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Adults' Health and Care

Provider newsletter

18 September 2025

Start of the Seasonal Influenza Autumn/Winter Vaccination programme

Flu infections spread more easily in winter when we spend more time together indoors, and both viruses can cause serious illness. As a frontline social care professional, you're more likely to be exposed to these viruses. If you are vaccinated and catch flu this winter, you are likely to have milder symptoms and recover faster. Getting vaccinated will also reduce the risk of you bringing the flu home from work.

We urge you to come forward for your flu vaccine as soon as possible to protect yourself and keep you able to help vulnerable Hampshire residents during winter. Frontline health and care professionals will be offered the flu vaccine from 1 October. Social care workers directly working with people clinically vulnerable to flu might be able to access vaccination provided by their employer. There are circumstances where frontline staff, employed by specific social care providers without access to employer led occupational health schemes (see [cohort eligibility](#)), can access the vaccine through the NHS free of charge. You can also book a [flu vaccine online](#) from 1 September, with appointments starting from 1 October.

Please note that there is no offer of a free COVID-19 vaccination for social care staff for the winter 2025/26 season. However, employers may have occupational health programmes that would support you in receiving this so please check with your organisation. Social care staff who have certain health conditions or who are receiving certain treatments may be eligible for a free COVID-19 vaccine and more information on eligibility and access is available in the winter vaccinations link above.

Reminder to all Care Providers of resources to support occupational health needs of staff and obligations to staff in relation to infection

Care providers should have a system in place to manage the occupational health needs and obligations to staff in relation to infection. In summer 2023, we circulated resources on occupational health provision in care homes to help guide providers. These have been updated to include information on the new Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccination programme. We would urge you to [look at this guidance](#), which has been summarised by our Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB) colleagues, and use the resources provided. These include a handy staff [vaccination assessment form](#) and tips on how to support staff with vaccinations.

Cold Weather resources for care providers and staff

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has developed an [adverse weather and health plan](#) which includes a number of resources for various staff groups and settings to prepare for and respond to cold weather, and protect staff and service users from the health impacts of adverse weather.

Please consider actions you can take within your settings and across your teams to prepare for the onset of colder weather and ensure processes are in place to mitigate against their impact in staff and residents/service users.

UKHSA winter readiness (infection prevention) information for care homes in South East England

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has prepared a [briefing pack](#) that provides information for care homes on preparing for the winter season, to try and help avoid cases and outbreaks of infectious disease.

Care home residents and staff are susceptible to infections which increase over the winter months, such as COVID-19, seasonal influenza (flu) and stomach infections (such as norovirus, the “winter vomiting bug”). These

are very infectious and can cause outbreaks due to close contact in residential settings. Good infection control practices can help reduce the risk of outbreaks occurring. This briefing pack provides:

- Key messages for care home managers on winter preparedness, including when and how to report outbreaks to your local UKHSA Health Protection Team (HPT).
 - Advice on use of multiplex LFDs to detect outbreaks of COVID-19 and Influenza (please see more information below).
 - Checklists for use in your settings
 - Links for posters and further information on RSV, COVID-19, flu, norovirus, shingles, and the health impacts of cold weather
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Multiplex LFDs for CQC-registered Care Homes to detect outbreaks of respiratory infections in care homes

CQC-registered care homes (residential and nursing) will begin receiving packages of multiplex lateral flow devices (LFDs) from 23 or 24 September. This is part of an evaluation by the UKHSA South East Health Protection team to assess whether using LFDs that can detect both flu and COVID-19 improves the management of suspected respiratory outbreaks in care homes compared to the usual process of organising testing through laboratories. Care Homes will receive five tests and instructions. These tests can detect COVID, flu A and flu B in 10 minutes.

For those who could not attend, please find a link to a recording of a webinar on this subject that is available on [YouTube](#) (9 minutes). The webinar explains what the LFDs are, how to use them and when to report results to UKHSA South East Health Protection Team.

[An FAQ document has also been developed](#)

Key points to remember:

- If a resident is severely unwell, seek urgent medical help as usual (via GP, NHS 111 or 999).

- If two or more residents have suspected or confirmed flu (positive test, or symptoms where testing isn't possible), then call the UKHSA South East Team on 0344 225 3861.
- After using the LFDs, an online form must always be completed for all results (negative, positive, or void). This will also automatically trigger a request for replacement kits to be sent

Useful meeting dates/contact information

For Care homes in the **North East Hampshire and Farnham area**, Frimley ICB is delivering IPC champions 1 hour topic sessions on:

Thursday 9 October - 2pm

Wednesday 10 December – 11am

Please do get in touch with the Frimley ICB IPC team if you wish to attend: frimleyicb.ipcteam@nhs.net

Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB area:

For those in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB area, please note that there is an IPC lead forum on the 7 October 14:00-15:30. You can sign up using the following registration link: [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#). The HIOW ICB IPC team also provide a 5 day service for care homes that require support on outbreaks and IPC related questions including the use of the new multiplex LFDs referred to above.

Contact details for the 5 day IPC service are: 08703156601 / hiowicb-hsi.infectionprevention@nhs.net 9am-4pm (Mon-Fri only)

Where a care home needs to access COVID-19 antivirals for an eligible resident or where the care home is not sure if a resident is eligible, [contact details](#) of the COVID medicine delivery unit (CMDU) are available.

[READ FURTHER INFORMATION](#)

Provider update for home care providers in Hampshire

Read the latest [home care provider update](#), giving information on the CCSH contract, contract monitoring, Take a Break and more. Further information can be found on the [Domiciliary Care webpages](#).

Capital Depleter quick guide

Following feedback from providers, we have recently updated the Care Home Framework website to include a new Capital Depleter quick guide. This guide gives an overview of what should happen when an individual is reaching their capital limit, and the actions Hampshire County Council will take. The guide, along with other FAQs can be found on our [Care Home Framework website](#).

Gas and Chimney fire safety checks

With both [Chimney Fire safety Week](#) and [Gas Safety Week](#) held in September, both are important reminders to get chimneys swept and gas central heating appliances checked (annually) before the Autumn chill sets in.

When you visit somebody's home, you can help by sharing the safety tips below and [making a referral for a Safe and Well \(home fire safety\)](#) visit if you have concerns:

- Ensure [the chimney is swept before use](#) if it hasn't been used for some time
- Ensure a fireguard is in front of the fire at all times
- Spark guards can prevent a serious property fire
- Extinguish the fire before going to bed or leaving the house
- Never use petrol or paraffin to light a fire
- Wood burning stoves should be placed on a fire-resistant base and not directly onto a hardwood floor or carpeted surface
- Ensure the right type of wood or coal is used
- The chimney or flue should be cleaned at the end of each heating season and at least once during the heating season
- Remove ash and burnt fuel once it has cooled
- Keep vents and chimneys clear at all times.

- Ensure there is a working carbon monoxide alarm and working smoke detectors in the home and test these regularly.
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Book your tickets for the next Hampshire Care Association network meeting

Hampshire Care Association are hosting two network meetings on 1 October, one for care home staff, and one for home care. The agenda will include updates from Hampshire County Council, the ICB and HCC Quality Teams, research presentations, and external speakers.

Find out more and [book your residential network meeting ticket](#)

Find out more and [book your homecare network meeting ticket](#)

Caring with Purpose, Driving Best Practice in Social Care

HCA are inviting care providers to the Hampshire Care Association's Autumn Conference on Wednesday, 5 November 2025 at the Voco Hotel, Winchester.

This full-day event will inspire and equip you with practical tools, featuring:

- Keynote speech from Jess Hutchinson (Director of Adult Social Care, Hampshire County Council) and Lottie Snow (Operations Manager, CQC)
- Panel discussion with Hampshire's care leaders
- Six expert-led workshops covering workforce development, marketing, compliance, digital security, wellbeing, and international recruitment

You can attend two workshops of your choice on the day (each workshop is limited to 30 delegates each), so early booking is essential.

[More information on the conference and workshops can be found on the events page.](#)

Event Details:

Date: Wednesday, 5 November 2025

Venue: Voco Hotel, Winchester

Time: 9:30 am – 3:15 pm

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