# Frontline NHS staff flu vaccination rates fall to record lows amid rising vaccine fatigue



Frontline NHS staff in the UK are reportedly declining vaccinations for seasonal flu, with alarming statistics indicating that nearly nine in ten healthcare workers at one of England's largest hospital trusts were unvaccinated last winter. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has highlighted that decreasing uptake of vaccinations has contributed to at least 18,000 deaths across the nation over the past two years. This situation underscores the ongoing public health challenge that flu presents, often regarded as one of the country's leading viral killers.

The recent figures reveal a troubling trend in vaccination rates among healthcare professionals. For the winter season of 2022 to 2023, the UKHSA reported that only 49.4% of frontline healthcare workers received the seasonal influenza vaccine. This marked a notable decline from 60.5% in the prior season and indicated a worrying pattern, as vaccination uptake among these essential workers has decreased for two consecutive years. For the ongoing winter season of 2023 to 2024, the figures have dipped further to merely 42.8%, exacerbating concerns about a growing culture of "vaccine fatigue" originating from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hospital groups, like Barts Health Trust—which employs over 18,750 staff across six hospitals in east London—reported a strikingly low vaccination rate of just 12.9% among its frontline staff. A senior consultant at Barts Health Trust expressed shock at the low percentage, suggesting that management must be proactive in understanding the reasons behind this hesitance. They noted, “Managers should be spending summer finding out why staff didn't get it, rather than just doing the same again next winter,” emphasising the necessity for targeted strategies rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

The challenges are not limited to just one region; across various NHS trusts, similar patterns have emerged. For example, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust reported a vaccination uptake of only 43%, significantly below the national NHS flu vaccination target of 80%. This decline has been attributed largely to vaccine fatigue experienced by staff who have received multiple vaccinations in response to the pandemic. Furthermore, an analysis highlighted approximately 300,000 fewer frontline NHS workers receiving the winter flu vaccine in the most recent season compared to the 2019-2020 period, illustrating a severe contraction in compliance.

In regions like Wigan, the situation remains dire, with reports indicating that fewer than 20% of frontline healthcare workers at the Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust took the flu jab by late November of the current year. This alarming statistic reflects a broader concern that not only NHS staff but also care staff are facing low immunisation rates. Indeed, a report earlier this year revealed that less than one in five adult social care staff had been vaccinated against flu or had received their COVID-19 booster, further complicating the UK's public health landscape.

As the NHS grapples with these vaccination challenges, it becomes increasingly clear that addressing vaccine hesitancy and implementing effective communication strategies will be critical in combating the impacts of both seasonal flu and other contagious diseases in the future.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2062718/nhs-staff-shun-jabs-covid), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2022-to-2023/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2022-to-2023)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2022-to-2023/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2022-to-2023), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2023-to-2024/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2023-to-2024)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2062718/nhs-staff-shun-jabs-covid), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-68946335)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.hsj.co.uk/workforce/revealed-300000-more-nhs-staff-missing-out-on-flu-jab/7036503.article), [[6]](https://www.wigantoday.net/health/less-than-a-fifth-of-wigan-hospital-staff-have-had-flu-jab-4922387)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2023/01/16/less-than-one-in-five-care-staff-vaccinated-against-flu-or-boosted-against-covid-figures-reveal/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2062718/nhs-staff-shun-jabs-covid> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2022-to-2023/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2022-to-2023> - The UK Health Security Agency's report for the 2022 to 2023 winter season indicates that 49.4% of frontline healthcare workers in NHS trusts received the seasonal influenza vaccine, a decrease from 60.5% in the previous season. This marks the second consecutive season of declining vaccination rates among frontline healthcare workers in England.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2023-to-2024/seasonal-influenza-vaccine-uptake-in-frontline-healthcare-workers-in-england-winter-season-2023-to-2024> - The UK Health Security Agency's report for the 2023 to 2024 winter season shows a further decline in influenza vaccine uptake among frontline healthcare workers in NHS trusts, with 42.8% vaccinated, down from 49.9% in the previous season. This continues the trend of decreasing vaccination rates over consecutive seasons.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-68946335> - The BBC reports that vaccine 'fatigue' has been cited as a reason for the drop in flu jab uptake among NHS workers at Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Health bosses suggest that staff having already had multiple jabs is one of the main reasons for the decline, with only 43% of workers getting vaccinated, compared to the national NHS flu vaccination target of 80%.
5. <https://www.hsj.co.uk/workforce/revealed-300000-more-nhs-staff-missing-out-on-flu-jab/7036503.article> - An analysis by the Health Service Journal reveals that approximately 300,000 fewer frontline NHS staff received the winter flu vaccine in the 2023-2024 season compared to 2019-2020, highlighting a significant decline in vaccination uptake among NHS workers.
6. <https://www.wigantoday.net/health/less-than-a-fifth-of-wigan-hospital-staff-have-had-flu-jab-4922387> - Wigan Today reports that less than 20% of frontline healthcare workers at Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust were vaccinated against flu as of the end of November 2024, indicating a low uptake among NHS staff in the region.
7. <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2023/01/16/less-than-one-in-five-care-staff-vaccinated-against-flu-or-boosted-against-covid-figures-reveal/> - Community Care reports that less than one in five adult social care staff had been vaccinated against flu or received their autumn booster jab for Covid-19 as of January 2023, highlighting low vaccination rates among care staff during the winter season.