

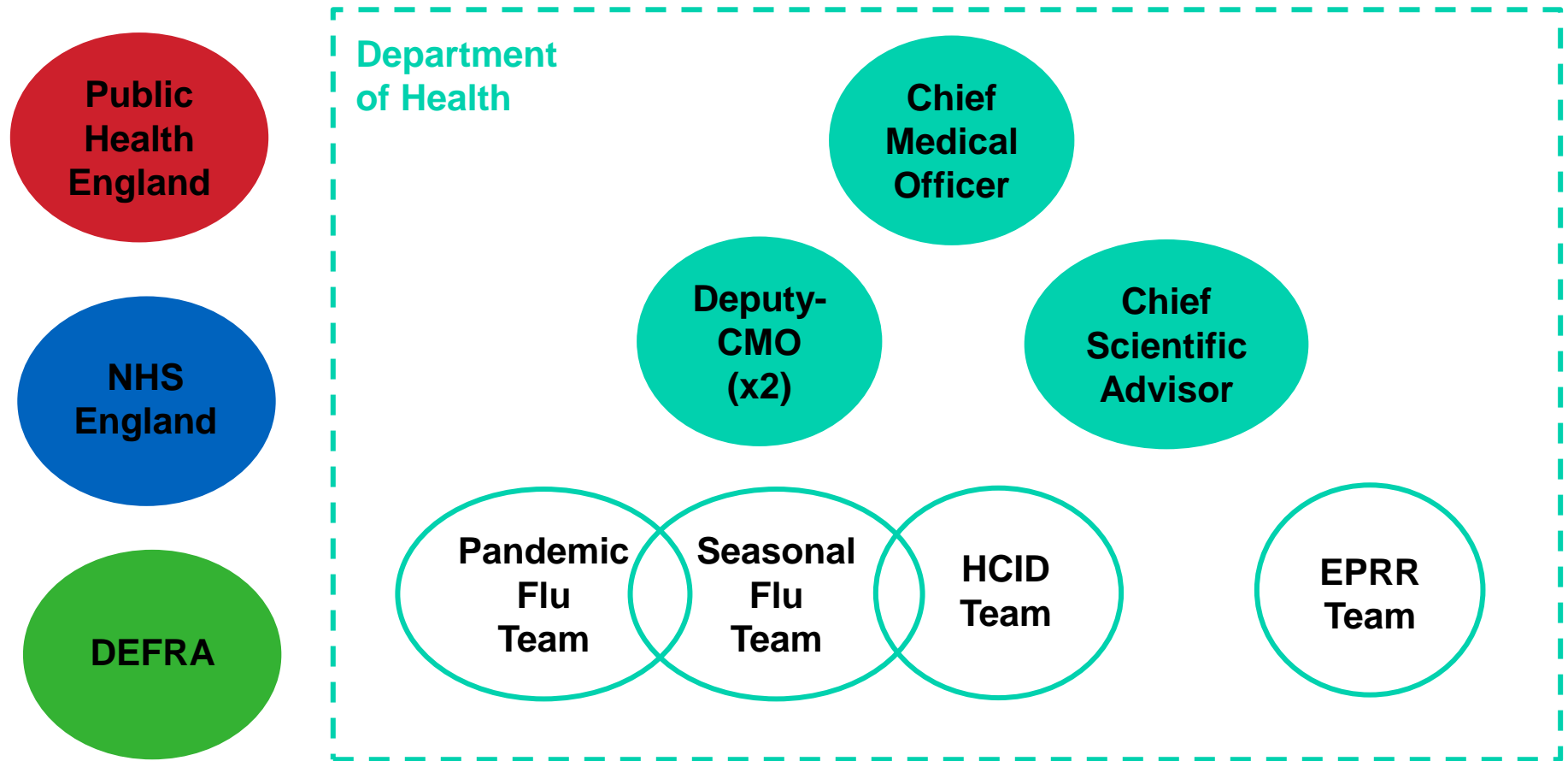


Department  
of Health

# The United Kingdom's approach to pandemic and inter-pandemic influenza preparedness and response

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# Structures for surveillance, planning and response to flu in England facilitates close working between teams



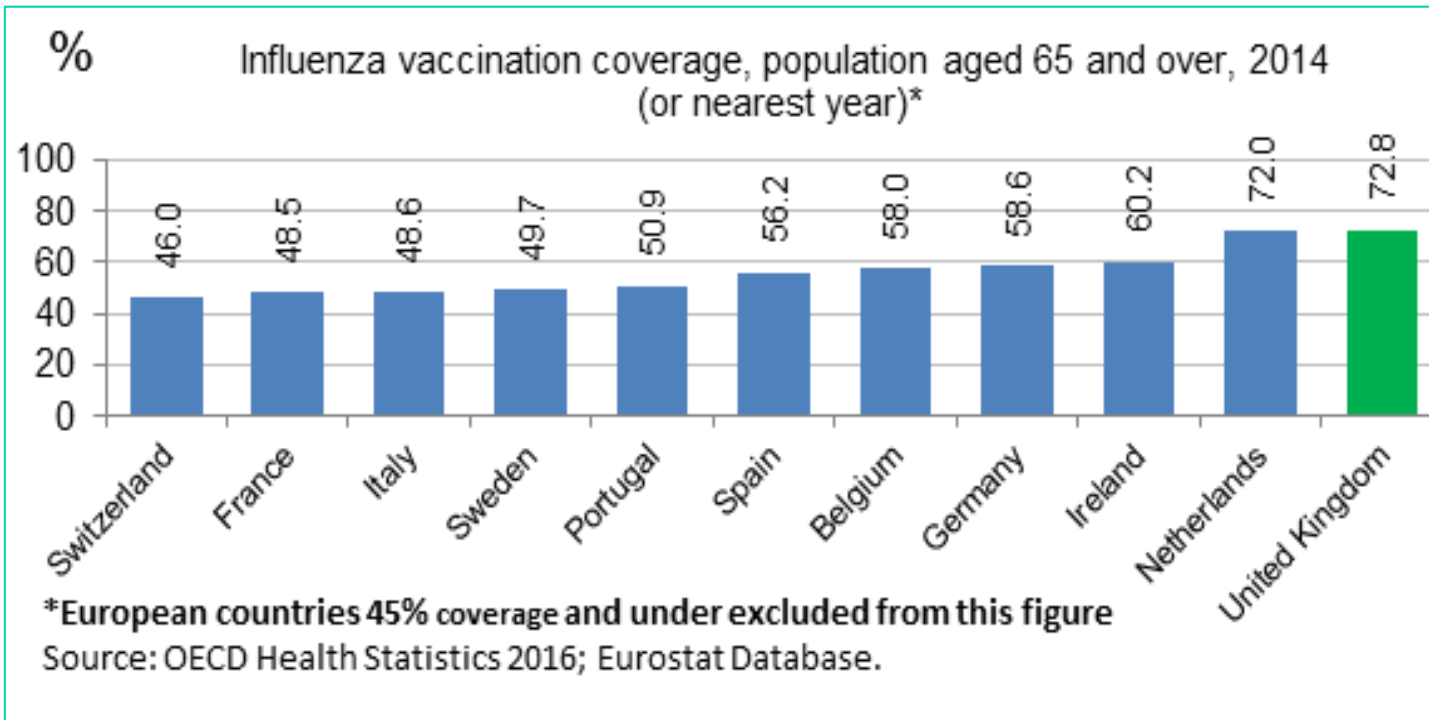
Teams in England also work with their counterparts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure a UK-wide approach.

# The National Flu Immunisation programme

The vaccine is offered to:

- Children aged 2 to 8 (LAIV nasal spray);
- Adults aged 65 and over;
- 'At risk' groups under 65;
- Pregnant women; and
- Healthcare workers.

**In 2017/18 21 million people in England are eligible for a free vaccine**



**We have one of the highest vaccination uptake rates in Europe for people aged 65 and over**

# National Childhood Flu Immunisation programme

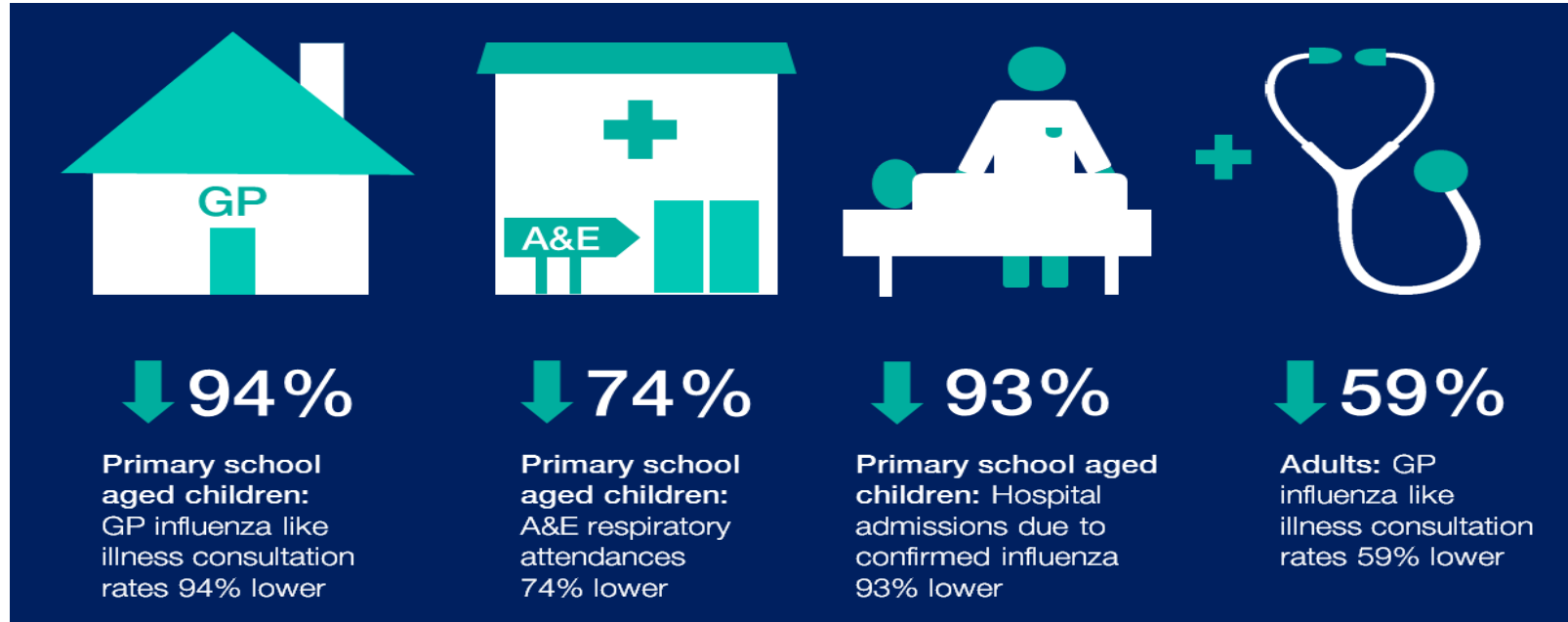
In 2012, the Government accepted an independent recommendation by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to vaccinate children against flu.

## **How does the programme work?**

- First year was 2013, starting with the youngest cohort (2 and 3 years).
- Additional cohorts are added to the programme each year - from 2017/18 children aged 8 are also being offered the vaccine. By end of current roll out the programme will cover all children aged 2-11 years (covers all primary school aged children).
- Live attenuated influenza vaccine - LAIV (nasal spray) is offered to all children including those in at-risk groups who were previously offered the inactivated vaccine (injection).
- Children aged 2 and 3 are offered vaccination at their GP surgery and primary school aged children at their school.

# National Childhood Flu Immunisation programme – is it working?

Pilot programme across seven areas in England found:



Across England:

- Vaccine efficacy of the nasal spray vaccine (LAIV) was **65.8%** for children in 2016/17
- Programme is highly cost effective - JCVI review the evidence annually.
- School setting shown to provide higher uptake rates (55.4% across all school years in 2016/17)

# Communications

## Those 'at risk'

- **'Stay Well This Winter'** is an integrated multichannel campaign, involving advertising, partnerships, PR, social media, and specific Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and disability groups' communications.
- It engages some of the society's **most vulnerable people** to help them take better care of their health in winter and avoid being admitted to hospital.
- It also reaches out to pregnant women, parents of small children and people with long-term health conditions with **flu vaccination related advice**.

## Health and social care workers

- **63.2% of frontline healthcare workers** had the flu vaccination in 2016/17 with some Trusts achieving over 90% - this was **our highest uptake in England** since the programme started in 2002/03.
- High uptake linked to sharing good practice and **incentive target payment** (available this year and next year).
- DH funds the **'flu fighter'** communication and engagement campaign for staff delivering health and social care – this year extended for more social care engagement.

# The Threat of Pandemic Influenza

Impact	5 (catastrophic)		Biological and nuclear terror attacks		Pandemic influenza	
	4 (significant)				Marauding firearms attack	
	3 (moderate)				Emerging infectious diseases	
	2 (minor)					
	1 (limited)					
		1 (low)	2 (med. low)	3 (med.)	4 (med. high)	5 (high)
		Likelihood/plausibility				

**National Risk Register:** the likelihood over the next five years plus the impact people will feel if it does.

**‘Reasonable worst case’:** the most severe event that expert advice indicates could reasonably be expected to occur. This is then used for our planning assumptions.

For example:

- Up to 50% of the population potentially being infected
- 4% of **those who are symptomatic** requiring hospital admission
- Staff absenteeism rates of up to 15-20% **during the peak week**
- Up to 2.5% of those with symptoms could die as a result of the pandemic

# Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

**The UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy** was published in 2011. It aims to minimise the health impact and the potential economic and societal impact and instil and maintain trust and confidence in the Government response to a future influenza pandemic.

## Preparations for a pandemic include:

- **Surveillance** – animals (DEFRA) and humans
- **Sampling and assessment** systems
- Stockpiled **clinical countermeasures**, including antivirals
- An **Advance Purchase Agreement** for a Pandemic Specific Vaccine
- **Infection control plans**
- The **National Pandemic Flu Service**
- **Public messaging** and advice

## CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.



## BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.



## KILL IT

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.



# Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

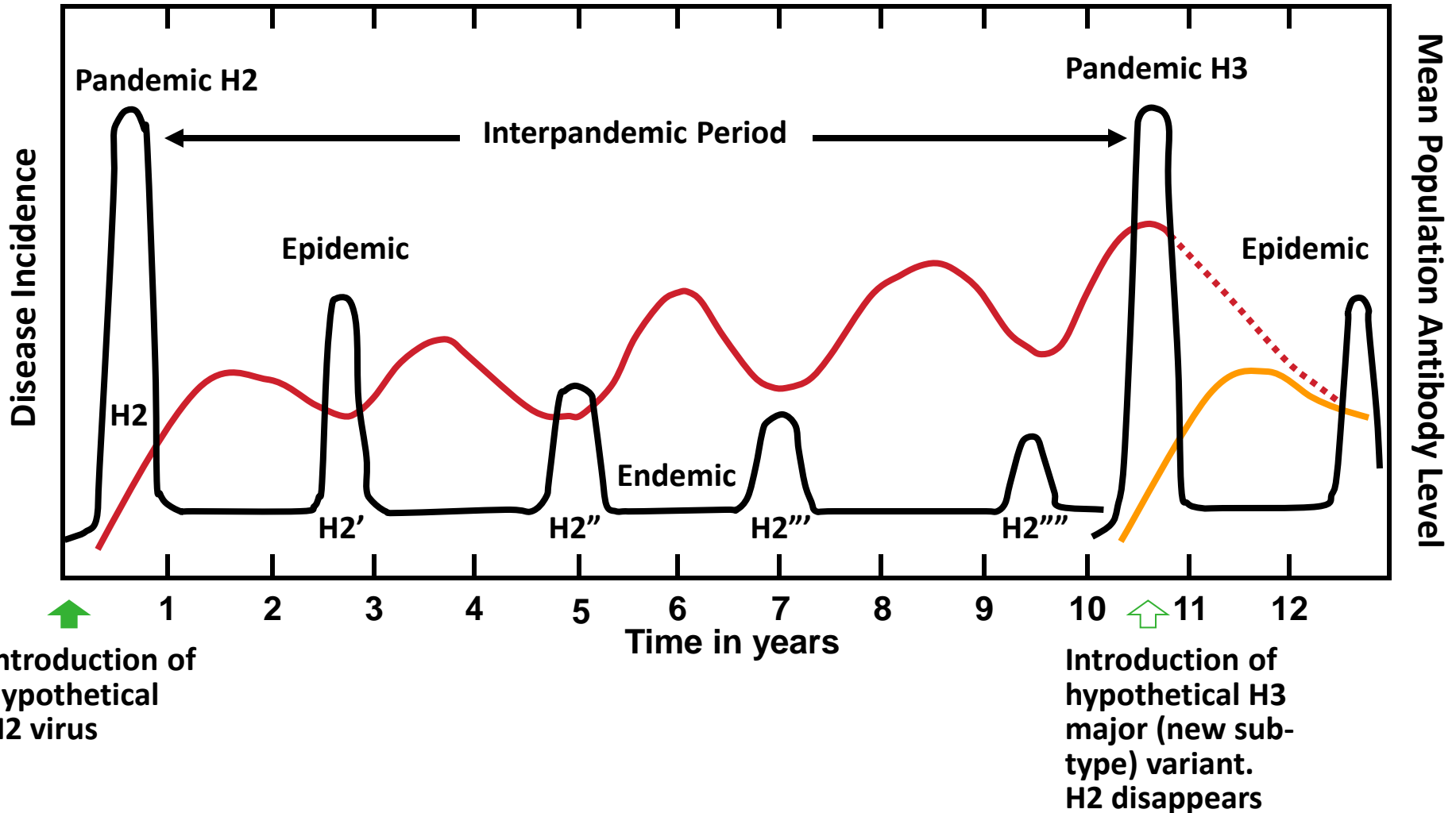
## National Pandemic Flu Exercise

- National level exercise carried out in October 2016
- The aim of the exercise was to **assess the UK's preparedness and response** to a pandemic influenza that was **close to the UK's reasonable worst case planning scenario**.
- This exercise was set in week seven of the UK's response to an influenza pandemic. At this point in the scenario vaccine had been ordered but was not yet available. The exercise encouraged participants to examine what their response and capacity would be at the peak of the pandemic.
- **Over 950 representatives** from the Department of Health and 12 other government departments, NHS England, Public Health England, the Devolved Administrations, NHS Wales, eight Local Resilience Forums and six prisons took part in the Exercise.
- Evaluation of the exercise highlighted the **strengths of existing plans** and UK command and control emergency response structures, as well as identifying areas where resilience could be further enhanced. Learning from exercise has informed cross government work programme.

# Wider synergies with animal health

- The Department of Health and Public Health England (PHE) coordinate with the **Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)** and the **Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)** who have responsibility for animal health, including avian and swine flu.
- APHA undertake the **surveillance, reporting and response to avian flu** both in livestock and captive birds, and wild birds too. If disease is confirmed, DEFRA will report and incident and control measures will be instigated.
- Local PHE **health protection teams** would then lead public health response to poultry outbreaks and/or detections in wild bird, working closely with local government and NHS services. Exposed individuals will be offered health advice, and based on a risk assessment, may be offered antiviral prophylaxis and are subject to follow-up for up to ten days following their last exposure.

- Incidence of clinically manifest influenza
- Mean level of population antibody vs H2 virus
- Mean level of population antibody vs H3 virus





# National Pandemic Flu Service (NPFS)

- The National Pandemic Flu Service (NPFS) is a self-care service with online and phone access managed operationally by Public Health England which can be activated during a flu pandemic.
- It reduces pressure on primary care services by allowing members of the public to check their symptoms online or over the phone, access antiviral medicines if required, or receive advice on symptom-relief. It also reduces the risk of infectious people spreading the disease to others.
- People are encouraged to nominate a “flu friend” who can pick up antivirals from the local collection point on their behalf if deemed necessary.
- The NPFS uses a series of questions developed by the Department of Health and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP). It will be reviewed and revised as appropriate as the flu pandemic progresses. Support to NPFS call centres is provided by nursing staff supported by GPs from the RCGP.
- Communications messaging will direct people towards the service.