

Additional notes:

Flu viruses can change from one winter to the next, so flu vaccines are updated ahead of each winter to give protection against the strains of flu that are most likely to be circulating. The World Health Organization (WHO) monitors the epidemiology of influenza viruses throughout the world, and each year based on this data makes recommendations about the virus strains to be included in vaccines for the forthcoming winter for the northern and southern hemispheres (<https://www.who.int/teams/global-influenza-programme/vaccines/who-recommendations>). As the WHO needs to have reviewed the most up to date global surveillance data (in order to make the most informed recommendation about which viruses should be used in the upcoming seasons vaccines), the Northern hemisphere announcement cannot be made until the end of February. This is so as much surveillance data as possible from the previous winter can be considered. Influenza vaccines are therefore prepared in line with the WHO recommendation, with manufacturers and regulators work at pace between the WHO announcement (at the end of February) and the autumn, to ensure that vaccines are available for the upcoming season.

If you have any queries regarding the information above please contact the London Region Flu/Covid team directly at: England.london-covid19voc@nhs.net