

The Challenges of Flu Vaccination Among Frontline Staff in a Local Authority Setting.

Background

Seasonal flu is a serious viral infection, especially among those considered to be at-risk groups.^{1,2} Each year, employers are urged to vaccinate their frontline staff in order to protect clients they serve, and to protect themselves, thus ensuring business continuity.²

While the system of flu vaccination for frontline staff working in the NHS is funded by the government, there is no coherence system in place for those in the local authority.

Methods

A service evaluation approach was used. Uptake of flu vaccination among frontline staff in the local authority was assessed and associated challenges.

Different delivery mechanism for Flu vaccinations were used over a three year period (2013-2016) targeting local authority staff. The delivery mechanisms included:

- Use of in-house occupational health service
- Giving voucher to staff to go out to local community pharmacies

Definition of front-line local authority staff:

Front line staff are those who have regular and direct contact with members of the public during their working day; and

Staff who are deemed as essential to maintaining services as identified through business continuity plans.



Objectives

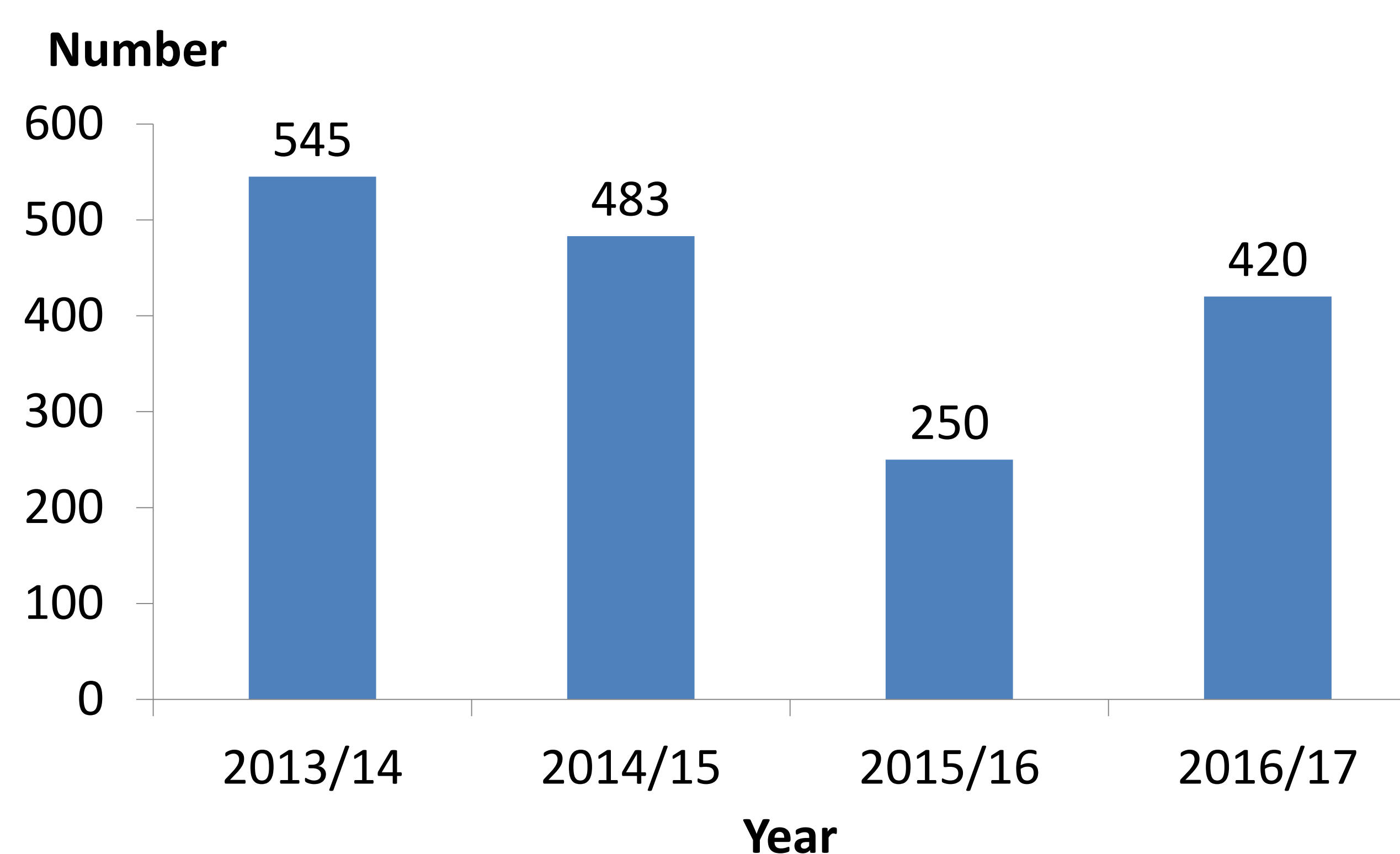
To describe flu vaccination in Doncaster Council targeting staff;

To draw lesson on efficient delivery mechanisms;

To raise the problem of inconsistency of approach between the NHS and local authority frontline staff in relation to flu vaccination.

Results

Figure 1: Uptake of Flu Vaccination in Doncaster: 2013/14 to 2016/17



Uptake rate of Flu vaccination:

- The first two years of Flu vaccination was not targeted to specific staff, while it was targeted in 2015/16 and 2016/17.
- Uptake rate for 2015/16 was 50% (250/500); and in 2016/17 it was 85% (420/500).
- A more efficient delivery mechanism was found to be in-house with occupational health when targeted to specific staff than when commissioned out to community pharmacies.
- There was no interest by NHS England in monitoring the uptake of Flu vaccination among local authority frontline staff.

Conclusions

More could be done to increase the uptake of Flu vaccination among frontline local authority staff. However, there is has not been incorporated as key performance indicator of the national Flu vaccination programme.

Contact

Dr Victor Joseph,
Doncaster Council
Email: Victor.joseph@doncaster.gov.uk
Website: www.doncaster.gov.uk/publichealth
Phone: 01302 734 911

References

1. Department of Health. Immunisation of healthcare and laboratory staff (Chapter 12). https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/147882/Green-Book-Chapter-12.pdf
2. Public Health England, Department of Health, and NHS England (2015). Flu Plan: Winter 2015/16.