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COVID Vaccination Update

Enhanced Service (ES)

The long awaited Enhanced Service Specification for the COVID-19 vaccination programme 2020/21 has been published, alongside a letter about the next steps. This will be a seven-day service, but the delivery demands of this will be vaccine supply led. While the timescale for supply of the vaccines still remains uncertain (they haven't arrived in the UK yet), Practices will be given 10 calendar days' notice.

The Green Book

There is also a new chapter in the Immunisation against infectious disease (the Green Book) for health professionals who administer vaccines which includes guidance on the storage, dosing and schedule of the vaccines as well as guidance on potential adverse effects.

Vaccine Training

New training and information materials have been published which are designed to help train and inform those who will deliver the COVID-19 vaccine. They include new COVID-19 vaccine e-learning modules, COVID-19 vaccinator training recommendations and a competency assessment tool.

Christmas Opening

The good news for now is that there are still currently no plans for General Practice to routinely open to meet new demands from the combined winter pressures. However, there are still just over 3 weeks until Christmas, and we have just come out of the second lockdown, so these plans will likely be kept under review.

New DBS Filtering Rules

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) 'filtering' system, the term used to describe the process that identifies which criminal records will be disclosed on a Standard or Enhanced DBS certificate (DBS check), has just been reformed. What this means is that certain old or minor offences may not automatically be disclosed on DBS certificates, known as 'protected' offences. There is of course a list of offences that will always be disclosed on a Standard or Enhanced DBS certificate (unless they relate to a youth caution), which are known as 'specified offences' and are usually of a serious violent or sexual nature, or are relevant for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and all convictions resulting in a custodial sentence, whether or not suspended, will always be disclosed. The DBS has

produced guidance that sits alongside the new rules. The QCS DBS/Disclosure Policy and Procedure will be updated to reflect this.

Winter Pressures Data Collection

A new data collection will replace the existing General Practice (GP) appointments collection, using a national standard that supports the intention to publish GP activity and waiting times data monthly from 2021, alongside hospital data.

Flu Vaccine for Healthcare Workers

Just 19.4% of GP Practices responded to the ImmForm GP/ISHCP data collection tool for the October 2020 survey and showed a vaccine uptake of 67.7%. Practices are reminded that employers have a responsibility to offer a free flu vaccination to all frontline health care workers, which includes NHS independent contractors, to help protect everyone from flu this winter.

Vitamin D Supplements

People who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and those in care homes will be offered a free four-month supply of daily vitamin D supplements during the winter months. All care homes will automatically receive a supply for their residents, while those on the CEV list will receive a letter inviting them to opt in for a supply to be delivered directly to their homes from January 2021.