

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Flu vaccination programme gets underway in primary schools

Thousands of primary school children across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are set to be protected once again from the flu, as the Community Immunisations team from Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) begins its annual nasal flu vaccination programme on Monday 9 October. And, from this year, the vaccine will be offered to children in the Reception year as well as to those in years one to six.



Last year, the opportunity to have the free nasal spray vaccination was open to 78,569 school children in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, leading to 47,491 children being vaccinated across 375 schools. The dedicated team of specialist immunisation nurses were vaccinating on average 1,055 children

each day during the ten week period of the programme.

Suzanne Leatherland, immunisation service manager for LPT, said: "Once again we have an amazing team of over 100 staff who are preparing to deliver the nasal flu vaccination in partnership with schools. Information packs have already been sent out with the dates for the immunisation sessions.

“Alongside the consent form, parents are provided with an information leaflet about the nasal flu vaccination. Our Health for Kids website ([www.healthforkids.co.uk](http://www.healthforkids.co.uk)) offers a child-friendly version of this information, which parents can share with their children, as well as a link to the [Flu Heroes film](#). Those children who are home educated or not enrolled at school will be invited to an alternative community venue.”

Last year, 98.5 per cent of parents surveyed told us they felt that had received enough information to make an informed choice about their child having the vaccine, with 99.2 per cent saying they found the consent form easy to complete.

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 in years one to six will help not only to stop the spread of the virus through the school, but to protect other friends and family members, including younger siblings.

The Fluenz Tetra vaccine is a simple, painless nasal spray that protects children against many strains of the flu virus. It was introduced in the UK in 2013-14 as a way of protecting healthy two and three year olds against the virus. The success of that programme has led to national implementation for primary school children.

Previously children in the Reception year were offered the vaccination through their GP. Uptake for this age group was relatively low, so this year for the first time, they will be able to have the vaccination in school. That means a further 12,500 children will be offered the vaccine via the schools immunisation programme.

Dr Tim Davies, public health consultant for NHS England said: “Flu can be a very unpleasant illness in children The flu vaccine is the best protection that is available against this unpredictable virus Flu infects many people and each year can cause severe illness especially in the young and those with pre-existing medical conditions.”

For more information visit: <http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/OurServicesAZ-CommunityImmunisationService.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/child-flu-vaccine.aspx>

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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](http://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](http://www.raisinghealth.org.uk)

- **Photo/filming opportunity:** Our Community Immunisations Team will be vaccinating pupils at Bishop Ellis Catholic Primary School (Barkby Thorpe Lane, Thurmaston, Leicester, LE4 8GP) during the morning of **Tuesday 10 October**. If you would like to use this opportunity for photo/film coverage, please contact Rosie Huckle Communications Manager for Families, Young People and Children's Services, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Tel: 0116 295 0802, Email: [rosie.huckle@leicspart.nhs.uk](mailto:rosie.huckle@leicspart.nhs.uk)