Patient Experience of the Community Pharmacy Flu Vaccination Service in Norfolk

An independent evaluation of patient experience

March 2014
About this report

This report sets out the findings of an independent evaluation by Healthwatch Norfolk of the community pharmacy flu vaccination service offered to eligible patients in Norfolk. The evaluation describes the experience of patients who chose this service for their flu vaccination and provides local evidence to help inform the future commissioning of this service by the NHS England East Anglia Local Area Team and the Anglia and Essex Centre for Public Health England.

Who this report is for

This report is intended for the NHS England East Anglia Local Area Team and the Anglia and Essex Centre for Public Health England, as the commissioners of community pharmacy services.

It will be also be of interest to:

- Residents, customers and patients who use community pharmacy services in Norfolk
- Norfolk Local Pharmaceutical Committee
- Norfolk’s pharmacists and community pharmacies and their staff
- Public Health Commissioners in the Norfolk County Council with responsibility for commissioning of local public health services in community pharmacies
- Norfolk Insight Team (local data observatory and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment)
- Norfolk’s five Clinical Commissioning Groups
- The Anglia Local Protection Team (Public Health England)
- Commissioners, service providers and charitable organisations with an interest in chronic respiratory disease
- The School of Pharmacy at the University of East Anglia
Executive Summary

This report sets out the findings of an independent evaluation of the community pharmacy flu vaccination service offered to patients in Norfolk. The evaluation describes the experience of patients who chose this service for their flu vaccination in order to provide patient feedback and local evidence to help inform the future commissioning of this service by the NHS England East Anglia Local Area Team.

Between September 2013 and January 2014, a flu vaccination service was offered by community pharmacies in Norfolk. During that time 1,103 patients registered with Norfolk GPs chose to have their flu vaccination administered by a pharmacist in the pharmacy premises. After receiving the vaccine patients were asked to stay in the pharmacy for a further five minutes for observation. During this period patients were asked if they would complete a patient experience survey. Each pharmacy offering the service was encouraged by the Norfolk Local Pharmaceutical Committee to collate and submit the surveys to Healthwatch Norfolk for processing and analysis. In total, 37 pharmacies returned 523 surveys. The evaluation is based upon 505 completed surveys and represents 45% of all Norfolk patients using this service.

The average age of a person getting a flu vaccination was 45 years. Four hundred and fourteen (414) patients had a long term condition, 56 were carers and 29 were pregnant. Exactly half of all patients indicated that they had a chronic respiratory disease and this was the reason for their vaccination.

Ninety seven percent (97%) of patients were very satisfied with the overall service they had received when getting their flu vaccination and 100% were happy to have their flu vaccination administered by a pharmacist. Ninety nine percent (99%) considered the pharmacy premises to be suitable for administering vaccinations and 100% would come to a pharmacy to receive flu vaccinations in future. Ninety six percent (96%) of patients would be happy for a pharmacist to administer other vaccinations in future. In total, 486 out of 505 (96%) patients responded ‘yes’ to all four questions about the quality of service received.

Three quarters had heard about the service on the premises either from the pharmacy staff or by a poster displayed in the pharmacy.

One hundred and eighty six (186) patients chose to leave additional feedback which was both strongly positive and appreciative. Included were comments on the ease and speed of the service, the convenience of the location and opening hours, the helpful, friendly and pleasant behaviour of pharmacy staff, being well informed and the injection itself being pain-free.

This evaluation shows that patients were extremely satisfied overall with the community pharmacy flu vaccination service. The high level of patient satisfaction coupled with the way that patients heard about the service suggests a sophisticated understanding of patients on the part of pharmacy staff leading to appropriate offers of service. The picture presented here is drawn from 45% of patients using this service and as such can be viewed as a very reliable representation of patient experience. The commissioners of the community pharmacy flu vaccination service in Norfolk can be assured that the patient experience of the service is extremely good indeed, that patients find the community pharmacy to be an appropriate setting and would be happy for the pharmacist to administer other vaccinations in future.
Introduction

Vaccination is an extremely effective means of protecting the health of the public against serious diseases and infections. Vaccination is when a person is given something to make their immune system learn to fight an infectious disease, in this case an injection of an influenza - or flu - vaccine. The community pharmacy flu vaccination service offers the option for eligible patients to get their seasonal flu vaccination free on the NHS in a community pharmacy.

The people who are eligible for this service are deemed to be at an increased risk of severe ill health or complications should they get flu. This includes people aged from 17 to 65 years with certain long term health conditions, such as chronic respiratory disease and diabetes, and pregnant women. In addition, people who are the main carer for someone who is elderly or disabled are also eligible since, should they become ill with flu, there would be a considerable impact upon the person they care for.

Many of these patients will be of working age; may be working some distance from their GP surgery; be highly mobile or be the main carer for young, elderly or disabled family members or friends. Community pharmacies can be found in convenient locations such as village centres, the high street or out of town retail parks. Many pharmacies are typically open six days a week and some seven days a week. Through providing a service in community pharmacy, eligible patients have greater choice and flexibility about where and when to get their flu vaccination.

Healthwatch Norfolk was invited to carry out an independent evaluation of the feedback from patients getting their flu vaccination in community pharmacies in Norfolk. This report is written for local people and the local organisations who commission and provide health services for the Norfolk population.

Collecting patient experience feedback

Once the pharmacist had administered the vaccine the patient was asked to stay in the pharmacy for a further five minutes. This was part of the service and meant that the patient could be observed and checked for any signs of a reaction to the vaccine. It is during this period that patients were asked to fill in a patient experience survey (please see Fig 1). Each pharmacy offering the service was encouraged by the Norfolk Local Pharmaceutical Committee to collate and submit the surveys to Healthwatch Norfolk for processing and analysis.

The information provided by patients was entered onto a simple, purposely designed database. The age of the patients, count of long term conditions and responses to questions 1 to 6 were calculated\(^1\). A rapid content analysis\(^2\) of additional comments was performed to identify common themes.

---

\(^1\) Using Microsoft Access and Excel software
\(^2\) Using NVIVO software
Results

Pharmacies and surveys
In total 37 pharmacies across Norfolk (see Fig 2) returned 523 patient experience surveys for analysis. Five hundred and five (505) surveys were of a standard format (see Fig 1). A further 18 surveys were of a different format and were therefore excluded from the analysis. The patient experience surveys included in the evaluation are representative of 45% of all patients receiving this service in a community pharmacy in Norfolk.

Fig 2 Communities pharmacies in Norfolk returning patient experience surveys to Healthwatch Norfolk

About the patients
The average age of eligible patients was 45 years. The largest numbers of people getting a vaccination and giving feedback were in the 45 - 54 years and the 55 - 65 years age groups. The numbers of patients in various age groups are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Aages of patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Number of patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 - 24</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 65</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Nine patients did not give their date of birth so their age could not be calculated.*

These surveys asked slightly different questions.
**Reason for having a flu vaccination**

Four hundred and fourteen (414) patients had the flu vaccination because they had one or more long term health conditions. Fifty six (56) patients were the main carer for someone else and one carer also had a long term condition themselves. Twenty nine patients had the flu vaccination because they were pregnant. Half of all Norfolk patients getting a flu vaccination in a community pharmacy were doing so because they had a chronic respiratory disease.

Six patients did not give a reason as to why they were getting a flu vaccination.

The reasons for getting a flu vaccination for all patients are shown in Fig 3.

**Fig 3 The reasons why 505 Norfolk patients got a flu vaccination**

![Pie chart showing the reasons why 505 Norfolk patients got a flu vaccination]

- Chronic heart disease
- Chronic respiratory disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic neurological disease
- Diabetes mellitus
- Immunosuppression
- Main carer
- Pregnant woman
- Unknown

**Carers**

Fifty six (56) out of 505 patients indicated that they were a main carer for someone else who was elderly or disabled. One carer of the 56 vaccinated also had a long term health condition themselves. The average age of a carer receiving a vaccination was 48 years (ages ranged from 20 - 65 years old).

**Pregnant women**

Twenty nine (29) out of 505 patients indicated that they were pregnant. The youngest pregnant woman getting a vaccination was 19 years and the oldest was 39 years.
People with long term health conditions

Some patients reported having more than one long term health condition:

- 391 patients had one long term condition
- 20 patients had two long term conditions
- 3 patients had three long term conditions

Chronic respiratory disease was the most common long term condition in patients getting a flu vaccination in Norfolk’s community pharmacies with just over 64% of all patients with a long term condition indicating that they had chronic respiratory disease. A further 18% of patients indicated that they had diabetes.

**Fig 4 Count of long term health conditions as reported by patients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Average age of patient (years)</th>
<th>Age range (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronic heart disease</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic respiratory disease</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic kidney disease</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic liver disease</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic neurological disease</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunosuppression</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25-65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality of the service

Patients were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of the service they had received on a four-point scale, from very satisfied to very unsatisfied. Ninety seven percent (97%) of patients were very satisfied with the quality of the service they had received (see Table 2).

Table 2 Patients’ rating of their satisfaction with the quality of service received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient satisfaction with quality of service</th>
<th>Number of patients</th>
<th>% of patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite satisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsatisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pharmacies, pharmacists and vaccinations

Patients were also asked about 4 different aspects of the community pharmacy flu vaccination service, by giving a simple yes or no answer. These aspects were:

- If they were happy were happy to have their flu vaccination administered by a pharmacist
- If they felt that the pharmacy premises were a suitable setting for administering vaccinations
- If they would be happy to come to a pharmacy to receive their flu vaccination in future
- If they would be happy for a pharmacist to administer other vaccinations in future

Table 3 shows the number and percentage of positive and negative responses from patients to these four questions.

Table 3 Patient feedback on pharmacists, pharmacies and vaccinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses of 624 patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q2. Were you happy to have your flu vaccination administered by a pharmacist today?</td>
<td>505 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. Do you feel that the pharmacy premises are a suitable place for administering vaccinations?</td>
<td>504 (99.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. Would you come to a pharmacy to receive a flu vaccination in future?</td>
<td>505 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5. Would you be happy for the pharmacist to give other vaccinations in future?</td>
<td>487 (96.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, 486 out of 505 (96%) patients responded ‘yes’ to all four questions.
Hearing about the service

Patients were asked about the way in which they had heard about the service and their responses are shown in Fig 5. One hundred and eighty six people (37%) had heard about the flu vaccination service from the pharmacy staff and 172 (34%) had seen a poster advertising the service in the pharmacy. Seventeen percent (17%) of people had heard about the service through word of mouth.

![Fig 5 How patients heard about the service](image)

Additional patient feedback

One hundred and eighty six (186) patients chose to leave additional feedback in the ‘any other comments’ space at the bottom of the patient experience survey.

A content analysis of these additional comments was performed to search for, identify and assemble themes\(^4\), using a simple four stage process.

A small number of patients gave further detail about their long term condition. Others mentioned that the pharmacy service suited them better than previous or existing arrangements for flu vaccinations at their GP surgery. The majority chose to provide an additional comment on elements of the service they were particularly satisfied with and some expressed their thanks.

The most frequently occurring themes produced from the content analysis are shown in Fig 6 [with the number of comments about that theme shown in brackets], along with some examples of the additional feedback patients gave about their experience of the service.

---

\(^4\) Content analysis is an approach to the analysis of texts that aims to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories (Bryman, 2012. Social Research Methods 4th Ed Oxford University Press). In this evaluation, the categories were based upon the aspects of the service about which patients were questioned, as well common topics observed in the feedback. Each additional patient comment was assigned (coded) to one or more categories.
"It makes a lot of sense to be able to receive vaccinations via the pharmacy, as I work in Norwich it saves me time to have it near where I work"

"Very handy to have it at the pharmacy"

"Glad the pharmacy are taking part in these"

"...could walk in anytime and only wait a few minutes"

"Professional and fast service"

"Quick, easy, painless"

"As someone who is not keen on injections, the vaccination was swiftly and painlessly administered"

"I never felt a thing, thank you very much"

"Excellent service - I work full time - hard to get to see GP & take time off work to go to GP clinics. Convenient and helpful"

"A lot easier for work commitments"

"Opening hours are more convenient!"

"Very convenient and easy to do"

"Very professional pharmacist"

"Excellent service - a very friendly pharmacist"

"Pharmacist made me feel very comfortable"

"Pharmacist advised me of all I needed to know. Very informative and helpful"

"Excellent service - efficiently did not feel injection. Thank you!"

"Thank you so much for a friendly and efficient service"

"Brilliant service and great customer service"

"Excellent service provided all round"
What the results say about patient experience

Between September 2013 and January 2014, the community pharmacy flu vaccination service was offered by community pharmacies to eligible patients in Norfolk aged 17 - 65 years. This evaluation explores the experience and satisfaction of 505 Norfolk patients when using this service.

The patient experience surveys tell us that the average age of a person getting a flu vaccination was 45 years. Five hundred and four patients had a long term condition, 56 were carers and 29 were pregnant women. Exactly half of all patients indicated that they had a chronic respiratory disease and this was the reason for their vaccination. This suggests that people of working age and a proportion of carers and pregnant women find the community pharmacy flu vaccination service an appropriate and useful option to get the flu vaccination they need to protect their health. It also suggests that pharmacists probably encounter larger numbers of patients with chronic respiratory disease, are particularly good at identifying eligible patients with chronic respiratory disease and making an appropriate offer of service.

Ninety seven percent (97%) of patients were very satisfied with the overall service they had received when getting their flu vaccination and every patient - 100% - was happy to have their flu vaccination administered by a pharmacist. Ninety nine percent (99%) considered the pharmacy premises to be suitable for administering vaccinations and every patient - 100% - would come to a pharmacy to receive flu vaccinations in future. Ninety six percent (96%) of patients would be happy for a pharmacist to administer other vaccinations in future.

Three quarters had heard about the service on the premises either from the pharmacy staff or by a poster displayed in the pharmacy. In total, 597 out of 624 (96%) patients responded ‘yes’ to all four questions about quality.

One hundred and eighty six (186) patients chose to leave additional feedback which was both strongly positive and appreciative. The feedback also reveals that the convenience of the community pharmacy flu vaccination service is highly rated by patients and a strong feature of the service offering of community pharmacies.

Fig 7 shows more detail on the concept of convenience and the context in which patients were using this word.
The ease, speed, convenience and professional and courteous nature of the service experience features strongly in the feedback, suggesting actual experience matched expectations of great customer service. Included were comments on; the ease and speed of the service; the convenience of the location and opening hours; the helpful, friendly and pleasant behaviour of pharmacy staff and the pharmacist; being well informed about the procedure and the injection itself being pain-free. The top 40 most frequently used words by patients when describing the services are shown in Fig 8.

![Fig 8 Words commonly used by patients](image)

The collective patient experience suggests that patients are happy to go to a community pharmacy for their flu vaccination in future and for the pharmacist to administer the vaccine. The additional feedback provides a further validation of the service being convenient for eligible patients who are working and those who value the option of flexible locations and opening hours.

This evaluation shows that patients were extremely satisfied overall with the community pharmacy flu vaccination service. The high level of patient satisfaction coupled with the way that patients heard about the service suggests a sophisticated understanding of patients on the part of pharmacy staff leading to appropriate offers of service.

The picture presented here is drawn from 45% of patients using this service and as such can be viewed as a reliable representation of patient experience. The commissioners of the community pharmacy flu vaccination service for the population of Norfolk can be assured that the patient experience of the service is extremely good indeed, that patients find the community pharmacy to be an appropriate setting and would be happy for the pharmacist to administer other vaccinations in future.

Healthwatch Norfolk March 2014
Tel: 01603 813904
Email: enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk