

Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) immunisation training and assessment of competence

All Wales guidance statements

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1 Introduction

The aim of these guidance statements is primarily, to ensure patient safety, support effective workforce utilisation and enable efficient service delivery from an All-Wales approach.

The guidance statements have been developed in line with the National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Vaccination Training - GOV.UK ¹ and reflect the collaborative recommendations of the All-Wales Immunisation Task & Finish Group and the Leads group for Primary & Community Care for HCSW Development Group and has been **reviewed by** Vaccine Programme Wales workforce and training group for approval and as governance for Wales.

2 Definitions

For this guidance the HCSW role is defined as

Nursing support workers who are collaborative members of nursing and multidisciplinary teams, providing person-centred nursing care across health, social care and education settings. While they are responsible for their own actions, all nursing care they deliver is delegated and supervised by a registered nurse. Their role supports and assists registered nurses in delivering safe and effective care for individuals and populations².

Addendum – Although this definition is for a Nursing HCSW – we acknowledge that HCSWs are supervised and assessed by other registered health professionals in other settings.

3 Guidance

It is recommended in the National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Vaccination Training that HCSWs undertaking the role of immuniser should have achieved education and training to Level Three of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) or equivalent (The credit and qualification framework for Wales³) and that they would be working at Level Three or above of the NHS Career Framework. This is the equivalent framework in Wales: A Strategic Framework for NHS Wales Careers – Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)⁴

Further guidance on meeting these recommendations should be sought through the Health Board local Immunisation & Vaccination teams or appropriate teams within health, social and education settings.

The guidance is dependent upon safe delegation of the role of immuniser to a HCSW by a Registered Health Professional (RHP) and adherence to the following professional standards:

- ❖ **The Registered Health Professional (RHP)** is responsible for ensuring that any HCSW delegated to undertake training for the administration of immunisations and vaccinations must have 2 years' experience that includes direct patient facing roles that encompass clinical interaction with patients and health care staff (as agreed at the All-Wales Primary Care HCSW Leads meeting to provide clarity on the timeframe). The HCSW undertaking the immuniser role must have the appropriate competence, experience, and exposure to clinical settings that prepare them and support them prior to commencing the immuniser role.
- ❖ **The RHP** delegating the task must themselves be experienced and competent in immunisation and have completed their annual immunisation and vaccination update training.
- ❖ **The RHP** responsible for supervising the training and assessing the competence of the HCSW, is accountable for ensuring that the HCSW has the required prior clinical experience and has completed all mandatory training before starting the immunisation and vaccination training.

Compulsory training and assessment of competence

It is **not** compulsory for the HCSW to gain academic credit for the programme **but**, in order to ensure the HCSW has the level of knowledge, understanding and skill to underpin safe practice, all elements of the programme must be assessed in their area of clinical practice.

Mandatory training

The mandatory training recommended prior to commencing immunisation and vaccination training can be accessed via [ESR](#) or Learning@wales and includes

- * Information Governance
- * Record Keeping
- * Basic Life support annual assessment (adult and / or Paediatrics based on role)
- * Anaphylaxis
- * Safeguarding adults and / or children (appropriate to role and local requirements)
- * Infection Prevention Control level 2
- * ANTT – Aseptic Non-Touch Technique

Immunisation & vaccination training

The National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Vaccination Training - GOV.UK¹ describe Core areas of Vaccination knowledge.

All staff involved in vaccination should be able to demonstrate current, evidence-based and best practice-based knowledge and understanding of the areas listed in Table Two. Trainers should ensure that the content and mode of delivery of each session enables the participant to meet the learning objectives specified for each core topic.

| Core areas of vaccination knowledge | |
|--|---|
| Applicable to all Staff | |
| 1. The aims of vaccination, national vaccine policy and schedules | 7. Legal issues as applied to vaccination: consent and legal mechanisms to supply and administer vaccines |
| 2. The immune response to vaccines and how vaccines work | 8. Storage and handling of vaccines |
| 3. Vaccine preventable diseases | 9. Correct administration of vaccines |
| 4. The different types of vaccines, their composition and their indications and contraindications | 10. Anaphylaxis, basic life support and adverse reactions |
| 5. Current issues in vaccination | 11. Documentation, record keeping and reporting |
| 6. Communicating with patients, parents and carers about vaccines | 12. Strategies for optimising vaccination uptake |
| The core topics listed above are relevant to all vaccinators in any setting where vaccines are given and should therefore be covered in all vaccination training. | |

The Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme (VPDP) in Public Health Wales (PHW), support national vaccination training by producing national training materials and eLearning modules, these can be viewed here: [Immunisation training resources and events - Public Health Wales](#)

The table below highlights the modules that available on [Y Ty Dysgu](#) ,and [Learning@Wales](#)

| Unit | Title | Frequency |
|--|---|---|
| Unit 1 Mandatory | The role of the immuniser | Once |
| Unit 2 Mandatory | Immunisations and how they work | Once |
| <u>Depending on service delivery will depend on which units are undertaken</u> | | |
| Unit 3 or Unit 4 | Immunising adults and children against influenza | <u>Once</u> |
| PHW eLearning module | Immunising adults against influenza | <u>Once</u> |
| PHW eLearning module | 'Flu Vaccine information for health and social care staff in Wales', previously known as 'FluOne' | <u>(every 3 years)</u> |
| PHW eLearning module | 'Flu Clinical update for Wales', previously known as 'FluTwo' | <u>(annually) this can be a taught session and/or eLearning</u> |
| Unit 5 | Immunising against Pneumococcal Pneumonia | Once |
| Unit 6 | Immunising against Herpes Zoster (Shingles) | Once |
| In addition, depending on role and local requirements | COVID-19 modules on ESR and learning@wales | Prior to each COVID-19 campaign |

Keeping up to date should be a continuous process. However, it is **recommended** that, as a **minimum**, vaccinators should attend (in person or virtually) an annual update which covers the recommended areas listed in table three of the National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Vaccination Training - GOV.UK¹

Assessment of competence

The assessment of competence, for each of the units of learning detailed above, must encompass provision of evidence of completion of the immunisation and vaccination training units, clinically based discussion focussing on clinical issues

and risk management and direct observation of clinical practice. The National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Vaccination Training have a 'Vaccinator competency assessment tool workbook' in appendix A of the document, this workbook can be downloaded and printed out to complete the vaccinator assessment offline. It must be used in conjunction with the national minimum standards and core curriculum for immunisation training¹.

The use of a checklist has also been suggested as a supportive tool to provides assurance that attendance on the Immunisation Training is suitable for learners' current role this can be viewed in Appendix 1.

The assessments **must** be undertaken by Registered Health Professionals who are experienced immunisers and up to date with their vaccination training. Completion of the assessments must be documented and include confirmation that the level of competence required has been demonstrated.

Assessment requirements – Direct observation of practice

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Flu Injection | Administration of a minimum of 10 injections or more until such time that both the learner and the assessor feel that the learner is both competent and confident in the administration |
| Intranasal Flu | Administration of a minimum of 10 injections or more until such time that both the learner and the assessor feel that the learner is both competent and confident in the administration |
| Pneumococcal | Administration of a minimum of 10 injections or more until such time that both the learner and the assessor feel that the learner is both competent and confident in the administration |
| Shingles | Administration of a minimum of 10 injections or more until such time that both the learner and the assessor feel that the learner is both competent and confident in the administration |

Delegated practice

Statement in the UKHSA National Minimum Standards for immunisation training¹: *"delegation of vaccination must be both appropriate and in the best interests of the provider organisation and, most importantly, of the patient. Each profession has its own standards or code of conduct which provide information on delegation responsibilities and RHCPs who delegate roles in vaccination should follow these"*.

HCSWs can administer specific (**flu, intranasal flu, Pneumococcal, shingles, COVID-19 vaccination**) immunisations and vaccinations under the delegation of a Registered Health Professional who is ultimately accountable for the governance of safe practice arrangements.

HCSWs are accountable for their practice as specified in the Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers in Wales⁵

For safe delegation of practice all the following criteria must be met:

1. The HCSW has completed the required training and assessment of competence for the administration of immunisations and vaccinations and there is a locally held record of this.
2. There is a fully completed Patient Specific Directive (PSD), in place detailing every patient for every immunisation or vaccination to be administered by a named HCSW. HCSWs cannot be delegated practice from a Patient Group Directive (PGD). National Protocols are currently in place to enable HCSW to administer COVID-19 and Flu Vaccines.
3. There is a Registered Health Professional within the clinical environment available to provide advice, guidance and in the event of an emergency provide assessment and required intervention.
4. The HCSW has access to appropriate record keeping facilities and access to the local Record Keeping policy.

The HCSW must have attended the required annual update training for the administration of immunisations and vaccinations.

4 Supporting information

Delegation guidelines:

- [All Wales Delegation Guidelines - HEIW](#)
- [Accountability and delegation guide | Royal College of Nursing](#)
- [Delegation-and-accountability-supplementary-information-to-the-nmc-Nursing Midwifery Council](#)

5 Appendix 1

Training Information checklist

Required for booking onto the Agored Level 3 Administering immunisations and injection giving session. The following information provides assurance that attendance on the Immunisation Training is suitable for learner's current role.

Please complete the following details:

| | Question | Response/ Comments |
|----|---|---|
| | Name | |
| | Practice or service | |
| | | |
| 1. | How long have you worked in a patient facing role? Dates - | |
| 2. | How many hours a week do you work? | |
| 3. | What skills/ activities are you currently undertaking in your practice or service? | |
| 4. | Which vaccine/ injection are you hoping to study (please tick all that apply)? Flu /Nasal flu/ Pneumococcal / Shingles / B12 | <input type="radio"/> Flu <input type="radio"/> Nasal flu <input type="radio"/> Pneumococcal <input type="radio"/> Shingles <input type="radio"/> B12 |
| 5. | Do you have a named nurse supervisor to support your learning? | |
| 6. | If yes, please provide their name and role | |
| 7. | Is the practice supporting this unit and understand the need for annual update learning? | |
| 8. | Are you receiving any protected learning time to complete this unit? | |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 9. | <p>Which mandatory training have you completed in preparation for the 1st day (please tick all that apply)?</p> <p>Information Governance / Record Keeping / Basic Life support annual assessment / Anaphylaxis / Safeguarding adults and / or children (appropriate to role and local requirements) / Infection Prevention Control / ANTT</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Information Governance <input type="radio"/> Record Keeping <input type="radio"/> Basic Life support annual assessment <input type="radio"/> Basic Life support paediatrics <input type="radio"/> Anaphylaxis <input type="radio"/> Safeguarding adults <input type="radio"/> Safeguarding children <input type="radio"/> Infection Prevention Control level 2 <input type="radio"/> ANTT |
| 10. | <p>If not, when will you complete by?</p> <p><i>(Please also notify the PC Academy or your education provider of this- otherwise you may not be accepted onto the course)</i></p> | |
| 11. | <p>Do you hold any current academic qualifications / Agored units? If yes, please provide</p> | |
| 12. | <p>Any other comments?</p> | |

Please return to: *{Insert email address here}*

Based on the responses provided your assessor will make an informed decision on your eligibility to undertake immunisation training and respond in due course.

6 References

Reference list

1. [National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Vaccination Training - GOV.UK](#) UKHSA 2025
2. The role of the HCSW definition. [Royal College of Nursing 2024](#)
3. The credit and qualification framework for Wales: [CQFW Fan Diagram 2023 ENG.PDF](#)
4. [A Strategic Framework for NHS Wales Careers – Health Education and Improvement Wales \(HEIW\) 2024 - heiw.nhs.wales/files/a-strategic-framework-for-nhs-wales-careers/](#)
5. [Appendix A: Vaccinator competency assessment tool workbook](#) within the [National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Vaccination Training - GOV.UK](#) 2025
6. Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers in Wales - [e2871 NLIAH NHS HSW Booklet](#) – Welsh Assembly Government