In an effort to increase flu vaccine uptake in the school's programme in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board the school nursing team identified several priorities whilst planning their 2016/17 campaign. These included: implementation of a Standard Operating Procedure ensuring a consistent approach by all school nurses; school assembly talks; greater engagement with education colleagues; community engagement events and identification and follow up of all non-returned consent forms.

This hard work resulted in the highest percentage increase in flu vaccine uptake in school aged children of all health boards across Wales in 2016/17. The team strengthened awareness with pupils, parents and carers as well as education services, local authorities and other key stakeholders.

**What did you do?**

In 2016/17 the School Health Nursing Service in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABM UHB) strengthened relationships with key stakeholders, and made engagement with parents a priority in their influenza campaign.

A Standard Operating Procedure was put in place ensuring a consistent approach across the health board.

The school nurse service engaged with key stakeholders e.g. Education, ABM UHB Public Health Team, Public Health Wales Health Protection, Healthy Schools and the health board child health department. They also built strong partnerships with the three local authorities across the health board.

School nurses actively worked with parents, teachers and pupils increasing awareness of flu vaccine via school text messaging services, posters displayed in school, weekly Healthy School's bulletins, school assemblies and school visits from the flu bug mascot.

Every parent or guardian was contacted by the school nurse if the child’s consent form was not returned. This contact was by either by telephone, during school visits or at parent’s evenings in school. This additional effort reduced the number of non-returned consent forms to about 11% compared with approximately 27% in 2015/16.

Community engagement via local authority events included a teddy bears picnic and a Play Days event to raise awareness of flu vaccine for children. The flu bug mascot also attended these events.

Through hard work and a consistent approach, flu vaccine uptake increased in eligible school aged children in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board in 2016/17 by 12% to 72.5%.
What have you learnt?

As well as increasing the uptake of flu vaccine in eligible school aged children the new approach also increased pupils, parents, carers, education colleagues and other stakeholders’ awareness of flu vaccine. The school nurses were more actively involved and visible in primary schools and the children were less anxious about having their nasal spray flu vaccine.

Lessons we will take forward next year include: the importance of recruiting new staff early to ensure they are in place for the start of the flu season; continued engagement with parents, education and other stakeholders; securing finance for the programme; booking school vaccination sessions well in advance and improving the non-returned consent form rate.

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