

Future Proofing Policy for Adult Influenza Vaccines in the UK – The Case for Centralised Procurement

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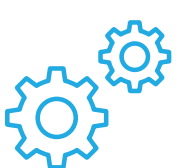
BACKGROUND

- The UK’s annual adult influenza and COVID-19 vaccination programmes are vital for reducing National Health Service (NHS) winter pressures and protecting public health
- Currently, all vaccines in the National Immunisation Programme in England, except adult influenza vaccines, are centrally procured
- Adult influenza vaccines are purchased locally by general practitioners (GPs) and pharmacies
- In contrast, Scotland and Northern Ireland have centralised procurement systems, and Wales is transitioning to one¹
- The UK Government is exploring centralising adult influenza vaccine procurement in England, a move that could optimise public health outcomes and improve pandemic preparedness



OBJECTIVE

- We reviewed UK Government policy, parliamentary documents, and impact assessments to examine the benefits and risks of introducing a centralised procurement for adult influenza vaccines



METHODS

- We assessed policy frameworks from the last 20 years in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- The review focused on procurement, purchasing models, and the applicability of these to evolving health policies, especially in light of new technologies
- Government reports, policy documents, and grey literature were reviewed for comprehensive insights



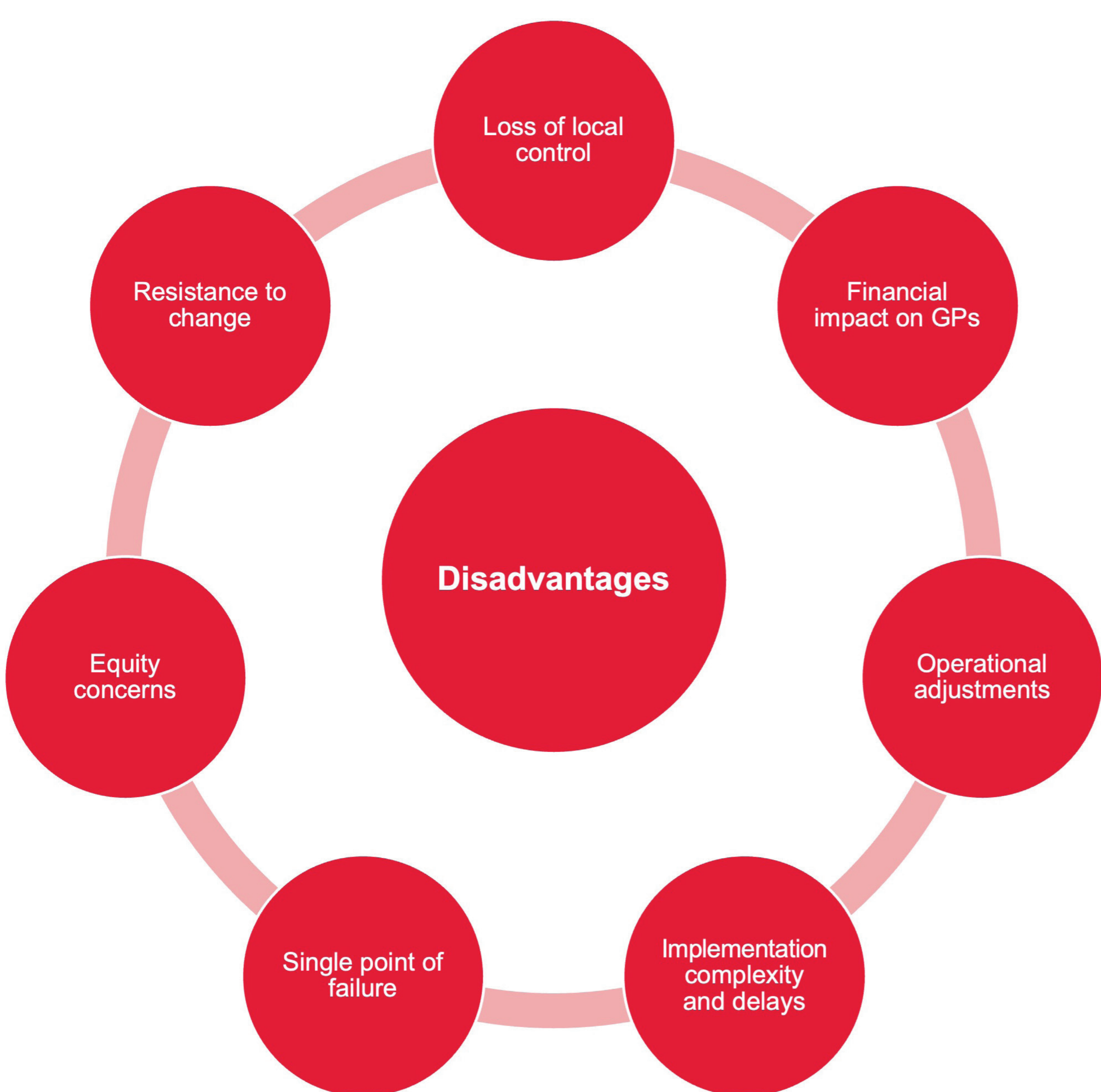
RESULTS

- Successive governments have considered the case for transitioning to centralised procurement for adult influenza vaccines
 - 2005: Department of Health and Social Care, Secretary of State, commissioned a review of procurement frameworks after shortages in the 2004-2005 season, but no changes were implemented
 - 2011: The Department of Health issued a consultation to review seasonal influenza vaccine procurement²
 - » The resulting Impact Assessment³ highlighted a potential net saving of £14 million in the first year by having the government tender contracts for influenza vaccines
 - » The assessment noted that while the (then) Department of Health would save >£30 million, GPs would face a reduction in income by approximately £18 million
 - 2023: A commitment was made in the NHS Vaccination and Immunisation Strategy⁴ to explore the costs and benefits of centralising adult influenza to understand if centralising procurement could deliver better outcomes and address the existing challenges
 - » The strategy suggests that current procurement arrangements limit Integrated Care Systems’ flexibility to design and deliver their vaccination networks, and a centralised procurement model may better support the co-administration of COVID-19 and influenza vaccines and facilitate the potential introduction of any future combined vaccine or mRNA influenza vaccine
 - See **Figures 1 and 2**, respectively, for details on the advantages and disadvantages of centralised procurement as identified in our review

Figure 1. Advantages of a Centralised Procurement Mechanism for Influenza Vaccines¹⁻⁴



Figure 2. Disadvantages of a Centralised Procurement Mechanism for Influenza Vaccines¹⁻⁴



CONCLUSIONS

- A UK-wide shift to a centralised procurement system for adult influenza vaccines would allow better management and coordination of vaccine distribution, reducing the risk of local shortages and ensuring consistent supply, thereby mitigating access-related health inequalities
- For future technologies combining adult influenza vaccination with other respiratory pathogens, a centralised system would be beneficial for procurement and patient access
- Harmonising procurement approaches across the devolved nations to a system of centralised procurement could improve vaccine distribution, reduce the risk of seasonal shortages, lower costs and better leverage new technologies for improved efficiency and access

References

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Disclosures

All authors are employees of Moderna, Inc., and may hold stock/stock options in the company.



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