Cambridge University Hospitals is one of the largest hospitals in the UK with approximately 10,000 staff. In 2017/18, the trust ran their most successful flu campaign, achieving an 84.3 per cent uptake among frontline staff, the highest uptake rate within their area.

What was done and why?

The flu team wanted to build on a ‘step change’ achieved in the 2016/17 campaign and invest in broadening access to clinics and incentivising colleagues to be part of the campaign.

1. Trust investment

The trust moved away from the campaign being the responsibility of HR and occupational health department, and instead sought support from the board, all the way through to individual staff member. Additional investment was provided for resourcing, campaign materials and incentives, with the trust board and commissioning team acknowledging that the flu campaign, particularly with its national focus, strong target and CQUIN criteria, required specific and separate financial investment.

The flu campaign is now part of the trust’s wider health and wellbeing programme which has seen investment from an external vaccination company.
This enabled the team to increase the number of drop-in clinics significantly, allowing the occupational health department to maintain their regular service and appointment waiting times, which has previously suffered.

The flu team is now multidisciplinary and supported by both trust staff members and externally contracted staff. This support spans trust-wide with everyone from the chief executive, through to local vaccinators championing vaccination at a ward or clinic level.

2. Campaign approach

The team’s approach was to be as available as possible, for at least 11 hours per working day, for both planned and opportunistic vaccination requests over a six-week period. Through communications, they ensured all staff were aware that there would be limited availability for vaccination after this time to encourage early uptake.

The trust maximised their approach by arranging a clinic in a central location for the first two weeks of the campaign with many vaccination nurses split over shifts. For a further four weeks, ‘pop-up’ clinics were conducted in high traffic areas to capture passing staff.

The trust also sought to recruit and mobilise approximately 60 peer vaccinators, targeting frontline staff in their clinical areas.

Core messages relayed to the wider staff included information about the risks associated with flu, the reported data on symptoms, complications, duty of care to patients and death rates. The trust utilised national coverage of flu occurring in the southern hemisphere, and ensured that staff had enough information about the vaccines to help combat myths. They avoided focusing too heavily on the CQUIN funding or the 70 per cent uptake target.

3. Communications strategy

The trust wanted their communications to create an environment in which flu immunisation was well known and where staff could encourage one another to get vaccinated. They wanted staff to be aware of their duty of care to protect their patients.

Incorporating information gathered from previous year’s evaluations, in which staff members had said flu was too much like a corporate target, the trust created a new campaign brand. The artwork played on the Ghostbusters logo, a recognisable image which differed from the trust’s normal corporate style of communication. The trust found that this fun and relaxed brand made a significant difference in changing people’s perception towards having the vaccination and the culture surrounding it.

The results

The 2017/18 flu campaign has been the trust’s most successful, achieving an 84.3 per cent uptake among frontline staff, which was also the highest uptake rate within their area.

The trust collated statistics through consent forms, which were then input into their occupational health electronic record system for reporting.

The results were not achieved by a magic formula, but through three years’ worth of evaluating and developing the campaign using a consistent team and through changing staff culture about the adoption of the vaccine.
**Top tips and learning to share**

- Removing simple barriers can pay off, for example hold drop in clinics without the need to book or allow people to complete consent forms ahead of time and open up clinics to fit with shift patterns.
- Design the accessibility of the vaccine around your workforce, and choose locations close to amenities, such as the food court.
- Utilise social media to post photos of teams and individuals who have received their jab, creating engaging content and adding to the fun aspect of the campaign.
- Create support and excitement for the campaign and keep the momentum going with weekly updates on progress.

**Next steps**

- The trust is planning to start the pre-launch of the campaign earlier and to engage with even more local vaccinators.
- They will also put more focus into approaching specific staff groups, who have difficulties in reaching the clinics due to location or working patterns.

**Contact for more information**

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