



MEDIA RELEASE

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More than 55,000 local children vaccinated against flu



The Community Immunisations Service from Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) has worked harder than ever in recent months to stop the flu virus in its tracks, administering the nasal flu vaccination to more than 55,000 primary school children across

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, including offering it in school to Reception age pupils for the first time.

Between October and the end of December 2017 (with the exception of four schools whose sessions had to be rearranged for the start of January due to adverse weather conditions), the free nasal flu vaccination was offered to 89,821 healthy and 'at risk' children (for example those with an underlying long term condition such as asthma, or a weakened immune system) across 361 schools and units in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. 55,817 children went on to have the vaccination. On

average, during the eight week vaccination programme, our dedicated team of specialist immunisation nurses and health care support workers were vaccinating an



impressive 1,195 primary school children each day.

The team was supported by a dedicated administrative team.

This year, the vaccine was also made available in school for children in Reception class.

Previously,

Reception age children had to go to their GP surgery in order to receive the vaccination, and the very positive 73 per cent uptake amongst this age group reflects the fact that it is a more convenient option for families.

In addition, for the third year running, LPT worked with selected local pharmacies to provide a second opportunity for children who had missed the chance to receive the vaccination in school, for example through absence or because they were too unwell on the day. This option was also made available to home-schooled children. The model has proved very popular with parents as it offers a choice of convenient locations and times. More than 850 children were vaccinated as a result of the 'second opportunity' option, compared to 550 during last year's nasal flu vaccination programme.

Suzanne Leatherland, children's immunisations lead, said: "I'm delighted that this year's nasal flu vaccination programme has been such a success, and that we were able to include the youngest primary school pupils for the first time. On behalf of the team, I'd like to extend our thanks to the schools who worked closely with us, enabling us to protect a larger population of children from the flu, and to provide

reassurance for parents at a time when nationally the spread of flu has been a significant concern.”

Flu is a highly contagious illness that spreads rapidly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are carrying the virus. Immunising all primary school children not only helps to stop the virus spreading through the school population, but also protects friends and family members who may be more vulnerable to its effects. Children can learn more about the flu vaccine by visiting our Health for Kids website (www.healthforkids.co.uk).

Suzanne and the Community Immunisations Team would like to hear from parents or carers about their family’s experiences of the nasal flu programme, and from parents who chose not to have their child vaccinated. Feedback comments can be sent to communityimms@leicspart.nhs.uk

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk. Our registered charity is called Raising Health (charity number 1057361). The charity fundraises to support excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff. See www.raisinghealth.org.uk
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