

**INFLUENZA VACCINE**

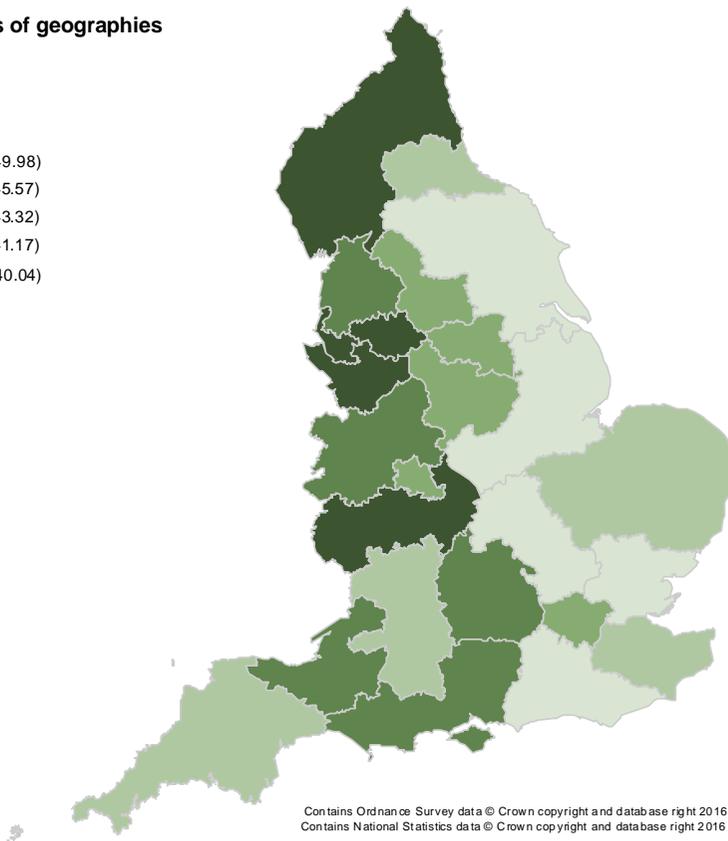
**Map 18:** Variation in percentage of people aged 6 months to 65 years with chronic liver disease who have received the influenza vaccine by NHS Area Team (2015/16)

NHS Domain 2: Enhancing quality of life for people with long-term conditions  
 NHS Domain 5: Treating and caring for people in a safe environment & protecting them from avoidable harm  
 PHOF Domain 3: Health protection

OPTIMUM VALUE: HIGH

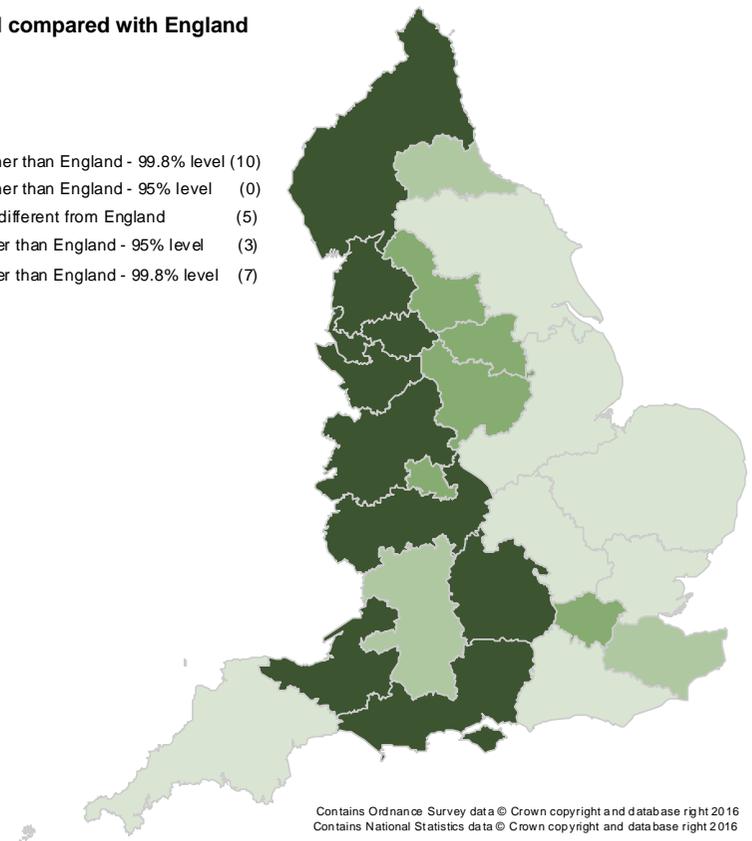
Equal-sized quintiles of geographies

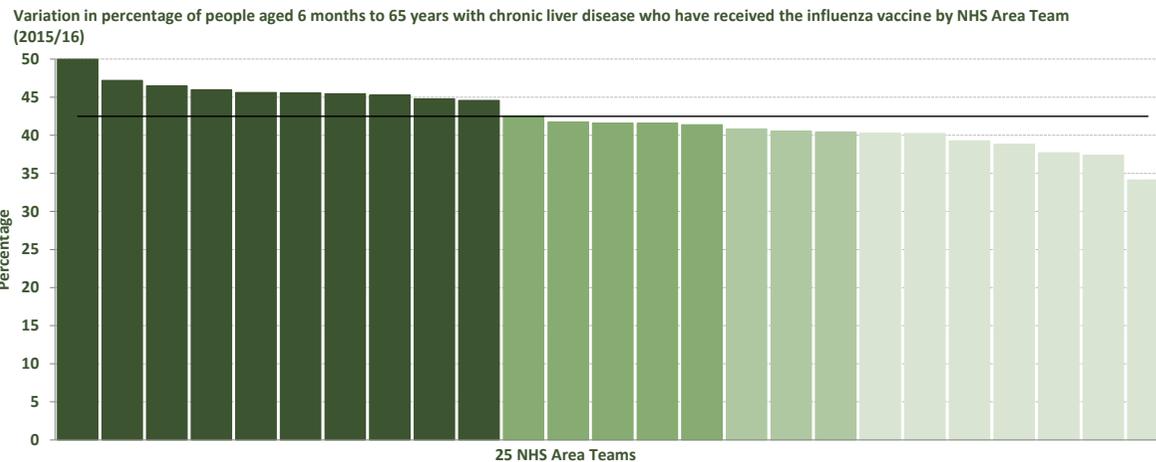
- Highest (45.58 - 49.98)
- (43.33 - 45.57)
- (41.18 - 43.32)
- (40.05 - 41.17)
- Lowest (34.14 - 40.04)



Significance level compared with England

- Significantly higher than England - 99.8% level (10)
- Significantly higher than England - 95% level (0)
- Not significantly different from England (5)
- Significantly lower than England - 95% level (3)
- Significantly lower than England - 99.8% level (7)



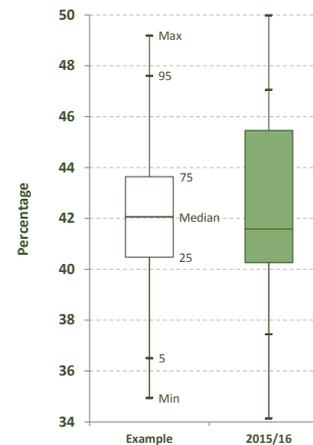


## Context

The common symptoms of influenza are chills, fever, nasal and sinus congestion, sore throat and extreme fatigue, however, people with chronic liver disease are at increased risk from the complications of influenza, such as bronchitis or pneumonia. Some of these complications can be life-threatening: every year several thousand people in England die from the complications of influenza.

In people with liver disease the immune system is weakened, increasing their susceptibility to the influenza virus. In addition underlying liver disease can limit the type of medications it is possible for people to take to control influenza symptoms and to treat any potential complications.

People who have had a liver transplant or who are on the waiting list for a transplant are particularly at risk from influenza:



Max-Min (Range)	15.8
95th-5th percentile	9.6
75th-25th percentile	5.2
Median	41.6

- it can increase the rate of rejection and drug resistance in people who have had a liver transplant
- for people with cirrhosis waiting for a transplant it can worsen their condition

Vaccination every year can protect against the influenza virus, and in 2016 Public Health England recommended that everyone with a chronic liver condition should have a free influenza vaccination.

The influenza vaccination season is from October to February, but most people get influenza in December or January. To protect people with chronic liver disease from the influenza virus and its complications it is best to offer vaccination as early as possible in the campaign before influenza circulation starts.

## Magnitude of variation

The maps and column chart display the data for 2015/16, during which NHS Area Team values ranged from 34.1% to 50.0%, which is a 1.5-fold difference between NHS Area Teams. The England value for 2015/16 was 42.5%.

The boxplot shows the distribution of NHS Area Team values for 2015/16.

The data shows that at best only one person in every two people under the age of 65 years with chronic liver disease received an influenza vaccination in 2015/16.

Potential reasons for the degree of variation observed include differences in:

- level of awareness among people with chronic liver disease of the need for influenza vaccination
- effectiveness of the promotion and offer of influenza vaccination to people with chronic liver disease, particularly in primary care
- access to free influenza vaccination services

## Options for action

To increase the number of people with chronic liver disease receiving influenza vaccination, commissioners need to ensure that service providers, particularly general practitioners and community pharmacies, promote and offer the service to people with chronic liver disease.

General practitioners need to invite people with chronic liver disease for influenza vaccination using a variety of methods, such as letter, telephone call, text message or email, either for a specific appointment or to an influenza vaccination clinic. Influenza vaccination clinics need to be promoted on practice websites.

Commissioners can encourage community pharmacies to participate in free influenza vaccination programmes. Being able to access vaccination at a community pharmacy may be more convenient for some people with chronic liver disease than attending the general practice.

Commissioners could consider specifying that primary care service providers responsible for delivering the national flu vaccination programme undergo education and training in promoting the uptake of influenza vaccination (see 'Resources' for e-learning package).

All healthcare professionals responsible for the care and treatment of people with chronic liver disease need to take the opportunity of Making Every Contact Count (MECC; see 'Resources') to highlight the importance of annual influenza vaccination especially as the season approaches.

## RESOURCES

- Public Health England. Annual flu programme. 17 October 2013. Last updated: 15 June 2017. [www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme)
- Public Health England. Influenza, the green book, chapter 19. Published: 20 March 2013. Last updated: 28 August 2015. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19)
- Public Health England. The flu vaccination winter 2017 to 2018: who should have it and why. Published: 6 August 2015. Last updated: 12 June 2017. [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/618591/Flu\\_vaccination\\_\\_A5\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/618591/Flu_vaccination__A5_booklet.pdf)
- NHS Health Education England in partnership with Public Health England. e-Learning for Healthcare. Flu Immunisation. [www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/flu-immunisation](http://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/flu-immunisation)
- Public Health England. Making Every Contact Count (MECC): practical resources. Published: 26 January 2016. Last updated: 12 April 2016. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-every-contact-count-mecc-practical-resources](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-every-contact-count-mecc-practical-resources)
- NHS Choices. The flu jab. Page last reviewed: 12/07/2016. [www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/flu-influenza-vaccine.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/flu-influenza-vaccine.aspx)