

Pandemic
Influenza

NHS guidance
on the current
and future
preparedness in
support of an
outbreak



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Document Purpose	Guidance
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Author	NHS England / Operations / EPRR
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Target Audience	CCG Clinical Leaders, Foundation Trust CEs , NHS England Regional Directors, NHS England Area Directors, NHS Trust CEs
Additional Circulation List	
Description	This document will provide an update on the current and future guidance on Pandemic Influenza for the NHS. It describes the current status of pandemic influenza guidance, and a strategic overview of work that is being taken forward by NHS England and partner organisations
Cross Reference	http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/gov/epr/
Superseded Docs (if applicable)	N/A
Action Required	To be advised of the current and future preparedness to a Pandemic Influenza outbreak
Timing / Deadlines (if applicable)	Quarterly updates from October 2013
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Document Status

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Pandemic Influenza

NHS guidance on the current and future preparedness in support of an outbreak

First published: October 2013

Prepared by: NHS England EPRR Team (corporate)

Purpose of Guidance

To provide an update to EPRR Accountable Emergency Officers and others with an interest / responsibility to EPRR / Pandemic Influenza in NHS commissioned services on the current status of NHS Pandemic Preparedness through:

- outlining the changes to the NHS since April 2013 and consequences of this for pandemic influenza preparedness and response
- describing the current status of pandemic influenza guidance, frameworks and strategies relevant to the NHS at international, national and sub-national level
- A strategic overview of work that is being taken forward by NHS England and partner organisations

Describing the current status of NHS England and preparedness of NHS in funding NHS commissioned care

Pandemic Influenza Policy - Summary of current UK risk level

UK Risk Register for pandemic influenza:

- The threat and potential impact of pandemic influenza is such that it remains the top risk on the UK Cabinet Office National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies (2013 edition) and continues to direct significant amount of emergency preparedness activity on a global basis.
- Lessons identified during the response to the 2009/10 influenza pandemic caused by the A(H1N1)pdm09 virus and subsequent 2010/11 winter seasonal influenza outbreak have informed on-going preparedness activity.

Outline planning for pandemic influenza:

- This document provides an update to NHS Organisations on the current status of NHS pandemic preparedness.
- Whilst the structures across the NHS have changed, the guiding principles and responsibilities of NHS Organisations as Category one and two responders under CCA (2004) remain unchanged.
- This document will be updated on a rolling quarterly basis. The next update is expected at the end of January 2014.

Changes in the NHS - changes since April 2013 and the consequences on NHS

pandemic influenza preparedness

- The NHS has undergone significant changes since April 2013 with the cessation of Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and formation of NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
- The formation of NHS England as a single, national organisation split into four regions of North, Midlands and East, South and London (sub-divided into smaller Area Teams) offers an opportunity for more cohesive and coordinated pandemic influenza preparedness across England.
- NHS England, CCG/CSU and NHS provider organisations collaborate on planning for emergencies through Local Health Resilience Partnerships, with Public Health England (PHE) teams, Directors of Public Health and local private and voluntary sector healthcare providers.
- Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA 2004), SHAs were category two responders and PCTs were category one responders. This has changed in the new structure.
- NHS England is a category one responder and CCGs are category two responders. This means that NHS England has significant roles and responsibilities in preparing for and responding to pandemic influenza, many of which were previously undertaken by PCTs.
- Public Health England (PHE) is also a newly formed organisation, as part of the Department of Health, formed through the amalgamation of the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and other national, regional and local bodies.
- PHE, like its predecessor the Health Protection Agency (HPA) is a category one responder, and retains significant responsibilities for pandemic influenza preparedness and response, not least overall multi agency leadership for this area.
- The Department of Health maintains the policy lead for pandemic influenza preparedness.

Guidance Documents - Published guidance documents for the NHS on pandemic

influenza preparedness

Pandemic flu guidance documents:

- Much of the published guidance on pandemic influenza still continues to provide the required advice and support to NHS organisations. While work is underway to update and publish guidance, these documents remain safe in terms of the information and advice provided on roles and responsibilities during an influenza pandemic.
- The following section identifies the organisations that have published documents on pandemic influenza, whether these are still current – i.e the policy is accurate and the structure is correct or where it can easily be amended to the new structures;
- NHS England are also responsible for a suite of emergency planning documents supportive of this workstream, available on the NHS England website.
<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/gov/eprp>

Cabinet Office:

- In July 2013, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) published revised guidance on the production of local multi-agency pandemic plans (*Preparing For Pandemic Influenza: Guidance for Local Planners*; www.gov.uk/pandemic-flu#guidance-for-local-planners).
- This document replaces previous Cabinet Office guidance documents and reflects the changes to the DH Strategy and reforms to the health sector in England. The guidance aims to support the development and revision of local multi-agency plans and Local Resilience Fora have been advised to review their pandemic preparedness and how the various bodies now work together locally following the changes to the NHS.

World Health Organisation (WHO):

- In June 2013, WHO published revised pandemic influenza guidance. This has moved away from the six previous clearly delineated pandemic phases, and instead uses a risk-based approach to pandemic influenza represented as a continuum of global phases (interpandemic, alert, pandemic and transition) that describe the spread of a new influenza subtype, taking account of the disease it causes, around the world. The document recognises the importance of national, regional and local plans for pandemic influenza that can be activated within the WHO framework.
- STATUS: Whilst referring to and recognising the importance of WHO arrangements, the UK response is not completely or solely predicated on a WHO alert and as such is not necessarily reliant on this information to activate NHS pandemic response plans.

Department of Health:

- The *UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy* was published in 2011. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responding-to-a-uk-flu-pandemic> It is supported by a suite of national guidance and scientific evidence that is publically available on the DH website. The strategy builds upon lessons identified during the 2009 pandemic and 2010/11 winter season
- The DH document, *Health and Social Care Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response*, published in 2012 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-response-to-flu-pandemics> focuses on the operational response of the NHS to an outbreak of pandemic influenza.
- **STATUS:** Whilst structures and terminology may relate to the previous PCT and SHA arrangements, the guidance given in both of these documents remains safe and continues to advise and give relevant and appropriate information to NHS providers and wider organisations for preparing for and responding to an influenza pandemic.
- The structural changes within the NHS may mean revisions will need to be made in the foreseeable future, however for now NHS organisations are advised to continue to use this document in planning for an outbreak. Both of these documents are DH-owned and as such it is the responsibility of DH to lead their review and update, with input from NHS England, PHE and other partners as appropriate.

Public Health England (PHE):

- Public Health England (PHE) is developing internal planning arrangements, based on previous Health Protection Agency (HPA) plans. PHE has assumed responsibility for some of the pandemic preparedness and response activities which previously were delivered by DH. These include ownership and management of the countermeasure stockpiles (antivirals, personal protective equipment, antibiotics), ownership of the Advanced Purchase Agreement for the supply of pandemic specific vaccine (agreement to activate in consultation with GPs), and the National Pandemic Influenza Service (NPFS) contract. This is in addition to on-going public health responsibilities around surveillance, epidemiology, expert advice and public health.
- **STATUS:** The PHE plan is due for publication in autumn 2013 and will be supported by internal facing documents regarding the specifics of their response.

NHS England:

- The *NHS England Operating Framework for Managing the Response to Pandemic Influenza* was published in October 2013. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of NHS England at all levels in planning for, responding to and recovering from a

pandemic influenza. This is new guidance and will support NHS England in working with local providers of NHS commissioned care through local commissioners to ensure the continuation and refinement of existing robust mechanisms and to ensure flexible, appropriate plans are in place to respond to pandemic influenza.

- **STATUS:** Now published, this will provide information to NHS and wider partners regarding NHS England's preparedness and response arrangements for pandemic influenza.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG):

- As category two responders (as defined by the CCA(2004)), the roles and responsibilities of CCGs are to support the NHS and other category one responders in preparing for and responding to pandemic influenza. Work is underway to develop a short operational document that describes the roles and responsibilities of CCGs before, during and after a pandemic.
- **STATUS:** The draft; once published will provide additional clarity on the pandemic specific roles and responsibilities of CCGs.

Current NHS preparedness - Outline of the on-going work being taken forward by the NHS, in planning and response for a pandemic influenza outbreak

NHS preparedness:

- The pandemic influenza preparedness and response arrangements of NHS organisations were tested during the 2009/10 A/H1N1 pandemic. Since then provider organisations have continued to update and maintain their local plans
- NHS England is developing internal organisational arrangements and working with national and local partners to ensure joined up working.
- Operational requirements and supporting documentation is under development and will be released upon completion

Tier one exercise:

A Cross Government Tier One (national) pandemic influenza Exercise Cygnus is planned for October 2014. Supported by the Cabinet Office (and Other Government Departments (OGDs)), this exercise will be led by the DH with strong engagement with PHE, NHS England and NHS Organisations, as well as OGDs and other stakeholders (e.g. Local Resilience Fora).

The Devolved Administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are all fully engaged in the planning process and will test their component parts alongside the core exercise.

The Strategic aim of the exercise is to *'assess the preparedness and response to a pandemic influenza outbreak in the UK'*

The key components of the exercise are as follows;

- Ministerial involvement at COBR to ensure the system is tested at all levels through the resilience community and into the NHS
- Selected parts of the UK will be involved, from Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) level through to regional and national engagement to ensure a good representation of the roles and responsibilities during a pandemic influenza outbreak
- Lessons identified will be published and shared across the resilience community.

Clinical Reference group:

- An EPRR clinical reference group has been set up to provide specialist, timely advice and clinical leadership to NHS England in the planning for and responding to national incidents and/or emergencies.
- The clinical reference group is chaired by National Clinical Director of Emergency Preparedness and Critical Care. The group report to the NHS England National Director for Domain 3 of the NHS Outcomes Framework; Acute episodes of care, and the NHS England Director of Operations and Delivery (Corporate).
- Representation to the EPRR clinical reference group has been drawn from a range of specialties with additional subject matter experts being invited to provide advice and/or support depending upon the nature of the work programme/incident
- This group will be reviewing current EPRR guidance to the NHS, which includes the suite of pandemic Influenza documents where there is relevant elements relating to the clinical discharge of responsibilities during a pandemic.
- At the first meeting held in August 2013, the group reviewed the NHS England Operating Framework and the published pandemic influenza; managing demand and capacity in health care organisations (surge guidance) (May 2009). The group felt both pieces of guidance are considered safe for support to a pandemic Influenza outbreak.

Pandemic programme - moving forward: Workstreams under development

	Delivery/publication
NHS England Operating Framework	October 2013
FFP3 Mask- refreshed and rebranded	October 2013
Clinical Reference Group guidance on roles and responsibilities	December 2013
Service Requirements / Specification on Antiviral Collection Points	April 2014
NHS Surge Guidance	Spring 2014
Tier one Pandemic Flu exercise	October 2014

If you have any further queries about the programme, please contact NHS England EPRR (corporate) team at england.epr@nhs.net