



To: London CCG Chief Operating Officers
London CCG Influenza leads
London CCG Medicines Management leads

Friday 31st May 2019

Dear colleagues,

Clarification over contracting arrangements for post-exposure prophylaxis with anti-viral drugs for influenza-like illness (ILI) in London

We write with reference to the letter (attached) from David Geddes, NHS England Head of Primary Care Commissioning in November 2017, which you will have previously received. As outlined in that letter, Public Health England Centre Health Protection Teams (in this case, PHE London HPTs) routinely receive reports of ILI outbreaks, and may recommend the use of antiviral medications (oseltamivir or zanamivir) for exposed people in at risk groups based on their risk assessment, in line with NICE technology appraisal guidance (TA158).

The purpose of this letter is to remind you of your responsibilities to ensure that services are commissioned locally to respond to alerts from PHE London HPTs of any localised ILI outbreaks in community settings. This should include arrangements for the appropriate clinical assessment of patients and timely prescribing and supply of antivirals both in and out of normal working hours, throughout the year. NB: at the point at which the Chief Medical Officer confirms that levels of circulating influenza have risen to the point that the “flu season” is declared, antivirals can be prescribed in primary care using an FP10.

Previous arrangements in London whereby antivirals could be accessed via NHS IMMS01 to support the management of community outbreaks have now been withdrawn. In addition, while PHE London HPTs have access to a limited supply of antivirals, this is reserved for the local response to pandemic and avian influenza and should not be relied on for the management of seasonal ILI outbreaks in the community. In limited exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the HPT outbreak control lead, these antivirals may be accessed to support the management of the local ILI outbreak in the pre-influenza season (i.e.: before the CMO alert is issued) but only if antivirals cannot be accessed and issued in a timely way via the agreed CCG commissioning arrangements. Any PHE held stocks used for this purpose must be reimbursed by the CCG as soon as the outbreak is declared over.



A range of options exists for how “out of influenza season” antivirals can be commissioned:

- A local enhanced service delivered by some or all GP practices,
- Out of hours or Urgent Care providers
- A local pharmacy to hold antiviral stock outside the main Influenza season.

We would be grateful if local CCG commissioning arrangements for Out of Influenza - Antivirals could be actioned with some urgency and advise your local PHE London HPT regarding the appropriate commissioning arrangements are in place in your area by Monday 29th July 2019.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Turbitt

Deborah Turbitt
PHE London Deputy Director for Health Protection



Catherine Heffernan
Principal Advisor for Commissioning Early Years, Immunisations and Vaccination Services,
PHE London/NHS London

