



Flu vaccination FAQs

November 2022

1. What insurance needs to be in place in order for me to provide flu vaccinations?

It is a professional requirement that every pharmacist undertakes activities that have some sort of indemnity arrangement to cover that activity. This cover may be individual cover or that which is provided by way of the employer (for example, a business policy by the pharmacy owner which covers all staff for all activities that are provided within that pharmacy). If a pharmacy is providing vaccinations away from the pharmacy, it may need to arrange additional cover, so you must check that this is in place before providing vaccinations in any place outside of that registered pharmacy.

All community pharmacies must have indemnity cover for all the services that are provided within it and for all individuals that provide the services (including locum pharmacists). However, the PDA strongly recommends that all pharmacists should also have in place their own independent insurance cover. There is no separate charge for undertaking flu vaccinations as this is covered within the general policy issued for those working within a community setting.

2. Who should be in control of the flu diary?

The RP may have conversations with their line manager regarding the flu appointment diary but ultimately the RP has final control over the volume of flu appointments that can safely be booked each day. The RP is responsible for the overall safe and effective operation of the pharmacy business and therefore must ensure patient safety is prioritised over any targets that the company may have set. The daily professional activities and professional priorities, together with how the professional areas of the pharmacy operate, should not be micromanaged by a non-pharmacist store manager, an area manager, or a Head Office.

3. What should I do if my store manager overrides my decision as RP regarding the flu diary?

We would hope that pharmacists were not put in this position because, as noted above, the RP has final control over the appointment diary, and this has already been acknowledged by Boots. If the store manager tries to override this decision, the pharmacist should then escalate this to the pharmacy support manager. The PDA Union Reps can support members in raising this issue and we urge members to get in touch with their local PDA Union Rep for assistance and advice.

4. What should I do if I turn up in a store as RP and there are more flu vaccines booked in than I think is safe for me to carry out whilst maintaining my other duties?

Initially, it would be recommended to have a discussion with your line manager, to see if additional cover can be given to you that day to enable you to safely deliver the flu service. If this is not possible, and as RP you do not believe it is possible to safely deliver these vaccines, it would be advisable to contact patients to reschedule appointments to a more suitable time when there will be adequate cover to deliver the service.

5. Should I prioritise flu vaccines over my other daily duties as RP?

Pharmacy contractors must carry out essential services as part of the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. Therefore, this should be the priority for the pharmacist. Essential services

include the dispensing of medicines and appliances and repeat dispensing. Flu vaccination service is an advanced service and should not take priority over essential services. Recent guidance issued by the NHS in Wales explicitly states that the flu service should be provided, but not to the detriment of core contracted services.

6. What should I do if additional pharmacist cover is withdrawn, and I have a flu clinic booked in?

Any staffing amendment should always be discussed with the RP. This is so the RP can organise the services (including core or essential services, such as dispensing) within the pharmacy to be provided safely. Initially, it would be recommended to have a discussion with your line manager to understand why the original cover has been withdrawn and to seek replacement cover to enable you to safely deliver the flu service on that day. If this is not possible, and it is not possible to safely deliver these vaccines, it would be advisable to contact patients to reschedule appointments to a time when there will be adequate cover to deliver the service.

7. I am a relief pharmacist so have no idea of how many flu appointments I will walk into each day?

As a relief pharmacist, it is advisable to have a conversation now with the different stores you may work with regarding how many flu appointments you will be comfortable delivering in a day. This may vary depending on which stores you work in. It would be advisable to follow this up with an email confirming what has been discussed. A couple of days before working in that store, call ahead and check the number of appointments booked. If this is different to the agreed volume, then ask the store manager to reschedule some of these appointments. If this request is refused, you may wish to escalate this with Pharmacy Services Manager or the Superintendent's office. Your local PDA Union Rep can also provide advice on this in the context of the specific circumstances.

8. Who is the RP for a mass vaccination centre (MVC)?

If the mass vaccination centre is within the pharmacy premises the pharmacist signed in as RP will also be the responsible pharmacist for the MVC, even if they are not involved with the vaccination process.

9. I am a sole pharmacist vaccinating in an MVC and there are back-to-back appointments booked. How should I manage if I get behind due to an incident such as anaphylaxis, fainting, needle phobia, etc as the appointment time doesn't take these situations into account?

It would be sensible to ensure adequate time is allocated for appointments but occasionally there may be unpredictable events that may cause these appointments to overrun. It would be advisable to have some allocated time available between blocks of appointments to allow pharmacists time to catch up at the end of a session. It is vitally important that pharmacists take adequate rest breaks so they should not be expected to catch up with workload during this time. If the pharmacist has fallen behind schedule due to these unpredictable events, they may feel that the safest option is to reschedule some appointments to another day.