Taking the vaccine
to the staff

By using a series of innovative methods to engage with community-based staff, NHS Rotherham have significantly increased their vaccine uptake rates.

SHA region: Yorkshire and Humber
During 2010, NHS Rotherham was made up of a commissioning organisation and a separate provider arm providing community and learning disability services across a variety of sites, employing approximately 1,800 people overall.

What we did and why
Uptake of staff vaccinations against flu in 2009 was low, with just 17.9 per cent of eligible staff taking up the seasonal flu vaccinations offered. The control of infection nurse (immunisation lead), medicines management and HR team were aware that flu was a big risk to staff health, the health of patients and organisational capacity, and decided to take a different approach for the winter of 2010.

Traditionally, vaccination had been delivered centrally at the occupational health department on the local general hospital site. This meant that staff had to leave their work locations, including community staff working in all areas of Rotherham, to get vaccinated, and the service was not always available at times convenient for staff.

To increase flexibility and accessibility, we decided to offer vaccinations to staff at a time and a community site that suited them, handy to their usual workplace and with ample parking for mobile staff. Everything that could be done was done to make it as simple as possible to attend.

This was a combined collaboration with local pharmacies (where staff could also go to get vaccinated if it was more convenient for them, and the charges were billed back to the trust) and healthcare staff at a community hospital, which meant that in this year close to 53 per cent of staff received vaccinations, with 430 delivered in local pharmacies.

How we did it
For 2010, planning began early. The team planned carefully where clinics could take place so that vaccinations could be provided in a location convenient to staff.

Alongside this, we ran a proactive and sustained communications campaign involving frontline staff describing why they believed vaccination was important, and the chief executive and executive team were amongst the first to have their vaccinations, in a show of support. Staff were also reminded and actively encouraged by their managers to take up the vaccine on and around the days that the sessions took place.
Results and next steps
We saw the number of staff volunteering to have a flu vaccination rocket from 17.9 per cent to 53 per cent in 2010/11.

Tips for other trusts
- Work with community pharmacists to increase the number of places where staff can be vaccinated.
- Look for frontline champions who will be able to convince their peers about the importance of vaccinations.
- Make it easy for staff to access vaccinations wherever and whenever they work.

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