

## **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)

### Update on the PFRB Work Programme

4. The following table summarises progress to date on the above work programme. PFRB is asked to consider the progress made to date on the work programme and consider the programme is still fit for purpose or needs to be adapted.

	Lead Gov't Dept.	Project Aim (as at May '18)	Current status
<b>WS1: Health care</b>	NHSE / I	Consider NHS surge escalation and triage in a reasonable worst case scenario pandemic, producing a briefing paper for CMO, CSA and CNO regarding options for increasing NHS capacity (delivered in year 1).  Year 2: Re-focus towards developing guidance for the NHS on changing service delivery, with supporting communications material.	<b>COMPLETED</b> - NHS England surge policy paper has been approved by the previous CMO, CSA & CNO. NHS England/Improvement are now finalising the strategy to be published and developing the service facing guidance that will be published when needed.
<b>WS2: Community care and Adult Social Care</b>	DHSC	Increase our understanding of and confidence in the ability of community and social care sectors to respond to a RWC pandemic. Year 1 – policy options for social care and community health care surge has been developed. Year 2 – Agree reporting routes for ASC. Review and update / publish guidance for the sector.	<b>PAUSED</b> - The surge policy paper is complete and reviewed by previous CMO. Community care – Draft strategy has been developed and shared with DAs and Royal Colleges for comment (Feb '19) Adult Social Care – Continuing to develop robust data and operational relationships through EU Exit work. There are no plans to produce any ASC guidance at this stage.
<b>WS3: Excess Deaths</b>	CCS	Ensure that there is sufficient capability in England (and Wales where relevant) to manage the volume of deaths set out in the National Resilience Planning Assumptions in an effective	<b>ONGOING</b> – A first draft has been produced, which requires further revision

		and coordinated, but respectful manner.	
<b>WS4: Sector Resilience</b>	CCS	Ensure that departments are confident that their key sectors have adequate resilience to anticipated levels of employee absence (both peak and duration) during a severe influenza pandemic.	<b>COMPLETED</b> – [ED checking latest]
<b>WS5: Communications</b>	DHSC	Year 1 – update, improve and consolidate public health communications messages.  Year 2 - broaden and operationalise the communications work completed in year 1, including developing coherent and planned cross-Government communications messages and a Concept of Operations.	<b>ONGOING (partially)</b> – Draft strategy has been cleared by the 4 Nation CMOs.
<b>WS5: Moral and Ethical</b>	DHSC	To ensure Ministers understand that there will be moral and ethical considerations in a response to an influenza pandemic, and give them the opportunity to access to moral and ethical advice in advance and/or at the time of a pandemic.	<b>COMPLETED</b>
<b>WS5: Draft Pandemic Flu Bill</b>	DHSC / CCS	Develop a single UK-wide draft Bill to be held internally and provide options to be brought forward if required to support a 4 nation response to a severe pandemic close to the reasonable worst case scenario.	<b>ONGOING</b> - All UK clauses are complete. Some DA clauses have been included. All UK supporting documentation complete. LCM paper drafted, awaiting clearance from the DAs upon completion of the clauses.
<b>Year 2: Refreshed 2011 Pandemic Flu strategy</b>	DHSC	Update the content of the 2011 UK Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Strategy to ensure that UK Pandemic Influenza preparedness and response policy is accurate and up to date.	<b>PAUSED</b> - Initial commission sent Nov '18. No further work undertaken.

<b>Year 2: Guidance restructure</b>	DHSC / CCS	Revise and reconfigure the public and local responder facing information/guidance on pandemic influenza on Gov.UK and Resilience Direct.	<b>PAUSED</b> – Documentation compiled and reviewed. Awaiting final review and upload to Resilience Direct.
<b>Year 2: LRF Pandemic Flu Standard</b>	CCS	Produce a Pandemic Flu Resilience Standard, outlining how Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) should prepare for an influenza pandemic.	<b>COMPLETED</b>

### Proposed Work Programme for 2020

5. The risk of pandemic influenza has not reduced. It is therefore important that we either complete the work programme that was set out in response to NSC(THRC)'s request or seek approval to adapt the programme if necessary to take into account recent events and deliver that. The proposed programme for the next 6 months (assuming that no revisions are needed to the work programme) is set out below for discussion:

Workstream	Lead Gov't Dept	Aim	Timeline
<b>WS3 – Excess Deaths</b>	CCS	Further drafting required before the final guidance is agreed with Wales and the stakeholder group. Cleared by Ministers if possible.	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020
<b>WS5 – Draft Pandemic Flu Bill</b>	CCS / DHSC	All UK Government and DA clauses complete and stitched together. Relevant supporting documentation complete.	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2020
<b>WS5 – Public Health Communications</b>	DHSC	DHSC Perm Sec to review proposed Comms Strategy in early 2020 to identify next steps, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If/when to seek ministerial agreement on Strategy</li> <li>• Production of Concept of Operations document to outline the comms command structure and responsibilities of different stakeholders during a flu pandemic.</li> </ul>	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2020

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?

5. What is the Devolved Administrations position on each of the workstreams and what are your priorities for the next 6 months?