

**NHS Cambridgeshire
Pandemic Influenza HR Policy**

**Agreed by Trust JCNP:
Adopted by Trust Board:
Revised:
Reviewed:**

27 November 2008

24 September, 2009

CONTENTS PAGE

Section	Table of Contents	Page number
1.	Scope	3
2.	Aim	3
3.	Introduction	3
4.	Trigger point	3
5.	How Staff may be affected during a Flu Pandemic	4
5.1	A flu pandemic will affect our staff in four ways	4
6.	Maintaining Staffing Levels	4
6.1	Recruitment	4
6.2	Review minimum staffing levels	4
6.3	Alternative sources of staffing	5
7.	Management and monitoring of absence	5
8.	Working Flexibly	6
8.1	Mapping the workforce	6
8.2	Changes to working arrangements	6
	Working hours and work pattern	6
	Job function and level	6
	Location	7
	Annual leave	7
9.	Staff at high risk of complications	7
10	Human Resource Policies	8
11.	Communication	8
12.	Return to work procedures	8
13	Training and information	8
14.	Occupational Health Department	9
15.	Infection Control	9
16.	Staff displaying flu like symptoms	9
17.	Counselling and support	9
18.	When the crisis is over	9
19.	Equality and diversity statement	9
Appendix A		
	World Health Organisation Pandemic Alert Protocol	10
Appendix B		
	Proforma to be completed at WHO Phase 5 of flu pandemic for each member of staff	11-14
Appendix C		
	Checklist for Employee to return to work after Flu	15

Pandemic Influenza HR Policy

1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to have an emergency procedure and strategy in place for workforce planning in the event of a flu pandemic. This is to ensure sufficient staff are employed to be able to respond to a flu pandemic and manage the effects of staff sickness due to the outbreak.

3. Introduction

A flu pandemic could have a serious affect on the running of Health and Social Care services. For further guidance on this issue, please refer to the *National framework* and related documents on the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu

A flu pandemic is likely to be more sustained and widespread than other types of emergencies the NHS has had to face. For example, the duration of the demand for healthcare and the levels of staff absence and stress on staff may be unprecedented. The scope for mutual aid between NHS organisations is also likely to be less than in previous emergencies as the pandemic is likely to spread rapidly and affect most of the country. However, the Trust will work with other NHS organisations and local authorities in planning for a flu pandemic.

4. Trigger point

This policy and the following procedures are designed to be implemented when World Health Organisation (**WHO**) **Phase 5 or UK level 1** of the Flu Pandemic is notified by the Department of Health (DoH) or WHO or any other appropriate trigger level identified by DoH, SHA or the Trust. The aim of the policy is to enable us to maintain adequate service levels during the pandemic. (Please refer to Appendix A: World Health Organisation Pandemic Alert Protocol and UK Alert Levels).

This policy is intended to overwrite all other policies whilst the WHO declare that the pandemic is in existence; these would include but are not limited to:

- Carer's leave policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Guidance on Sickness absence management
- Capability procedure
- Annual leave

5. How Staff may be affected during a Flu Pandemic

5.1 A flu pandemic will affect our staff in four ways:

- staff may themselves become infected, which is likely to lead to an unprecedented level of sickness absence during a pandemic
- some staff may have fears of being infected while at work and, in particular, of passing on the infection to their families and friends
- stress levels will be high because of pressures on staffing
- staff with caring responsibilities may be adversely affected by local measures, such as closure of schools. As a result, these staff may have to stay at home to care for dependent children and, in other cases; staff may be caring for partners or other dependants, such as older relatives.

6. Maintaining Staffing Levels

6.1 Recruitment

Recruiting staff will be critical and will need to be completed in short timescales.

At the appropriate trigger point of the pandemic the Trust will contact staff that have recently retired within the last 12 months and encourage them to return to the workforce on a short-term basis. Non medical staff will be appointed on Agenda for Change terms and conditions and will, wherever possible, work to a previously banded job description. If it is a new post it will be given an interim band by the Human Resources department. Medical and Dental staff will be appointed on Whitley Council medical and dental terms and will work to one of the standard job descriptions for the role they fulfil. In preparation for this the Human Resources Department will have a central list of these staff with post details and skills, maintained in a central location.

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance and the receipt of references may be delayed in the event of a pandemic as other organisations become affected. The Trust will require a system for the fast tracking CRB by order of the Chief Executive/Chief Operating Officer.

Anyone registered with NHS Professionals who has had a CRB check in the last 12-months will not need another one if they apply for a post within the Trust. CRB disclosures received in the previous 12 months will also be portable for internal candidates to posts.

6.2 Review minimum staffing levels

The Trust will undertake a review of normal and acceptable minimum staffing levels of core and critical functions and services in anticipation of a flu pandemic and the corresponding reduced staff availability. This review should include any changes to working practices that might be required to ensure that as much work can be completed safely with reduced staffing levels. Business continuity planning will be carried out to ensure the Trust is aware of the potential effects of reduced staffing levels on services provided and can therefore plan service provision accordingly.

6.3 Alternative sources of staffing

The Trust will work hard to identify alternative sources of staff to cover gaps in the service due to sickness and other causes of absence during a pandemic and this will commence at the appropriate trigger point. This will include the following:

- retired staff
- volunteers
- independent providers
- private hospitals (routine procedures are likely to be cancelled)
- NHS Professionals
- NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency
- Healthcare students (educational establishments are likely to be closed or clinical placements not available)

The Trust will also work with other NHS organisations and Local Authorities as it may possible and necessary due to the social care/clinical needs of patients/clients to have some movement of staff across these organisations. The subject of flu pandemic will be a standing agenda item on the Cambridgeshire County Workforce Group, which is co-ordinated by NHS Cambridgeshire.

The Trust and the Cambridgeshire County Council will work closely together on this subject and as part of this will map out a process of which patients/clients have joint care and who could have their care package consolidated during a flu pandemic. This would happen at the appropriate trigger point.

7. Management and monitoring of absence

During the pandemic there will be considerable pressures on GP surgeries. When it is clear that it is necessary, to alleviate these pressures we will contact staff to inform them that they will not be required to produce a medical certificate from their doctor for the first 14 days of their illness. Self certification will apply for this period of sickness absence during the pandemic for all sickness absence. This may be reviewed during the course of the pandemic.

Normal staff sickness reporting arrangements will apply. P6 forms should be completed. If the sickness is swine flu related, please ensure this is noted in one of the empty boxes in the "Reason for sickness absence" section.

There will also be up to date information available to staff on the Trust website about the flu pandemic and what action they should take.

8. Working Flexibly

8.1 Mapping the workforce

Details on the workforce will be collected by managers in preparation for the need to redeploy staff during a pandemic at the appropriate trigger point (Appendix B – Staff Pandemic Flu Questionnaire). It is possible that power supplies will be affected during a pandemic and therefore, normal IT systems may not be available for varying periods of time. Therefore, the information obtained from the completed appendix B forms should be available in hard copy.

Data maintained will include the following:

- Contact details including home and mobile phone numbers
- Mobility including distance to travel
- Skills
- Hours available to work
- Whether they are a carer for children/have eldercare requirements (To assist with planning because their childcare or elder care provider may also be affected)

8.2 Changes to working arrangements

The Trust reserves the right to deploy staff as the need arises. This could be to a different role, function, or locality and all such requests should not be unreasonably refused due to the unprecedented nature of the crisis.

- **Working hours and work pattern**

Staff may also be requested to work different hours from those in their contract of employment. Staff may also be asked to work outside their normal working hours, including increased hours. If staff work above their full time hours or are required to work evenings, nights, weekends and/or general public holidays they will be paid or given time of in lieu in line with their terms and conditions.

- **Job function and level**

All staff may be requested to temporarily change their job function and/or level they work in the Trust. Office based staff working in non-clinical/social care areas not in direct support of the pandemic may be requested to work in such areas.

- **Location**

Staff may be expected to work in other localities to their normal one due to staff shortage in some areas. If staff have to travel further due to this change they will be reimbursed in line with their terms and conditions.

- **Annual leave**

To meet the operational needs of the service during the pandemic, it is very likely that for the duration of the pandemic to cancel all annual leave and refuse all new requests.

As the pandemic may continue for some time, the Trust would anticipate that there will be large numbers of staff trying to take annual leave in a short period of time following the pandemic. Therefore, the Trust may allow staff to carry forward up to 10 days holiday entitlement (pro rata for part time staff) to the following annual leave year.

Staff who do not normally work on bank holidays may be requested to do so and in this event, the payment and time off in lieu would be in line with their terms and conditions of employment.

Alterations to work patterns will be for the duration of the pandemic only, there will be no change to the contract of employment and normal working hours will resume at the end of the crisis. The end of the crisis will be determined by the Department of Health.

9. Staff at high risk of complications

Those staff that who are at a high risk of complications will be assessed by their line manager to ensure that they are not at undue risk whilst working in direct patient care. Redeployment will be considered in line with Occupational Health guidance. At the appropriate trigger point staff will be invited to declare to the Occupational Health (OH) Department if they believe they are at increased risk of infection or complications of infection. DOH guidance states that the following groups of people are within the high risk categories:

- People aged over 6 months and under 65 years of age in current seasonal flu vaccine clinical at risk groups.
- All pregnant women
- Household contacts of people with compromised immune systems e.g people in regular close contact with patients on treatment for cancer.
- People aged 65 and over in the current seasonal flu vaccine clinical at risk groups.

Staff must approach the OH Department using the appropriate method of contact. Staff in and around the Huntingdon area should use Hinchingsbrook OH and should use the form in Appendix D to contact them. For staff using ASP OH they should telephone them on 01733 316519.

10 Human Resource Policies

There will be the need for some flexibility when implementing HR policies during the pandemic.

In contrast some HR policies, some eg Carers and Special Leave will have an increased use at this time. Schools, day nurseries, nursing homes and other support agencies may be affected and have to close or cease operating. The Trust will aim to be flexible and allow time off for staff whose dependents' normal care arrangements in these circumstances break down. Staff may be requested to take annual leave and/ or unpaid leave. Managers may provide the opportunity for staff to make up the time at a later date or where certain roles allow, permit staff to work from home.

11. Communication

Communication to all staff will be by email and staff briefings.

Staff should communicate any concerns to their line manager or an appropriate manager involved in the flu planning team. There will also be up to date information available to staff on the Trust website about the flu pandemic and what action they should take.

12. Return to work procedures

Current guidance is that staff can return to work if they feel well enough, seven days after they are first symptomatic with swine flu. However, they must first speak to their manager who will ask a series of questions to ascertain and check the staff member's fitness to work. (Please see Appendix C Checklist for Employee to return to work after Flu).

13 Training and Information

The Trust may request staff to attend training; this may be particularly relevant for those staff that are re-deployed to other areas, for example in emergency procedures and infection control.

The Trust will produce explanatory material for staff on what might happen during a flu pandemic. This should help them to fulfil their role; alert them to essential and critical information and act as a support.

This will be published via email briefings, face-to-face briefings, the staff extranet/intranet sites including the ASP intranet.

14. Occupational Health Department

The Occupational Health (OH) Departments at ASP and Hinchingsbrooke will have a vital role to play before, during and after a flu pandemic. Staff records will need to be kept up to date with vaccinations.

15. Infection Control

It is important for staff to follow the infection control guidelines of the Trust at all times and particularly during a pandemic flu outbreak. This will protect both the patient/client and also the member of staff. This will be published via email briefings, face-to-face briefings, the staff extranet/intranet sites including the ASP intranet.

16. Staff displaying flu like symptoms

If a member of staff arrives at work and is displaying signs of flu or becomes ill with flu like symptoms while at work, (Please see Appendix C for a list of the symptoms) they should be sent home immediately.

17. Counselling and support

Staff that may be affected by bereavement and increased pressure and stress at work and home. Staff can use their manager and HR for support. They can also call the Oakdale Counselling helpline on 0800 027 7844.

18. When the crisis is over

This policy will stay in effect whilst the flu pandemic alert level is at the appropriate trigger point. After the WHO declare that the crisis is over there will probably be a period of catch up after this point, i.e. filling vacancies, holidays to be taken and undertaking an extensive review of how the NHS dealt with the crisis and lessons to be learnt for the future. It is also important to remember there could also be more than one wave of the pandemic of around 15 weeks each, spread some weeks or months apart. Therefore, the Trust must stay alert for another wave coming and so many of the systems in place must be maintained.

19. Equality and diversity statement

This document has been Equality Impact Assessed.

Appendix A

World Health Organisation Pandemic Alert Protocol

Period	Phase	Characteristics
Inter pandemic	1	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection or disease is considered to be low.
	2	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.
Pandemic Alert	3	Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to-human spread, or at most rare instances of spread, to a close contact.
	4	Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localised, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.
	5	Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human spread is still localised, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be transmittable.
Pandemic	6	<p>Pandemic increased and sustained transmission in general population.</p> <p>UK Alert Level</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virus/cases only outside UK 2. Virus isolated in UK 3. Outbreak(s) in UK 4. Widespread activity across UK

Appendix B

Staff questionnaire to be completed at WHO Stage 5 of flu pandemic

Trust Pandemic Influenza Staff Questionnaire

In the event of an influenza pandemic, the health service will be at the forefront of the response at a time when its own staff and resources will be reduced. In order to maximise the Trust's ability to provide services for patients/clients with and without influenza during a potential pandemic, it will be important to know more about our staff and what skills they may have.

This questionnaire has been designed to ensure that we have an up to date record of your skills, qualifications and other relevant information. Part of the Trust's influenza pandemic planning process is to see how we may need to help you during a pandemic, for example with transport to get to work, help with caring responsibilities; as well as understanding how your skills might be put to the best use during the pandemic. All information will be strictly confidential and held in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

You may also have been asked about your role during a pandemic as part of the wider pandemic planning process looking at how services may operate during a pandemic.

If you have an administration or office based post, you may have been asked to think about the skills and training you have or could obtain and how best these could be used to assist the Trust during a pandemic. For example, you may have a recent clinical background, but have moved into a management role. Managing information during the pandemic will be also be essential, so if your usual role involves collecting and providing information, you may be asked to join the Operational Group which will co-ordinate the Trust's response during the pandemic.

Please complete and return the form to:

(Please complete return address details before distributing this form)

As it is impossible to predict when a pandemic may happen, please help us to keep your information up to date by informing human resources if any of the information you have completed on this form changes, for example if you change contact details or gain more qualifications or skills.

Thank you

Staff Questionnaire - Pandemic Flu

About You			
1.	Assignment No. (on your pay slip)		
2.	Title		
3.	First Name		Known as (if different):
4.	Middle Name		
5.	Last Name		
6.	Date of Birth		
7.	Home Address		
8.	Post Code		
9.	Home Phone No.		
10.	Personal Mobile No.		(Personal Mobile for emergency use only)
11.	Work Phone No(s) Land and Mobile (if applicable).		
Emergency Contact (Next of Kin)			
12.	Name		
13.	Relationship	Partner / Dependent / Friend	
14.	Address		
15.	Contact No(s)		
16.	Alternative Contact		
Personal Responsibilities (people who depend on you for their general care):			
17.	Dependents	Pre school / Primary / Secondary	
18.	Carer e.g for other dependant		
20.	Emergency	i.e. care for relatives, spouse/partner	
About Your Job			
21.	Job Title		
22.	Team / Service		
23.	Directorate / Dept		
24.	Organisation	CCS / NHS Cambridgeshire:	
25.	Main Location		
26.	General Duties	Admin / Clinical / Manager / Nursing / Team Lead / Other	
27.	Contract (please circle)	Permanent / Temporary / Agency / Self-Employed / Secondment / Volunteer	
28.	Previous role		
29.	CRB Check	Yes (When) / No / Pending	

Skills						
<p><i>(please mark with a X all skills you have including those you may not currently use but could during a pandemic)</i></p> <p><i>*Assessment carried out with pre-determined guidance / script</i></p>						
29.	A		1 st Contact Assessment	K		Triage
	B		Telephone Assessment*	L		Discharge planning / care package
	C		Respiratory Care	M		Resuscitation
	D		Prescribing	N		First Aid
	E		Phlebotomy	O		Mental Health
	F		Physiotherapy	P		Wound Dressing
	G		Immunisation / Vaccination	Q		Minor ailments
	H		Children / Paediatrics	R		Pregnancy & Birth
	I		Older People / Elderly	S		Patient Moving & Handling
	J		Social Care	T		Mobility
	U		Working with babies, children, young people and their families	V		Working with sick babies, children and young people
	W		Working with children with special needs and disabilities	X		Working within a special school or hospice setting
	Y		Working within/an understanding of the Safeguarding agenda.			
Z		Other (please state):				
Languages						
30.	Which languages do you speak?					
31.	Could you translate medical symptoms? (see notes*)		Basic / Intermediate / Advanced / Medical Terminology			
Working Patterns						
32.	Would you be able to work different hours (i.e. shifts) during a pandemic?				Yes / No	
33.	Do you have any responsibilities that would limit your ability to work certain hours?				Yes / No	
34.	Do you have any health issues, which may restrict your ability to work in a different role?				Yes / No	
Travel & Transport – how do you get to work?						
35.	How do you usually travel to and from work?			Car / Public transport/ Walk / Bike / Lift / Other		
36.	Do you have a full driving license?				Yes / No	
37.	Do you have your own transport (including if not currently used for work)?				Yes / No	
38.	Would you be able to give lifts to other staff?				Yes / No	
39.	Would you be able to provide accommodation for staff during a pandemic?				Yes / No	

Working from home and other locations		
40.	Can you work from home?	Have remote access to IT / need remote access / not applicable / Other:
41.	Do you have your own Personal Computer / Laptop?	Yes / No
42.	Do you have an internet or broadband connection?	Yes / No
43.	What would you rate your computer experience as:	Basic / Intermediate / Advanced
Pandemic Role		
44.	Have you been given a specific role to carry out during a pandemic?	Yes / No
45.	If yes, please state:	Current role / Other:
General Comments		
46.	Please give any general comments: (i.e. due to retire, planning to change roles, maternity etc)	

Thank you for completing the form

(Please complete return address details before distributing this form)

Notes:

Skills:

Please tick any skills you have or had and could use with minimal refresher training. In the event of a shortage of staff you may be asked to take on a role, which reflects your skills.

*** Medical translation**

Basic = symptoms such as fever, headache etc

Intermediate = translating more complex symptoms such as previous medical symptoms

Advanced = native language or second language

Medical terminology = directly translating medical terms, i.e. anatomy and procedures

Office use: input on to Pandemic Flu data base Date input: _____

APPENDIX C

Managers' check list FITNESS TO RETURN TO WORK AFTER A SICKNESS ABSENCE WITH SWINE INFLUENZA

Employees are recommended by Health Protection Agency to **remain off work for seven calendar days** following onset of swine flu. Employees must be **well enough** to return to work.

Employees who have a suppressed immune system may be infectious for longer and should be nine days since onset of flu *and* free from respiratory symptoms for at least 48 hours.

Question	Yes/No
Did the illness that you have recovered from consist of fever 38°C or more plus cough/severe shortness of breath/sore throat/muscle ache	
How many days is it since you started with the illness?	
Do you have any residual symptoms? Fever above 38°C, cough/shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, conjunctivitis, watery diarrhoea, severe unexplained chest problems, headache	
Do you feel fit to return to work?	

I confirm that I am now ready to return to work following swine influenza and that I have no medical reasons not to return to work.

Employee Signature:

Date

Employee Name:

Manager signature

Manager Name

Place of work

Contact Tel. No:

When complete this form is to be **filed in the Personal File** of the employee

Line managers should ensure that sickness absence from swine influenza is recorded, and any additional processes put in place by their Trust on the reporting and monitoring of swine influenza followed.

Please do not notify occupational health of sickness absence from swine influenza.



**ASSESSMENT FOR WORKING WITH/CARING FOR
CASES OF PANDEMIC FLU**

Name	Date of Birth
Place of Work	Male/Female
Job Title	
Address	Contact No.
	Line Manager

This questionnaire is designed to detect any health problems that may increase your personal health risks whilst working with/caring for cases of pandemic flu.

It is not to be completed until UK Alert Levels 3 or 4 have been reached.

Do you suffer with any of the conditions lists below:

Severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	YES	NO
Bronchiectasis	YES	NO
Severe/brittle asthma	YES	NO
Poorly controlled/brittle diabetes	YES	NO
Uncontrolled angina/heart failure	YES	NO
HIV/AIDS	YES	NO
Any malignant disease	YES	NO
Are you pregnant	YES	NO
Have you had a solid organ transplant	YES	NO
Are you taking any regular medication that includes:		
• Steroids	YES	NO
• Immuno suppressant therapy	YES	NO
If yes please list below:-		

If none of the above apply but you have other concerns about your health in relation to increased susceptibility to pandemic flu please outline below:

I confirm the above information to be accurate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Please return to Occupational Health in confidence.

The Occupational Health Service, Hinchingbrooke Hospital, Hinchingbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. PE29 6NT. Tel: 01480 416263 Fax: 01480 416675