

14 December 2009

BY EMAIL & POST

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Dear Ms Caulfield and Mr Hellett

Swine Flu Vaccinations for Family Carers

Thank you for your letter of 30 November regarding the prioritisation of family carers of people with learning disability for swine flu vaccinations. Regarding the swine flu vaccination programme the PCT is following the Department of Health recommendations about who should receive the vaccine, and the order of priority.

Because of the limited availability of pandemic specific vaccine the government has prioritised certain groups to receive the vaccine. Based on the advice of independent expert committees the Department of Health announced the phase one priority groups for vaccination because they were considered to have the highest risk of severe illness should they contract the swine flu virus. Frontline health and social care staff have also been prioritised for vaccination in the first phase of the programme. The next phase of the vaccination programme is for children over six months and under five years.

In his letter of 20 November to General Practitioners the Chief Medical Officer stated that an expert group has advised that the main carers for elderly or disabled persons whose welfare may be at risk if their carer falls ill should be encouraged to receive the swine flu vaccine. The Department of Health is discussing the implementation of this advice with carers' organisations. Once further details about who will be eligible for this phase of the vaccination programme and how it will be delivered are made known I will let you know the local arrangements and timescales.

I hope that you are reassured by the future plans to offer the vaccination to carers and the rationale for the approach being taken to the swine flu programme by the Department of Health.

Yours sincerely

Darren Grayson
Chief Executive

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