

Swine Flu:

Helping business preparedness

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Aims and Objectives

- Protect UK citizens and visitors against the health and wider consequences as far as this is possible
- Organise and adapt the health and social care systems to provide treatment and support for those suffering from influenza or its complications, whilst maintaining other essential care
- Support the continuity of essential services
- Support the continuation of everyday activities as far as practical
- Instil and maintain trust and confidence by ensuring that the public are engaged and well informed, and are enabled to take steps to sustain their own safety and well being
- Promote a return to normality and the restoration of any disrupted services at the earliest opportunity

Central government process

Development of UK response

- Latest situation disease updates
- Impact assessments
- Scientific evidence

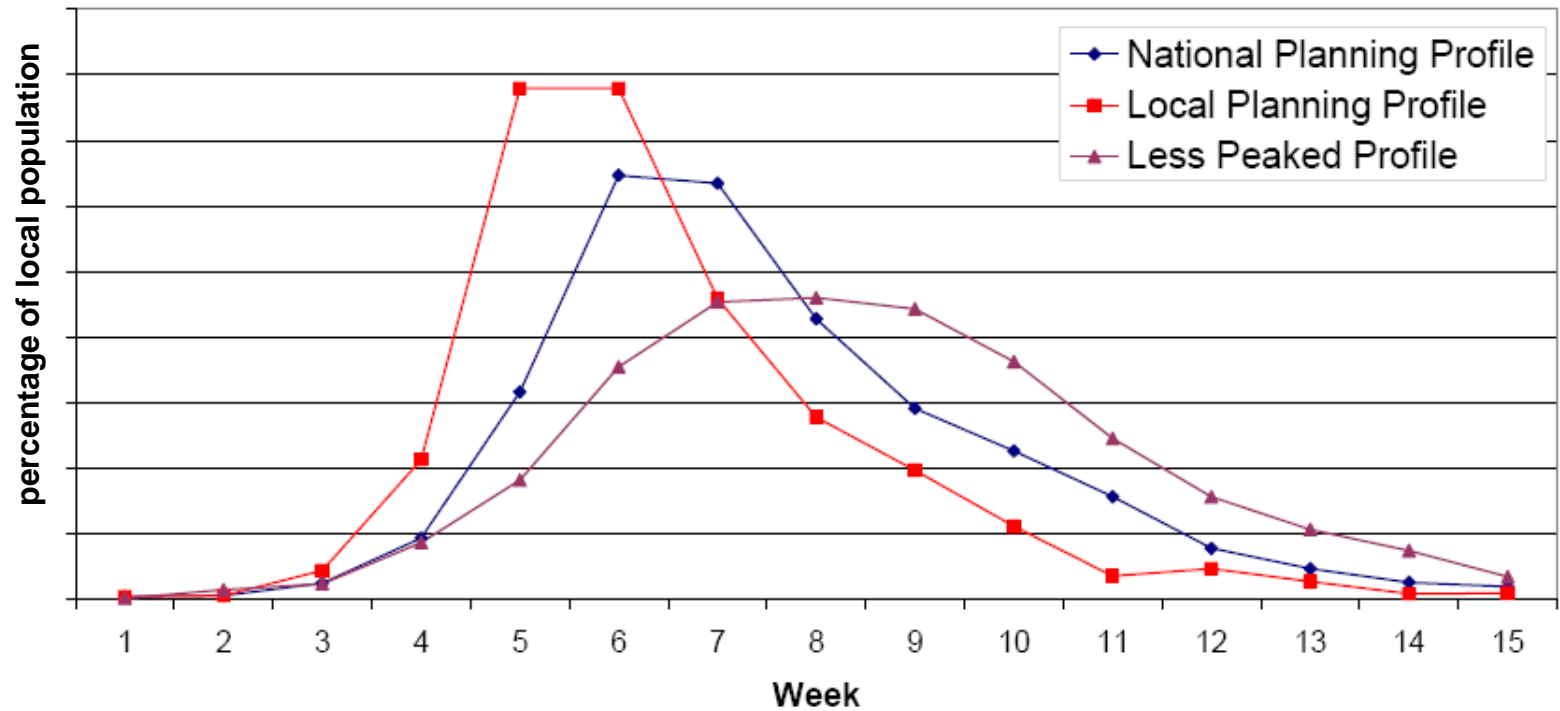
Dissemination of response strategies

- Communication strategies
- Stakeholder Liaison - BANF
- Local health partners
- Regional Government and LRFs

Situation overview

- WHO Alert at **Phase 6 - Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission**
- As of 3rd September, there have been a total of 209,438 confirmed and reported cases and at least 2,185 deaths. Many countries have adopted clinical diagnosis; thus these numbers significantly under represent the true case number.
- Based on GP consultations and virological studies HPA estimates that there were around 4,500 cases within England in the past week. There have been 70 deaths associated with swine flu in the UK. The majority of deaths have occurred in people with underlying health conditions.
- The majority of cases continue to be mild, although some people develop more severe illness.
- The viruses characterised so far have been sensitive to oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza), but resistant to both amantadine and rimantadine.

Prognosis



Planning Assumptions

- Based on analysis & modelling of data from both inside & outside the UK
- Kept under review
- ‘Reasonable worst case’ - not a prediction of how the pandemic will develop.

Available at:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/pandemicflu/risk/current_risk_assessment.aspx

Absence Rates

- Peak absence rate of **12%** of the workforce
- *Average absence of **10 calendar days** for those without complications;*
- ***14 calendar days** for those with complications, and some allowance for those at home caring for ill children.*

Includes:

- Some allowance for those at home caring for ill children

Doesn't include:

- Normal holiday leave
- Non-pandemic illness
- Absence of those caring for ill dependent relatives or friends other than children
- Absence due to fear of pandemic illness
- Absence due to school closures [not currently planned]

National Pandemic Flu Service

- <http://www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu> or 0800 1513 100
- This service assesses the patient's symptoms, using a checklist, and, if required, provides an authorisation number for antivirals
- The authorisation number can be used by a flu friend to collect antivirals from a local Antiviral Collection Point.
- The NPFS is intended to take the pressure off NHS Direct and GPs
- People at high risk of developing complications should contact their GP instead of using the NPFS. These are:
 - People with serious underlying health conditions
 - Pregnant women
 - Children under one or children whose condition suddenly gets worse
 - People who are still getting worse after 7 days

Vaccine

- Contracts allow purchase of enough pandemic-specific vaccine for whole population if needed
- Delivery through primary care organisations
- Potential high level of immunity against closely-related strains

Initial prioritisation

- Those at highest risk of severe illness should they contract Swine Flu
- Those at increased risk of infection and of transmitting that infection to vulnerable patients

Closure of schools

Where there is good evidence of widespread community transmission:

- The presumption is that schools will remain open, but a local risk assessment should be made
- DCSF issued revised guidance to schools in England towards the end of the summer holidays
- Situation is being kept under review

Relaxation of Regulations

- **Business continuity** the first line of defence
- Would look to find **flexibility** within existing regulation rather than making legislative changes
- Pre-pandemic planning resulted in preparations of some draft amendments
- **Changes only brought in where strong evidence supports requirement**

Businesses should work with their Lead Government Department to provide this evidence if they feel a change is required

Sickness Certification

- Launched National Pandemic Flu Service, but need to consider protecting capacity of primary care if things get worse:
 - Under 1s, people with underlying conditions, pregnant women still need to contact GP
 - Also people who are still getting worse after 7 days (5 for children)
 - Care for people with complications
- Reduce spread of disease: enable people to stay at home if unwell

Sickness Certification – Contingency Planning

- Business Continuity has to be first line of defence
- Pre-pandemic planning included discussions with businesses about possible changes
- Planning presumption arising from discussions (based on H5N1) was that:
 - draft regulations amending the current 7 days of self-certification to 14 calendar days should be prepared for use in the event of a pandemic
 - regulations should be time limited to 6 months;
 - should apply to all illness not just flu

BANF Sickness Certification Workshop, 12 August 09

Feedback

- Employers would prefer **no change**
- **Business continuity** has to be first line of defence supported by a **co-ordinated communication** strategy now & to provide guidance prior to any change
- If changes are required:
 - Consider a voluntary “approved” **code of conduct** endorsed by Government and other relevant bodies
 - Legislative change extending self certification to **10 days** for a limited time and **flexibility** to be withdrawn as circumstances change
 - Extension applicable to **all** illnesses

Business Advisory Network for Flu (BANF)

- Ensures the delivery of advice & guidance needed by business groups & individual firms to allow them to undertake their own planning.
- Provides a conduit for two-way communication.
- Primarily an email facility, but does hold meetings when appropriate.
- Meetings held 30 June & 25 August. Next meeting 19 October.
- Specialist workshops if required, eg. sickness certification workshop on 12 August.
- banf@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Business Continuity – Sources of Advice

- Business Advisory Network for Flu
- Pandemic Influenza Checklist
- BCM Toolkit
- Frequently Asked Questions

- National Risk Register
- Community Risk Registers

www.businesslink.gov.uk/swineflu

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/national_risk_register.aspx

Key messages

- The risk to severe disruption to business remains real!
- Central Government shall continue to provide advice and guidance to minimise the disease's impact on society
- Organisations **must** continue to develop robust business continuity arrangements