

Executive Summary

Influenza is a familiar winter infection in the UK. Almost every year new drifted strains of influenza subtypes A and B emerge giving rise to morbidity and mortality, mainly in older persons and young children.

Pandemic influenza is different. A pandemic of influenza is the result of a new influenza A virus subtype emerging which is markedly different from its currently circulating predecessors and is able to: cause clinically apparent illness in humans; spread efficiently from person to person; and spread widely, because a high proportion of the population is fully susceptible (most people will have little or no immunity to the new virus because they will not have been infected or vaccinated with it or a similar virus before).

HPS and the Health Protection Units of each of the NHS Boards have a major role in supporting the preparations in Scotland for, and response to, an influenza pandemic. This plan puts the Health Protection response in the context of the overarching national arrangements laid out in the UK Health Departments' Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan. It covers the Health Protection roles and responsibilities, and is intended for use by Health Protection staff and partner agencies working with HPS and the Health Protection Units of the NHS Boards. It updates the HP Framework for response to an influenza pandemic in Scotland published in June 2005.

The health protection response in Scotland has been developed in tandem with that of colleagues in the Health Protection Agency in England reflecting the close relationship between our organisations, our reliance in Scotland on HPA for delivery of specific health protection functions and the need to have a standard approach for health protection issues around pandemic influenza across the UK.

This Scottish framework describes the Health Protection roles of HPS and the NHS Boards in the event of an influenza pandemic, with the aim of providing a comprehensive and integrated response across these health protection organisations. The actions section clearly sets out the actions that will be implemented by HP staff (identified by job description) at each World Health Organization (WHO) designated pandemic influenza Phase and UK Alert Level. These include the actions HPS and the NHS Board Health Protection teams will take to meet their responsibilities as set out in the UK Health Departments' Plan and the actions that all National Services Scotland (NSS) & the NHS Boards will take to support the Health Protection Teams and to support the response of the National Health Service.

In addition to clearly describing the actions that will be taken by the HPS and HP Teams in each of the NHS Boards in response to an influenza pandemic, this framework provides a performance management tool that can be used to assist these organisations that will sit beneath this plan and detail their respective operational response. Detailed protocols for the management of suspect cases and contacts, together with control of infection guidelines are on the HPS (and HPA) websites.

The HP Framework for an influenza pandemic is an ongoing activity. This plan will be updated at least annually, and if necessary earlier should amendments to the UK National Plan or major developments in UK policy indicate. Comments to inform this review are welcome and can be submitted via the pandemic influenza pages on the HPS website.

Aims

The Health Protection Framework aims to:

- Provide a tactical framework for the health protection response to an influenza pandemic in Scotland .
- Puts the Health Protection Framework for the response to an influenza pandemic in Scotland in the context of the overarching national arrangements laid out in the UK Health Departments' Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan, the Health Protection Agency Pandemic Influenza Plan and the HPS Emergency Response Plan.
- Ensure that Health Protection resources of host organisations are effectively mobilised to support the national response to an escalating threat from a novel influenza subtype and an influenza pandemic itself, led by DH and discharged by the Scottish Executive in Scotland, in the areas of detection, risk assessment, diagnosis, management, control and prevention and communications.
- Provide clear guidance, through the allocation of actions and roles in relation to job descriptions, in order that all Health Protection Services can develop more detailed operational plans for their own parts of the response, including the development of local and regional arrangements with National Health Service (NHS) colleagues.