

Access and Uptake of Flu Vaccinations in  
Cumbria - 2017/18

April 2018



your  
**voice**  
**counts**

## Introduction

Influenza vaccination is a key part of the annual NHS England winter wellness campaign and played a significant role in tackling the 17/18 winter pressures.

Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) became aware of an individual case of a patient with physical and learning disabilities who had struggled to obtain a flu vaccination owing to systemic barriers. The two things together influenced the development of this project in which HWC sought to find out if any other people had been affected by similar issues, thus compromising the government's ambition to use this as a key tool to reduce winter pressures.

Flu vaccination uptake among adults aged 65 years or over was 70.5%, and among clinically at risk individuals between the ages of six months and 65 was 48.6% in the winter season 2016 - 2017 [1].

HWC hoped that the provision of more information about possible barriers to accessing the flu vaccinations locally would make a positive contribution to flu vaccination rates in Cumbria. The project focused on comparing the experiences of patients against the planned access strategies of GP surgeries and pharmacies to:

- Identify barriers to flu vaccination uptake
- To identify areas of best practice.

## Methodology

HWC developed the project using two surveys.

The first survey was designed to be answered by patients at the point of vaccination (pharmacies and GP surgeries). It covered the following topics:

- access
- information
- motivating factors
- Importance of vaccination to the individual

HWC representatives visited local GP surgeries and pharmacies with copies of the survey to encourage and support patients to complete it. This took part between beginning of November 2017 and the end of December 2017.

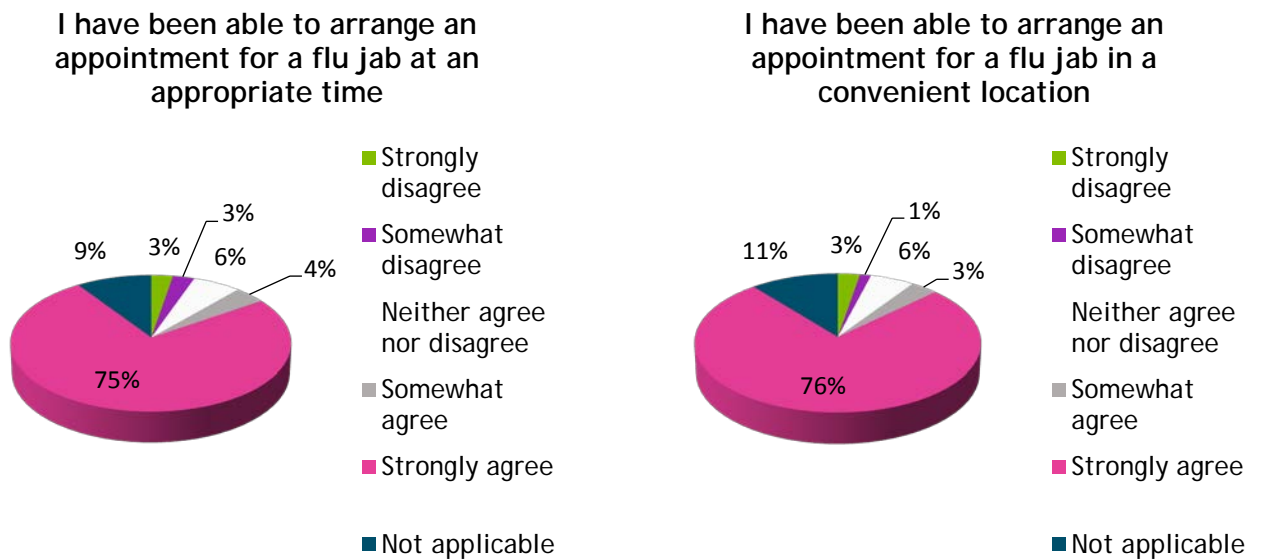
HWC was also interested in learning about the approach and experiences of staff at pharmacies and GP surgeries regarding the provision of flu vaccinations.

A second online survey was made available on the website *SurveyMonkey.net*. An email was sent to all pharmacists and GP's in Cumbria explaining what the survey was about and encouraging responses through the attached link.

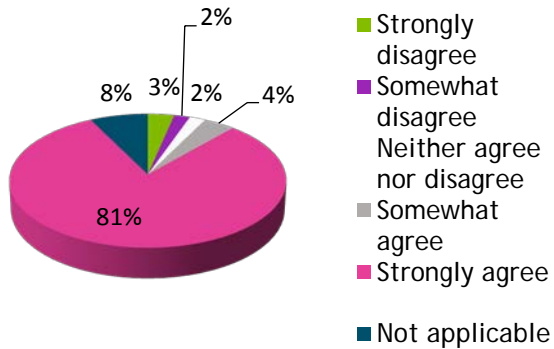
The North Cumbria and Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Groups sent out information about the project including a link to the survey in the GP's e-newsletter. Also the local pharmaceutical committee sent out an email with information and the link to all pharmacists in the county.

**Findings**

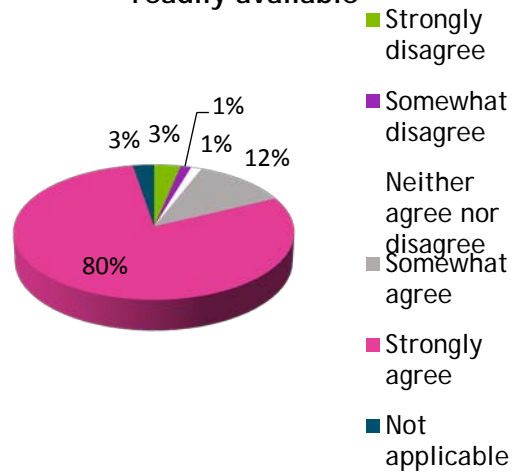
155 service users responded to the patient survey. Of these, 79% reported that they'd had their flu vaccination this winter.



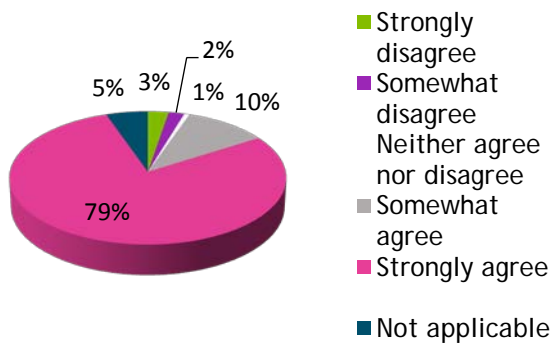
**It has been easy for me to get a flu job**



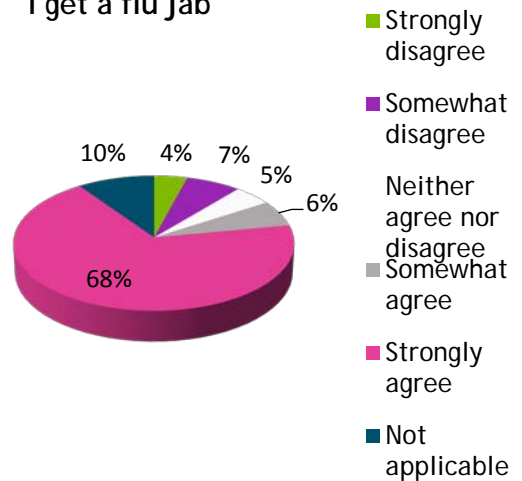
**Information about flu jobs is readily available**



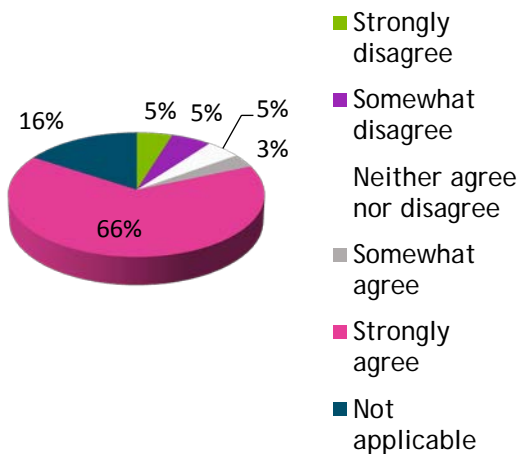
**Information about flu jobs is presented in a manner I understand**



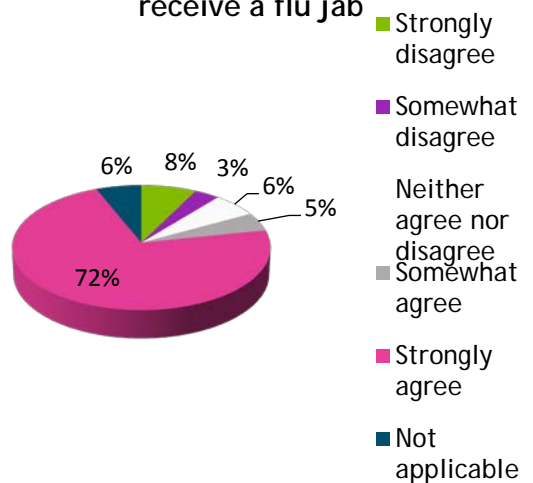
**It is up to me to make sure that I get a flu job**



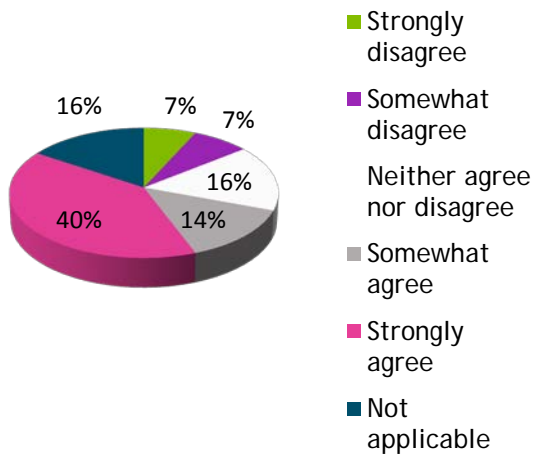
**My GP / nurse has made sure that I receive a flu job**



**It is important to me that I receive a flu job**

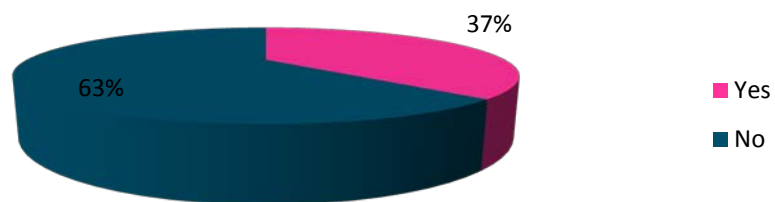


**People I know have encouraged me to go for a flu jab**

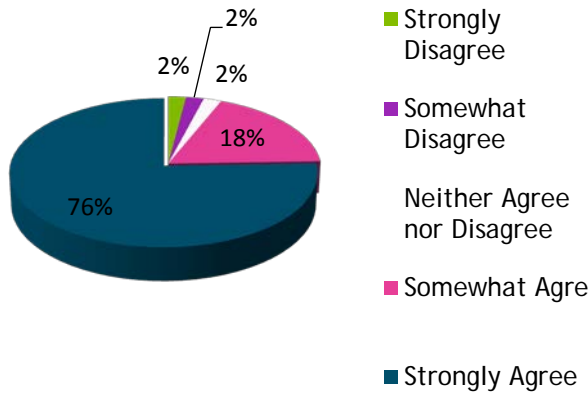


There were 49 NHS provider responses to the second survey comprising 94% from Pharmacies and 6% from GP surgeries.

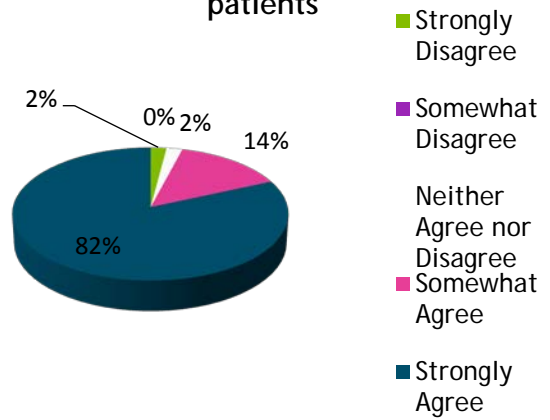
**I am aware of an individual or individuals that have struggled or have been unable to obtain a flu vaccination**



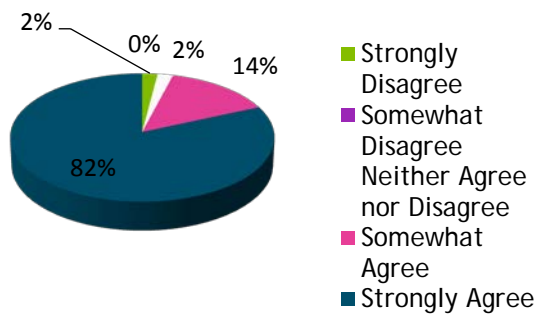
My workplace is doing enough to encourage the uptake of flu vaccinations



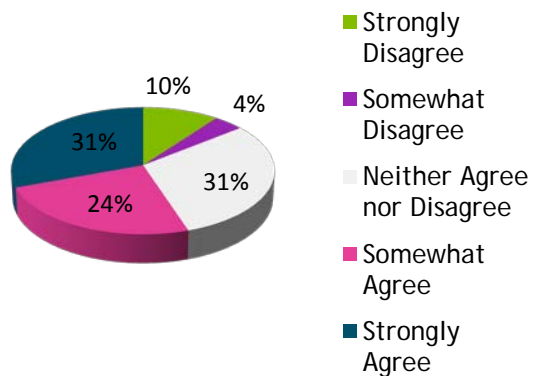
My workplace provides information regarding flu vaccinations in a manner that meets the needs of all of our patients



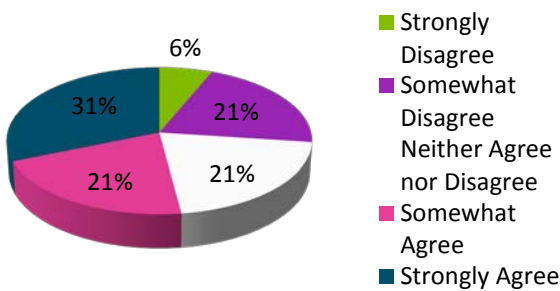
My workplace is performing well as a provider of flu vaccinations



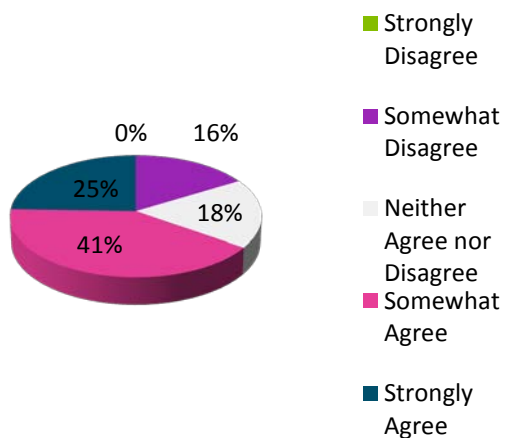
Factors beyond our control are responsible for low flu vaccination uptake



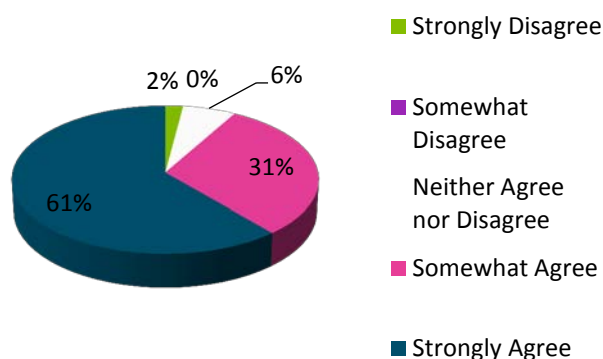
My workplace collaborates with social care providers and other external parties to ensure clinically at risk individuals receive flu vaccinations



There are sufficient resources available to carry out measures intended to improve flu vaccination uptake



### Increasing flu vaccination uptake is a priority in my workplace



### Conclusion

The majority of people who responded to the patient focused survey thought that it had been easy to get a flu vaccination and that information was readily available and presented in an understandable way.

Although 65 % acknowledged that their GP/nurse had made sure they received the vaccination, 37% of the health professionals said they had been aware of individual/s that had struggled or been unable to obtain a flu vaccination. This is despite the fact that a large majority thought that their workplace was doing enough to encourage uptake of flu vaccinations and provided accessible information to ensure high levels of uptake.

It would appear that there is an opportunity for surgeries and pharmacies to;

- Explore why their patients had struggled to, or been unable to obtain a flu vaccination
- Use this knowledge and information to review the marketing strategies for winter 18/19

This would be a good opportunity to involve local people in the planning stages perhaps through individual Patient Participation Forums or by a facilitated coproduction style session by HWC in late summer 2018. This could focus on;

- Development of a local awareness raising campaign

- Development of an agreed set of access success criteria
- A review of planned access arrangements against these criteria making appropriate improvement recommendations

[1] Source: Public Health England report: '[Seasonal influenza vaccination uptake in GP patients: winter season 2016-2017](#)'