



How you can help support the Beat Flu campaign

Toolkit



How can you help Beat Flu?



There are a number of ways your organisation can get involved in raising awareness of the benefits of influenza (flu) vaccination. This toolkit provides materials to help make this as straightforward as possible, because we know that influenza is just one of the many key health messages that you will be sharing.

The Beat Flu campaign generally runs from October to March, with the bulk of activity prior to Christmas. This makes October and November a good time for you to encourage those who are eligible to get their flu vaccination.

Here is a list of suggestions you might like to consider:

Activity	How we can support you
Issue a story to the media highlighting why influenza is dangerous for your audience and that there is a free vaccine available.	> A template story is provided.
Post a news feature on your website.	> A template story is provided.
Include information about influenza and the vaccination in any organisational outlets you have, such as bulletins/e-bulletins, newsletters or even notice boards.	> The template story provided can be edited to a shorter length if necessary.
Share key information via your social media channels.	> Visual content, a social media guide, example posts and how to tag us is provided. We can also re-share your #beatflu messages to show our followers that you support the campaign.
Share information with any key partners by word of mouth and by leaving information resources at events you attend.	> Posters and other promotional resources are available to download at www.beatflu.org . If you would like hard copies, please let us know.

Working together

The Beat Flu team would be more than happy to discuss any ideas or plans you may have about how to raise awareness.

Everything provided as part of this toolkit is bilingual and also available electronically via email upon request. Please get in touch via beatflu@four.cymru or by calling 01970 636400 and asking to speak to a member of the Beat Flu team.



Template news story

You may wish to use the following news story as a template, which can be easily adapted to suit different purposes – such as issuing a story to the press, or posting a news feature on your website or e-bulletin. Just edit it to suit your needs.

Remember, you can find more specific information about how influenza can affect your target audience in the cover letter provided - it would be great if you could add this information into the template news story below to personalise your message.



Name of org issues influenza warning to name of target group

The annual influenza (flu) immunisation programme in Wales is now underway in time for the coming winter – and those eligible for a flu vaccine are being urged by leading charities including name of organisation to get their flu vaccination as soon as possible.

Last year, fewer than half (46.9%) of people in clinical risk groups got protected against influenza, a virus, which can and does kill every year. People particularly 'at risk' of influenza and its complications, such as those with / who are name of risk group, are given the vaccine at no cost as part of NHS care. However last year only X% (insert statistic from covering letter) of this group got protected.

People with / who are name of risk group are urged to protect themselves as early as possible and get their vaccine before influenza starts circulating in Wales.

X, (name of individual) at name of organisation, explains why the influenza vaccination is vital for people with name of risk group: "Influenza is a serious illness caused by a virus that affects the lungs and airways. Symptoms generally come on suddenly, and can include fever, chills, headache, cough, muscle aches and fatigue. For those with / who are name of risk group, influenza can be deadly.

"The best way to protect against catching flu is by having the flu vaccine each year. Make sure you don't put yourself at risk by missing this potentially life-saving opportunity. Influenza cannot be treated with antibiotics, so make sure you get your flu vaccine for your own best protection.

"The vaccination also helps prevent the spread of the virus, so getting vaccinated helps keep you and also those around safe. It's a win-win."

Every year influenza circulates, but each year thousands of people who are at risk of serious complications because of age, pregnancy or a health condition fail to protect themselves.

Health officials warn that even if you had the vaccine last year, it is very important to get it again this year. Immunity wanes and the influenza virus changes every year so you should have it again now for best protection this winter.

Please speak to your GP surgery or community pharmacist to arrange to have your influenza vaccination soon. You can also find out more by visiting www.beatflu.org or www.curwchffliw.org, or finding @beatflu or @curwchffliw.org on Twitter and Facebook.

Getting social

The Beat Flu campaign has English language Twitter and Facebook pages (@beatflu), as well as Welsh language Twitter and Facebook pages (@curwchffliw). We also have our own hashtags.

#beatflu #curwchffliw

Please tag us and use our hashtag in anything you share on social media so that your followers know where to find out more about the campaign. It also means we will then be notified about your post, so we can share it or engage with it too!

By following @beatflu or @curwchffliw you can keep up to date and share our content too. Don't forget on Twitter you can add your own comment before you retweet (RT) something, so you can remind your key audience why it is important for them in particular.

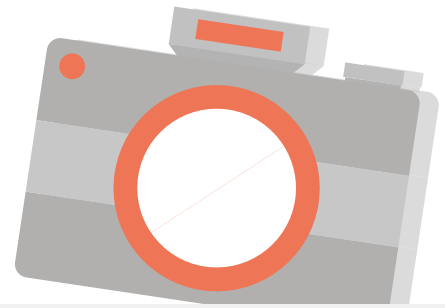
Don't forget to use handles and hashtags relevant to your audience to ensure you reach as many people as possible that need to know about influenza and the vaccination. Examples include #pregnant #stroke #ListentoYourLungs



Be visual

We've all heard the saying that a picture is worth a thousand words and social media is no different. Good quality images or videos can help enhance your tweets and really grab your audience's attention. That's why we've included a selection on the Beat Flu website for you to download. There are more available by getting in touch with one of the team.

Did you know that you can link up to 10 twitter handles (such as @beatflu) under each image you tweet? This may help you reach more people and organisations.



Be informative

Use your social media wisely. Keep messages short and simple but make sure they get the point across. Some key messages to focus on could include:

Influenza is very serious for those in risk groups. It can kill.

The single best way to protect yourself against influenza is with annual vaccination.

The influenza vaccination is available free for people in risk groups. Adults can get the influenza vaccination at their GP surgery or some community pharmacies.

The influenza vaccination protects you as well as others around you from the virus, so the more people who get vaccinated the less opportunity there is for it to spread.

We've written a few tweets below to get you started. Please amend to make them relevant to your audience and share information about influenza and the flu vaccination in any way that you think would resonate with your followers.

Some example tweets

General

- Did you know that people die from #influenza every year in Wales? If you have XXX you are more at risk so get your flu vaccine soon
- The #influenza #vaccine is free for those most at risk. Learn more at beatflu.org or ask your GP surgery or pharmacist
- It's not too late to get protected against #flu so speak to your GP surgery or pharmacy about having a flu vaccine soon #beatflu
- Eligible for a free flu vaccine? The annual flu vaccine is available from your GP surgery or community pharmacy – don't miss out!

Long term conditions

- #beatflu before it beats you. Get your annual influenza vaccine now if you have #diabetes and stay protected this year.
- If you have a long term chest condition like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) get a free #influenza vaccine soon! #beatflu
- If you have a heart condition, please remember to get an #influenza vaccine to protect your #health and help protect others too #beatflu
- Did you know that people who have had a stroke or a mini stroke should have an annual #influenza vaccine? Let's #beatflu

Carer

- If you are the main carer of someone who is vulnerable to flu get your free flu vaccine soon. It's the best way to prevent spreading flu #beatflu

Aged 65 or over

- If you are aged 65 or over don't miss out on getting protected from #influenza! Make an appointment at your GP surgery for your jab now

Parents and mums to be

- Mum to be? Protect yourself and your unborn #baby by having your free #influenza jab today #beatflu
- Did you know the #influenza vaccine for children is a nasal spray? So no scary needles for children to #beatflu this winter!
- Does your child have a long term health condition? Help protect them from #influenza with a nasal spray vaccine and #beatflu!





About influenza and Beat Flu

What is Beat Flu?

The Beat Flu campaign is the communications element of the national Public Health Wales influenza programme.

We want to make sure that as many people as possible know about the dangers of influenza, and the benefits of having the vaccine; especially those most at risk of being very ill if they catch influenza.

Annual flu vaccination is the single best way to protect against catching or spreading flu and that's why we want more eligible people to get an influenza vaccine each year in Wales.

Last year, around 47% of individuals under the age of 65 with a long term health condition, and 67% of people aged 65 or over had the vaccine. So lots of people in Wales are still missing out on this important protection.

Every year, people die as a result of catching influenza. We need support from organisations who deal closely with people in risk groups to make sure messages about the danger of influenza and the benefits of having the vaccine reaches them.

This year, our campaign is focusing on two core areas:

1. Influenza is serious

2. The best way to protect yourself and others is with annual vaccination



What is influenza?

Influenza is a viral illness that spreads quickly. It circulates every year and is more common in the winter. Symptoms vary for different people but they tend to start suddenly and can be severe - they usually include fever, chills, headaches, aching muscles, cough and sore throat. It is a serious illness and every year people die from influenza.

Some people catch influenza and it doesn't make them ill. However, they still carry the influenza virus, even though they don't develop the symptoms themselves, and they can still pass it on to others who may be vulnerable and suffer serious complications.

The vaccination not only reduces your chances of catching the virus, it also helps reduce the risk of passing it on to others.

How can people get their influenza vaccine?

- For adults the influenza vaccine is an injection and is available free for those eligible at their GP surgery or from many community pharmacies in Wales.
- Frontline health and social care workers should discuss how to get their influenza vaccine with their employer.
- For children aged two and over the vaccine is usually a nasal spray. Children aged two and three will generally get their vaccine at their GP surgery, and children in primary school, in reception class or school years 1, 2, 3 or 4, will be offered their nasal spray vaccine in school - parents or guardians will receive a letter asking for their consent. Children in a risk group not in these school year groups should have their influenza vaccine at their GP surgery.
- The influenza vaccine is usually available from early October, and ideally people should get it in the autumn before influenza starts spreading.
- Eligible people should get their influenza vaccination every year as immunity wanes and the viruses that circulate and cause illness change every year.



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