

To: Ambulance staff

NHS England and NHS Improvement  
Skipton House  
80 London Road  
London  
SE1 6LH

**22 December 2021**

Dear Colleague,

**Protect yourself, your colleagues and your patients from flu and COVID-19 this winter**

Thank you to colleagues across the service for working incredibly hard to deal with current pressures. The months ahead look unpredictable, and the arrival of the Omicron variant presents new and significant challenges. That's why we are urging you to take up the flu vaccine and COVID-19 booster as soon as possible, if you have not already done so.

Latest data suggests Omicron is extremely transmissible and cases are doubling every two to three days. Studies also suggest that vaccine protection against symptomatic infection from the variant is reduced, but a third dose boosts protection back up to over 70%.

Experts have also warned there is potential for a significant flu surge this year. It's a highly infectious disease and symptoms can come on very quickly.

Both flu and COVID-19 can easily be passed on without knowing. Research has shown that if you get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, you're more likely to be seriously ill. Every single day, we care for people who may be at greater risk from these viruses – it is our duty to do everything we can protect to them and continue to deliver our life-saving services.

We must take this important step to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our patients this winter.

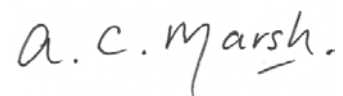
**How and when to get your vaccines**

The flu vaccine is available now and you should get it as soon as possible. Your employer will provide you with information on how and where you can access this.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended that COVID-19 booster vaccinations should be given at least three months after a second dose.

Your employer will provide you with information on how you can most easily access the vaccination.

Yours sincerely



Professor Anthony Marsh  
National Strategic Ambulance Advisor  
NHS England and NHS Improvement



Professor Stephen Powis  
National Medical Director  
NHS England and NHS Improvement