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### **Age UK London urges older Londoners to get their flu jab**

This year it is more important than ever that older Londoners get their flu jab, says charity Age UK London.

With coronavirus cases on the rise and with London having some of the lowest levels of flu vaccination in the country, Age UK London is concerned by the large number of older Londoners who are currently vulnerable to the flu virus.

Flu is a serious health hazard for older Londoners, particularly those with long-term conditions. Complications from flu include pneumonia, inflammation of the heart, brain or muscle tissues, as well as multi-organ failure.

New research from Public Health England (PHE) suggests the risk of death more than doubled for people who tested positive for both flu and COVID-19, compared to those with COVID-19 alone. Age UK London is calling on all older Londoners who haven't had their flu jab to visit their GP or pharmacist as soon as possible to ensure they're protected from the flu virus.

Why get the flu vaccine this winter?

- Flu is a serious condition that kills, on average, 11,000 people in England each year and hospitalises many more.
- In recent years, the vaccine has reduced the risk of flu-associated hospitalisation among older adults by about 40%.
- Even though the flu jab is free for those over the age of 65, 18 of the 20 lowest areas in England for flu vaccine take up are in London. The World Health Organisation suggests that flu vaccine coverage should be at least 75% for this age group.

Tony Burch, retired GP and Age UK London's Trustee said:

'While coronavirus is dominating the headlines, it is crucial we don't lose sight that winter flu poses a serious risk to older Londoners' health. The free flu vaccine is more important than ever to help protect them from a double threat this winter.

"Any organisations working with older Londoners should get in touch with Age UK London so we can help them to spread the word – now more than ever!"

To find out more about Age UK London's "Now More Than Ever" Campaign, head to:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/london/projects-campaigns/flu-campaign-2020-21/>

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**Notes to editors:**

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/912099/Annual-Report\\_SeasonalFlu-Vaccine\\_GPs\\_2019-20\\_FINAL\\_amended.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912099/Annual-Report_SeasonalFlu-Vaccine_GPs_2019-20_FINAL_amended.pdf)

1. Age UK London is the regional Age UK for London, which campaigns to make London an Age-friendly City.

- [www.ageuk.org.uk/london](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/london)
- [www.twitter.com/ageuklondon](https://www.twitter.com/ageuklondon)
- [www.facebook.com/ageuklondon](https://www.facebook.com/ageuklondon)

2. Age UK London has launched the "Now More Than Ever" campaign, a focused promotion of the flu vaccine across London. The campaign will place addition focus on targeting the boroughs in north and northwest London as well as BAME older Londoners.

3. Tony Burch, retired GP and Age UK London Trustee, is available for interviews. Please contact Aurelie Leroy for more information.