

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Establishment Committee – For Decision	26 February 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Flu Vaccinations	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Chrissie Morgan, Director of HR	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Colette Hawkins, Corporate HR	

### **Summary**

The Establishment Committee requested officers to investigate providing a free flu vaccination for all officers and Members to reduce sickness absence levels due to flu and to maximise officer/Member wellbeing in time for the next flu season. This report highlights potential costs and other implications which will need to be considered in full.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- Approve the recommendation to operate this scheme for officers in the same way as eye and eyesight tests are reclaimed, and for Members to reclaim via the Committee and Members Services team;
- Approve the recommendation that the maximum cost that can be reclaimed is £15.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. In October 2018, Members considered a report on sickness absence across the City of London Corporation. A question was raised regarding whether the City Corporation should offer free flu vaccinations for all officers and Members as soon as practicably possible to reduce sickness absence levels and maximise officer/Member wellbeing.
2. A high-level report was provided to the December 2018 Establishment Committee highlighting potential costs for offering this to all officers and Members. The report also advised Members of a pilot scheme within the Open Spaces Department offering free flu vaccinations to all staff.
3. Following discussion Members asked that officers take this forward in order that a scheme could be implemented in time for the 2019/2020 flu season.

## Current Position

4. The following pre-conditions will apply:
  - a. The decision to have a flu vaccination is a personal choice, so officers and Members can choose to opt in or opt out of having a flu vaccination;
  - b. A private flu vaccination is only offered to officers and Members who do not already qualify for a free flu vaccination by the NHS. Anyone who is already entitled to a free flu vaccination should continue to receive these through their GP if they choose to have one.
5. Discussions have taken place with the Procurement team in the Chamberlains Department on the best way to implement this scheme in time for the 2019/2020 flu season.
6. Consideration was given to undertaking a full tender process which would award a contract to one provider. If this was to one organisation (e.g. Boots), it was felt that this may restrict officers/Members ability to choose where they have the vaccination. If the contract was awarded to a company which provides pre-paid vouchers at a discount which could be redeemed at several places (e.g. Lloyds pharmacy, Tesco supermarket), this could be wasteful as there would be no way to monitor if the vouchers were used, which could result in over-expenditure. This advice is based on learning from the procurement process to secure a Corporate contract for eye and eyesight tests which would have led to issues for employees who were not based centrally to the Guildhall, and for those who had their own regular optician.
7. An alternative approach, although not one that would secure a bulk purchase order is to allow officers and Members to choose where they purchase and have a private flu vaccination. A limit will be set on how much the City Corporation will reimburse. Considering this year's highest costs and to allow for any increase, it is suggested that this is capped at £15 per person. Any costs incurred above this level must be met by the officer or Member.
8. Officers would purchase the flu vaccines themselves and then reclaim this expense via CityPeople Self Service, attaching a copy of the receipt. Their line manager would then be able to approve this request. Members would submit their claim to the Committee and Members Services team.
9. The process for officers is the same used to reclaim costs for eye and eyesight tests and other expenses. By delegating this task to an individual level, it will minimise administration costs and resources, compared to operating a centrally run scheme. This will allow the City Corporation to accurately monitor take up and cost.
10. A review will be undertaken after the first year, and monitoring reports on take-up and spend across the organisation will be analysed. A comparison of sickness absence due to flu will be undertaken in 2020, comparing the data from 2018/19

to 2019/20 to see if there is an indication of a positive impact on reducing sickness absence amongst officers.

11. It is anticipated that full communications will commence in July / August to allow officers and Members time to start considering whether they wish to take up this offer when the flu vaccinations become available (this is usually towards the end of September). There is a limited window for flu vaccinations, and it is down to the officer/Member to personally arrange to have the vaccination if they wish to.

### **Open Spaces Flu Vaccination Pilot Update**

12. The Open Spaces Department offered free flu vaccinations to all its officers. This was welcomed at all levels across the Department with 81 officers (approximately 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the workforce) taking up the offer to receive a free flu vaccination voucher. It is not known how many officers did redeem their voucher as there is no way of monitoring this once the vouchers have been distributed. It is too early to identify if there has been a positive impact to reduce sickness absence for flu.

### **Financial Implications**

13. The headcount of officers and Members is approximately 4,820 (excluding Police Officers, agency workers, casual staff, contractors and consultants) and costs have been calculated on different levels of take up. This takes into account an estimated percentage of officers and Members who are already eligible for a free flu vaccination; and officers and Members who choose not to take up this option.
14. The cost for the 2018 flu vaccination has ranged between £10 and £13. The prices costed below are based on £15 per officer / Member to take into account any potential increase in cost.

<b>Staff / Members (c4,820)</b>	<b>Cost</b>
10% (c482)	£7,230
25% (c1,205)	£18,075
50% (c2,410)	£36,150
75% (c3,615)	£54,225

15. The Chamberlain has advised that these costs would be met from Department's local risk budgets. The Chamberlain's Department has advised that the City Corporation would not be required to pay tax on this as it meets the criteria known as a 'trivial benefit'.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

16. Colleagues from the Town Clerks Department, including Occupational Health, and the Chamberlains Department, including City Procurement, and the Trade Unions have been consulted to discuss the options and agree a proposal of how this could be delivered.
17. This links with the Corporate Plan outcome number 2 – people enjoy good health and wellbeing.

18. A test of relevance, as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) has been undertaken and no negative impacts were identified. Where there was positive impact this is due to the City Corporation paying for a private flu vaccination for all officers and members which goes beyond those who are covered by the NHS free flu vaccination.

### **Health Implications**

19. OH have advised that a flu vaccination may also reduce the length and severity of symptoms for flu strains that are not covered in the vaccine.

20. Efficacy in the general population is quite low, 15% in all age groups, though slightly better in children, but it is only 12.2% in those of working age.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/flu-vaccine-effectiveness-in-2017-to-2018-season>).

### **Recommendations**

21. Members are asked to approve the proposal to operate this scheme in the same way that officers reclaim costs for eye and eyesight tests, and for Members to reclaim costs via the Committee and Members Services team. It is proposed that this is capped at £15 per person.

### **Conclusion**

22. This report provides details of potential costs and associated implications for offering free private flu vaccinations for all officers and Members. Agreement is sought to the recommended option and to cap the amount which can be reclaimed in order that this can be implemented in time for the 2019/20 flu season.

### **Appendices**

- None

### **Background Papers**

- Public Sector Equality Duty Test of Relevance for the provision of Flu Vaccinations for all officers and members
- Flu Vaccinations – Establishment Committee Report, 3 December 2018
- Gov.UK: Tax on Trivial Benefits <https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-trivial-benefits>

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