

Public questions from Healthwatch Rochdale Public Board Meeting.

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 2pm - 3pm.

The following questions were submitted in advance:

	Questions
1.	<p>The free NHS flu programme is normally for people aged 65 and over, pregnant women, people with certain conditions such as kidney disease, asthma or heart disease and carers or those in care homes. Frontline health and social care workers are also eligible to receive the flu vaccine.</p> <p>The flu jab is also free for children over six months with a long-term health condition, those aged two and three and those in primary school. It has been reported widely in the national media that this programme will now be extended to include anyone aged 50 and over, and children who are aged 11 by the end of August this year - the first year of secondary school. Anyone living in a household with somebody on the <a href="#">NHS shielded patient list for Covid-19</a> will also be eligible for a free jab.</p> <p>I get my Flu jab free each year since I'm a keyworker in an area designated as high risk of community transmission and am grateful to the NHS for it, however I have been told that ASDA Rochdale are still rationing out the Flu vaccination in age related groups saying that it is only free to those aged 65 or over.</p> <p>Is this the case and is it possible for Rochdale Healthwatch to clarify this since I know it is causing some confusion locally with people anxious to get a flu vaccination.</p>
	<p><b>Response to Question 1</b></p>
	<p>The NHS Flu programme is eligible to the following groups listed in the national document and it is free to all these groups.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-who-should-have-it-this-winter-and-why/the-flu-vaccination-winter-2020-to-2021-who-should-have-it-and-why">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-who-should-have-it-this-winter-and-why/the-flu-vaccination-winter-2020-to-2021-who-should-have-it-and-why</a></p> <p>The healthy 50-64 year old programme has not been released as yet but maybe introduced later in the year. We are waiting for further details for this new cohort. For those done my General Practices they calling people in and obviously having to manage appointments and the programme in a managed way. In terms of Pharmacists they can also provide the programme but it is their choice which</p>

	<p>elements of the programme they can provide and this can also depend on vaccine stocks at the time.</p> <p>For NHS and social care staff the employer should provide or assist staff to access the vaccine. NHS and Council social care staff obtain their vaccine from their organisation. Some other social care staff outside of the Council or NHS are eligible to get a vaccine from their own GP or a Pharmacist. We are aware that some social care staff had experienced some problems so we are liaising with some care providers such as care homes to check where the problems are in order to help staff make links with providers with vaccine supplies.</p>
2.	<p>Are old and vulnerable people still being discharged from NHS hospital settings without first having a clear Cv19 test into local care homes?</p> <p>It has also been reported in some sections of the media that letters from several councils in the North West have been sent asking all care homes in their area to immediately stop family visits, due to a rise in coronavirus , except for end of life visits. Are Healthwatch able to clarify whether or not visits to care homes in Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton are to be immediately restricted in the same way due to rising Cv19 infection rates in our area?</p>
	<p><b>Response to Question 2</b></p>
	<p>Patients are only discharged from hospital to care homes when medically fit to do so. All discharges will have a recorded covid status. We have a specific site for those where they are covid positive and require a further isolation period but do not need to remain in hospital prior to moving to their long-term care placement.</p> <p>Visits to care homes in HMR were restricted during lockdown as in the rest of the country. However, as GM (including HMR) has remained in additional measures since lockdown was released, care home visiting is still restricted under the North of England restriction except for end of life or exceptional circumstances.</p>