

## **Pandemic Flu Readiness Board**

### **Work Programme Forward Look**

#### **Introduction:**

1. The Pandemic Flu Readiness Board (PFRB) has not met since November 2018 due to reprioritisation in 2019 to plan for a potential no-deal EU Exit. This paper:
  - a. reminds members why PFRB was set up and its work programme;
  - b. provides updates on the work programme;
  - c. asks PFRB to consider if the work programme still focuses on the most appropriate ways to increase UK preparedness;
  - d. asks PFRB to agree priorities for the next 6-12 months taking into account on-going resource pressures.
  - e. Sets out next steps in terms of frequency of PFRB meetings in 2020 and Ministerial engagement.

#### **Background:**

2. The UK response to an influenza pandemic was tested in October 2016 as part of Exercise Cygnus. A number of lessons learnt were identified. In response, NSC(THRC) directed the Cabinet Office and DHSC to oversee a cross-Government work programme to increase the UK's readiness to manage the effects of a severe influenza pandemic. In Year 1 the work programme was divided into five workstreams, each consisting of a range of activities. In Year 2 additional projects were incorporated into the work programme.
3. In summary, the two year programme consisted of:
  - a. WS 1 (Healthcare)
  - b. WS 2 (Community Care)
  - c. WS 3 (Excess Deaths)
  - d. WS4 (Sector Resilience)
  - e. WS 5 (Moral and ethical)
  - f. WS 5 (Communications)
  - g. WS 5 (Draft Pandemic Flu Bill)
  - h. Year 2 (2011 UK Pandemic Flu Strategy Refresh)
  - i. Year 2 (Pan Flu Document Restructure)

6. The following workstreams, or parts of workstreams, will remain paused for the next three months, to be reviewed at the next PFRB meeting:
  - a. WS2 – production of surge guidance for Adult Social Care.
  - b. WS5 Communications: The work to develop a broader cross-Government messaging plan has been paused.
  - c. Year 2 – Public facing guidance reconfiguration: DHSC have developed proposals to restructure the guidance. Dependent on CCS resource, the technical reconfiguration and uploading to Resilience Direct was paused.
  - d. Year 2 – 2011 Strategy Refresh: DHSC have paused this workstream. This will be an opportunity to capture much of the work done through this programme.
  - e. Business Checklist Communication (WS4 deliverable): a draft checklist has been developed. The work to share this with businesses has been paused in recognition of the need for businesses to focus on other key Government communications about risks and contingency plans.

### **Next Steps**

7. *Frequency of PFRB meetings* – PFRB had committed to meet every 6 – 8 weeks until the key outputs of the work programme were delivered. It is proposed that in 2020 PFRB meets every 3 months. This will ensure that progress can be communicated to key planning partners through updated documentation where appropriate.
8. *NHS(THRC)* - Under the PFRB's current governance arrangements, the Board reports on progress to NSC (THRC). Due to EU Exit pressures, NSC(THRC) were not updated at the end of Year 2, March 2019. It is proposed that an update is sent to NSC (THRC) in March 2020, 3 years after the start of the programme. This should set out all the work that has been completed to date, as well as seeking agreement to our proposed timetable to complete the programme.
9. *New Government:* As Pandemic Flu remains the top hazard on the NSRA 2019, DHSC and CCS should update their incoming Ministers of this risk and the work being undertaken to increase UK preparedness.

### **Questions for the Board**

1. Is the PFRB work programme still the focus on the most appropriate ways to increase UK preparedness?
2. If so, do you agree with the proposed work plan for the next 6 months or are there suggested changes?
3. Are you content for PRFB to meet every three months in 2020?
4. Do you agree that we should seek to put an update to NSC(THRC) in March 2020?