letter, is that these frontline staff are at increased risk of exposure to the virus and increased risk of transmitting the virus to vulnerable patients. These frontline staff are those who have regular and close clinical contact with patients and who are directly involved in patient care in clinical settings.

This is a risk-based approach. Following the above guidance, those pharmacists and their clinical staff, or for that matter other professions, who have regular clinical contact with patients and who are directly involved in patient care, as part of their pharmacy practice, will be eligible for the vaccine. Similarly, pharmacists, their clinical staff and other health professionals falling outside that definition will not be eligible for vaccination.

Community pharmacy has made, and will continue to make, an important contribution to the effective national response to swine flu and we hope that this helps to provide reassurance that pharmacists and their staff are not excluded from the definition of frontline healthcare workers. Some are likely to fall within the definition, whereas others will not, depending on the role that individual plays in patient care. The assessment and implementation of this will be a local responsibility. I would urge all of you who are eligible for early swine flu vaccination to take up the offer at the earliest opportunity – this will protect yourselves, your family and your patients.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ian Dalton".

Ian Dalton
National Director of NHS flu resilience

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Sharpe".

Sue Sharpe
Chief Executive Officer, PSNC