



Report to Merton Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Section 7a Immunisation Programmes in Merton 2019

Report on Section 7a Immunisation Programmes in the London Borough of Merton.

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Classification: OFFICIAL

The NHS Commissioning Board (NHS CB) was established on 1st October 2012 as an executive non-departmental public body. Since 1st April 2019, the NHS Commissioning Board has used the name NHS England and Improvement for operational purposes.

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1 Aim

- The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of Section 7a adult immunisation programmes in the London Borough of Merton for 2019/20. The paper covers the vaccine coverage and uptake for each programme along with an account of what NHS England and Improvement (NHSE&I) London Region are doing to improve uptake and coverage.
- Section 7a immunisation programmes are population based, publicly funded immunisation programmes that cover the life-course and include:
 - Antenatal and targeted new-born vaccinations.
 - Routine Childhood Immunisation Programme for 0-5 years.
 - School age vaccinations.
 - Adult vaccinations such as the annual seasonal influenza vaccination.
- This paper focuses on those immunisation programmes provided for adults namely, influenza, shingles and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV).
- Members of the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to note and support the work NHSE&I (London) and its partners such as Public Health England (PHE), the Local Authority and the CCG are doing to increase vaccination coverage and immunisation uptake in Merton.

2 Headlines for London

- Historically and currently, London performs lower than national (England) averages across all the immunisation programmes.
- London faces challenges in attaining high coverage and uptake of vaccinations due to high population mobility, increasing population, increasing fiscal pressures and demands on primary care services and a decreasing vaccinating workforce.
- Under the London Immunisation Partnership Board, NHS England and Improvement London Region (NHSE&I London) and Public Health England London Region (PHE London) seek to ensure that the London population are protected from vaccine preventable diseases and are working in partnership with local authorities, CCGs and other partners to increase equity in access to vaccination services and to reduce health inequalities in relation to immunisations.

3 Merton and the challenges

- Merton is affected by the same challenges that face the London region. London has in recent years delivered significantly poorer uptake than the remainder of the country. Reasons for the low coverage include:
 - London's high population mobility which affects tracking and recording of adult patients.

- Coding errors in general practice (including missing data for patients vaccinated abroad or elsewhere).
- Inconsistent patient invite/reminder (call-recall) systems across London
- Declining vaccinating workforce.
- Decreasing and ageing GP workforce dealing with increasing work priorities and patient lists, resulting in shortages of vaccinators and appointments.
- Difficulties accessing appointments.
- Large numbers of underserved populations whom are associated with lower uptake of vaccinations than the wider population (i.e. delayed vaccinations).
- Growing vaccine hesitancy (i.e. confidence in vaccine, lack of convenience and complacency).
- In relation to adult vaccinations, there are extra complications regarding vaccine shortages (e.g. PPV23), delays in 'flu vaccine supply, different vaccines for different cohorts and different providers (pharmacy, maternity, acute trusts and general practice) meaning that the surveillance rates do not reflect all vaccinations given (mainly those given in general practice).

4 Seasonal 'flu Vaccination

4.1 Vaccination Uptake rates

- There isn't a herd immunity target for 'flu vaccination. However, nationally there is a target of 75% 'flu vaccine uptake for patients aged 65 years and older and 55% for the clinical 'at risk' groups (those aged 6 months to 64 years with long term conditions).
- The latest available information is for 2018/19 – the current 'flu season is still underway with the data collection being completed by end of March 2020.
- However, it's suffice to say that London's performance so far has been better than 2018/19 for the over 65s, the primary school cohorts and in health care workers.
- Rates to date have been lower in the clinical at risk, pregnant women and in the age 2 and 3 year olds. However, it is anticipated that due to the late start this season due to delayed vaccine supplies that we will maintain the same uptake as last year.
- Table 1 illustrates the uptake in London compared to England for the years 2016/17 to 2018/19.
- All CCGs in London performed below national standards of 70-75% for over 65s and 50-55% for clinically at-risk groups for 2018/19.
- 'Flu uptake for 2018/19 was affected by:
 - The mild winter and low circulation of influenza.
 - Late national planning to introduce the new vaccine (aTIV) for the over 65s, difficulties with manufacturing large volumes at short notice resulting in late and staggered deliveries of the vaccine.

- These figures may not include all flu vaccinations offered in maternity units nor the vaccinations provided in pharmacy. For London, 211,320 vaccinations were offered in pharmacy. Of these, 200,353 vaccinations were to the at-risk groups and over half were to people aged 65 and older. The majority of 'flu vaccinations are provided in Hillingdon, Ealing, Wandsworth, Croydon, Bromley, Greenwich, Newham, Redbridge and Barnet (all in excess of 8,000).
- In relation to 'at risk' groups, 20,000 vaccinations were given in pharmacy but not all clinically uploaded onto GP systems (if all were included it would raise the rates by 1.8%).

Table 1
Seasonal Influenza vaccination rates for England and London 2016 - 2019

	England			London		
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2016-17	2017-2018	2018-19
65+ years	70.4%	72.6%	71.3%	65.1%	66.9%	63.9%
<65 years	48.7%	48.9%	46.9%	47.1%	45.4%	42.5%
Pregnant	44.8%	47.2%	45.0%	39.6%	41.1%	38.9%
Healthcare workers	63.0%	68.7%	70.3%	55.4%	64.1%	63.7%
2 years of age	35.4%	42.8%	43.1%	30.3%	33.2%	31.1%
3 years of age	37.7%	44.2%	45.2%	32.6%	33.3%	32.5%
4 years of age/Reception	30.0%	62.6%	63.9%	24.9%	51.6%	53.7%
Year 1	57.6%	60.9%	63.4%	45.8%	49.6%	52.7%
Year 2	55.3%	60.3%	61.4%	43.6%	48.2%	50.2%
Year 3	53.3%	57.5%	60.2%	42.0%	45.6%	48.9%
Year 4	n/a	55.7%	58.0%	n/a	43.8%	46.5%
Year 5	n/a	n/a	56.2%	n/a	n/a	44.6%

Source: PHE (2019)

- Figure 1 compares Merton with London and England averages and the rest of its geographical neighbours in the 65 years and over, under 65 'at risk' and pregnant women with the same time-period in 2018/19.
- Merton did not meet the national standards in all cohorts.

Figure 1

Uptake of seasonal flu vaccination for Merton CCG compared to SWL, London and England for Winter 2018/19 compared to 2017/18

CCG	Seasonal flu uptake					
	2018/19			2017/18		
	65 and over	under 65 at risk	All pregnant women	65 and over	Under 65 (at-risk only)	All pregnant women
	% Vaccine Uptake	% Vaccine Uptake	% Vaccine Uptake	% Vaccine Uptake	% Vaccine Uptake	% Vaccine Uptake
England	72.0	48.0	45.2	72.9	49.7	47.0
NHS ENGLAND LONDON	65.4	44.4	39.1	67.5	46.6	41.0
NHS CROYDON CCG	65.0	45.5	41.1	66.6	45.3	43.6
NHS KINGSTON CCG	65.6	46.4	44.8	68.0	48.8	44.7
NHS RICHMOND CCG	65.9	38.3	41.9	68.5	42.2	43.4
NHS MERTON CCG	63.4	42.8	41.1	66.2	47.1	43.6
NHS WANDSWORTH CCG	66.4	42.1	46.6	67.6	45.1	50.1

PHE (2019)

4.2 What are we doing to increase uptake of seasonal influenza vaccine this year?

- There is evidence to suggest that practices who are well prepared and have uptake in their first couple of weeks continue to have good uptake throughout the season.
- This means that the weekly checks by commissioners have little or no impact on improving flu uptake once the season started. The focus therefore from 2019 is on practices being prepared and have advanced planning particularly around identifying eligible cohorts and estimating demand and supply, including considering extra staff capacity for opportunistic vaccinations.
- A workshop with CCG 'flu leads took place in July 2019. This cumulated in the formulation of CCG flu plans which were monitored throughout the 'flu season.
- There is evidence to suggest that 'flu vaccinations are considered optional or preventative and are not seen as integral to an individual's care pathway or health maintenance. In light of this, we are changing the narrative around 'flu vaccinations for 'at risk' groups, including working with specialised commissioning colleagues and acute and primary providers to embed primary care appointments (for checking co-morbidities and vaccination) into pathways. For example, we commissioned 11 acute trusts across London to provide 'flu vaccination in clinics with clinical 'at risk' patients, vaccination advice recorded in letters to GPs from specialists. This is in keeping with NICE's recommendation of multicomponent interventions.
- We developed and distributed an 'under 65 years' resource pack for each London CCG providing specific localised information and data for each London CCG & LA. For Merton, out of 22,799 eligible patients, 13,340 were

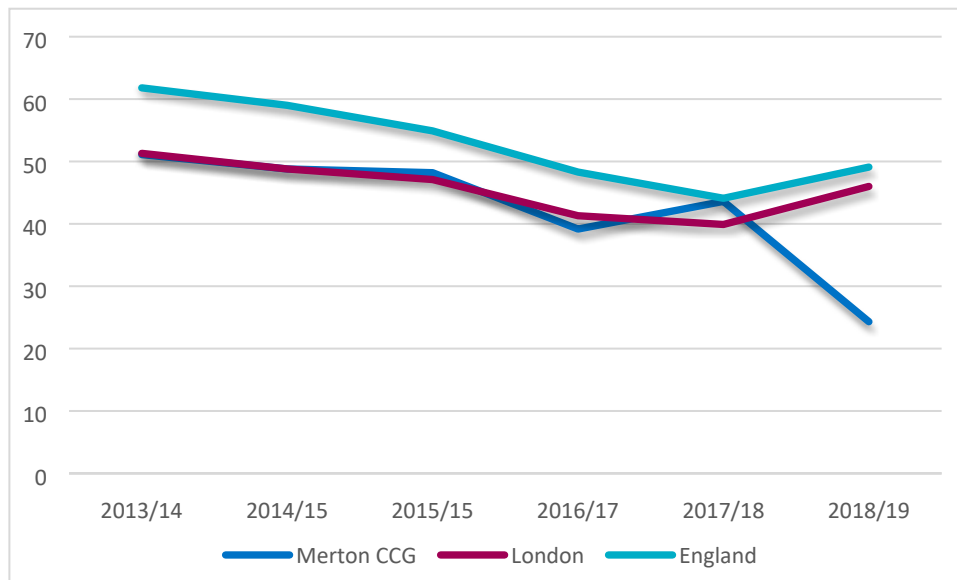
unvaccinated and vulnerable to flu, resulting in an estimated loss of income of £134,200 across all Merton practices.

- NHSE&I has also highlighted to each London CCG the number of Practices whose undertake is under 30% and worked together to improve performance with these practices.
- NHSE&I Communication team worked with local and national charities to spread the message as well as sending tweets and Instagram messages throughout the flu season.
- NHSE&I reviewed and improved the vaccination offer to London's statutory homeless and rough sleepers utilising pharmacy, general practices that care for the homeless population and commissioning voluntary organisations that provide outreach medical services to deliver vaccinations.
- We undertook a Delphi methods study to determine the interventions that work in improving 'flu vaccination uptake amongst health care workers in London trusts. This was developed into the '7 Steps to Success' and shared with trusts to implement this 'flu season. The evaluation to date shows that uptake amongst health care workers is higher again this year as a result. There are now plans to implement this in primary care.
- Training of staff is crucial to maintaining good vaccination uptake. PHE London and NHSE/I London continue to work together to ensure that vaccinators are updated on 'flu vaccination and that health care professionals are informed to address any vaccine hesitancy thereby reducing complacency and improving confidence and convenience.
- Every year, we evaluate the impact of our annual London 'Flu Vaccination Plan. These evaluations are underway and include a 'flu wash up event. This event will be held on the 29 April 2020 and will focus on how to improve uptake in the clinical at risk group (<65s). Colleagues from CCGs, LA, Trust, pharmacies, Charities and GP Practices are invited to the event.

5 Shingles

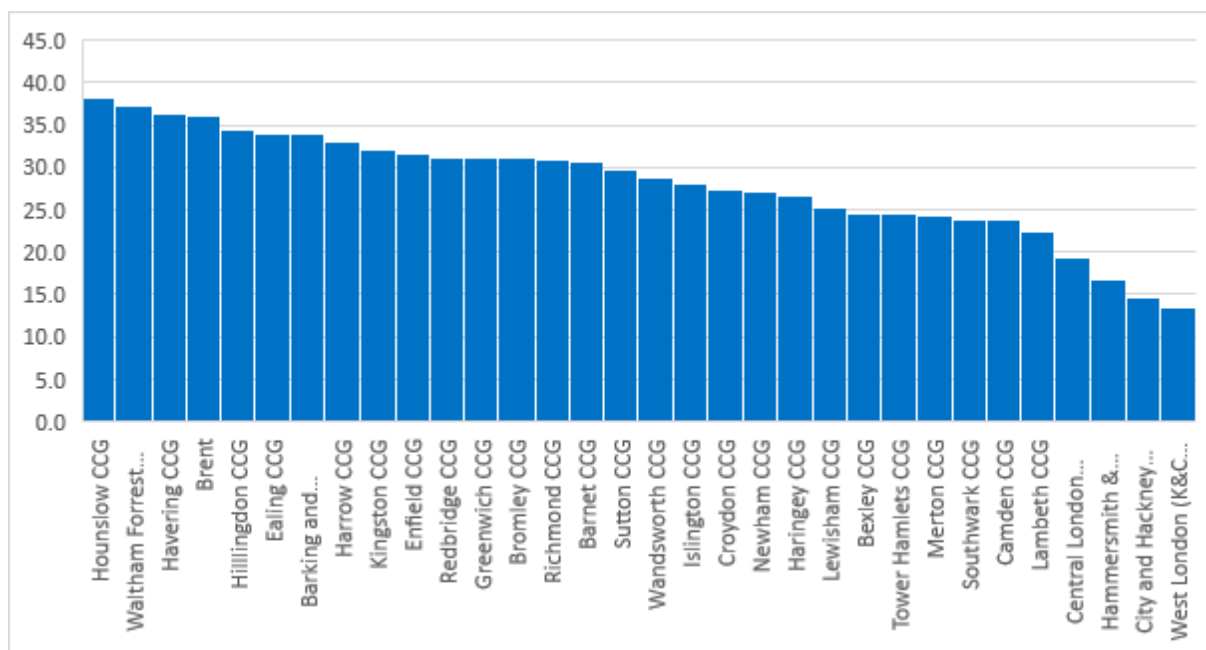
- The Shingles vaccination programme commenced in September 2013. Shingles vaccine is offered to people who turn 70 years with a 'catch up' for 78 years. However, anyone who turned 70 since 2013 remains eligible and from September 2020, everyone aged 70 to 79 will be eligible.
- Figure 2 illustrates the percentage uptake by CCG in London for years of the programme for the routine age 70 cohort.
- Whilst London has seen an increase in uptake – partly due to changes in the calculation of the denominator and partly due to the implementation of the London Shingles Vaccine Improvement Plan – there has been a considerable drop in the uptake amongst 70 year olds in Merton. This places Merton 8th from the bottom of uptake when the London CCGs are ranked in descending order (see Figure 3).

Figure 2
Shingles Uptake for Merton CCG compared to London and England averages for 2013/14 to 2018/19



Source: PHE (2019)

Figure 3
Shingles Uptake for London CCGs 2018/19 with CCGs ranked from highest uptake to lowest



Source: PHE (2019)

6 PPV

- Pneumococcal Polysachride Vaccine (PPV) is offered to all those aged 65 and older to protect against 23 strains of pneumococcal bacterium. It is a one-off vaccine which protects for life. This vaccination tends to be given alongside the flu vaccination during the flu season as the patient is usually present at the flu appointment.
- For the past few years, there has been a global shortage of this vaccine and so the cumulative uptake has remained relatively unchanged nationally and regionally.
- For 2018/19, 64.5% of the London over 65s population and 65% of Merton's population had received PPV. This compares to 69% nationally.
- It is worth noting that the over 65s population are largely protected against pneumococcal invasive disease and pneumonia from the PCV-13 programme given as part of the 0 to 5s routine childhood immunisation schedule, because young children are the main source of spread of these infections. PPV23 is an additional vaccine to help protect this population from the remaining 13 strains not covered in the PCV-13 vaccine.

7 What are we doing to improve uptake in Merton?

- NHSE/I (London) works in partnership with other bodies, such as London Councils, Greater London Authority as part of the London Immunisation Partnership Board and its delivery groups.
- This includes delivering on the pan London Immunisation Improvement Plan, the annual London 'flu vaccination and the Shingles Vaccine Uptake Improvement Plan.
- Quarterly assurance is provided on Merton through the SWL Immunisation Performance and Quality Board where challenges and solutions can be discussed with all stakeholders around the performance and the surveillance data.
- As well as these pan London approaches, NHSE/I immunisation commissioning team (London) have been working locally with the SWL Alliance Flu Strategy Group, the local Public Health team and local providers to focus and identify local barriers, improving access for vulnerable or underserved groups and improving public acceptability. One example of this is our local flu working group which meets monthly throughout the flu season. Key agenda items are local communications, data analysis, current vaccination uptake, national updates and school engagement.
- SW London seasonal flu group intends to extend its scope to cover immunisations more broadly and to monitor improvement actions / performance data.