



Department
of Health

*From the Chief Medical Officer,
Professor Dame Sally C Davies FRS FMedSci*

*Richmond House
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To early years practitioners

20 September 2016

Dear Colleague

Childhood flu immunisation programme

I am writing to you about the childhood flu immunisation programme, and to seek your help in raising awareness of the programme to staff working in the early years sector. Staff working in this sector can play a valuable role in talking to parents about the benefits of flu vaccination.

For many years the flu vaccine has been routinely offered to those who are most at risk of severe illness from flu. This includes pregnant women, those aged 65 and over, and those with long term health conditions, including children.

Since 2013, vaccination has been extended to children in a phased roll-out. Not only does the flu vaccine help to protect the children themselves, but by reducing the spread of flu it will also help protect family members and others in the community. The flu vaccine also promotes a healthy working environment in nurseries and preschools by reducing the risk of spread of flu to others including staff.

All children aged two, three and four years can get the vaccine at their general practice. This is usually administered by the practice nurse. The vaccine is given as a nasal spray. This is quick and painless and no injection is involved. Children in years 1, 2 and 3 in primary school are also offered the flu vaccine. Over the next few years, the programme will be extended gradually to include children in other age groups.

I would be grateful for your support in helping to publicise the programme. A fuller briefing for the early years sector has been produced by Public Health England and this, along with materials to give to parents, can be downloaded and ordered for free at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme>

If you would like any further information please e-mail immunisation@phe.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally C Davies', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**PROFESSOR DAME SALLY C DAVIES
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER**