



Department of Health & Social Care

*From the Chief Medical Officer
Professor Chris Whitty KCB FRS FMedSci*

Andrea Brown
National Kidney Federation

By email via Andrea@kidney.org.uk

3 November 2025

Dear Andrea Brown,

Help protect those most at-risk from flu - encourage those you support to get their flu vaccination this winter

Last winter in England, there were around 8,000 deaths from flu and the flu vaccination programme is estimated to have prevented around 100,000 people from being hospitalised¹. I am seeking your support and encouragement to those you support to be vaccinated against flu this winter.

The importance of flu vaccination

As you know people with chronic renal disease are eligible to receive the seasonal flu vaccine free each autumn because patients with chronic renal disease are at particular risk of severe illness if they catch flu. It is known that chronic renal disease can make people less able to fight off infection. This means that these patients are more likely to be admitted to hospital or on rare occasions be admitted to intensive care and potentially die. Evidence indicates that people with chronic renal disease are approximately 19 times more likely to die if they catch flu than individuals with no underlying health conditions².

It is important that people living with long-term health conditions that put them at greater risk of severe disease and complications from flu help protect themselves by having the flu vaccination. This can reduce the incidence of flu, prevent GP visits and flu-related hospitalisations. Last year only 48%³ of those with chronic renal disease had flu vaccination last year. This is why I am asking for your help in promoting the benefits of vaccination, so that more of your members take up the offer of vaccination this autumn.

¹ Influenza in the UK, annual epidemiological report: winter 2024 to 2025 available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/influenza-in-the-uk-annual-epidemiological-report-winter-2024-to-2025>

² UKHSA (2025) Influenza: the green book, chapter 19 available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19>

³ [Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in GP patients in England: winter season 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-gp-patients-in-england-winter-season-2024-to-2025)

What you can do

Please use your channels and networks to encourage those eligible to get their flu vaccination by booking in with a clinic or visit a pharmacy offering flu vaccination.

For this coming winter, we have dedicated materials to encourage those eligible and most at-risk to get vaccinated. Please find the Winter 2025/26 Communications Toolkit here: <https://bit.ly/CMOCHAR>.

Flu vaccination is important and I urge you to support the programme by encouraging take up of the vaccine. Once again, thank you for your support. If you would like any further information about the programme, please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine/> or email immunisation@ukhsa.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Chris Whitty

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Whitty', with a stylized flourish at the end.

PROFESSOR CHRIS WHITTY