



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Wales Pandemic Flu Preparedness Group

10:30am – 29th January 2018

Situation Room ECC(W)3

Minutes from the Meeting

Attendees:

David Goulding (DG)

Wyn Price (WP)

Marion Lyons (ML)

Name Redacted

- WG Health Emergency Planning Adviser
- WG Head of Resilience
- WG Public Health
- WG Social Services
- WG Health -Communications
- WG Health EP
- WG Health EP
- PHW – Public Health Wales
- Hywel Dda UHB – Dyfed Powys LRF
- PHW Emergency Planning Lead

1. Welcome

DG welcomed everyone to the meeting and following introductions, explained that the UK pandemic review was progressing at a pace and that it was important that the implications of the outcomes were properly considered in a Wales context, He added that this group had met previously to reflect on progress and that it was now timely to also include the chairs of the 4 LRF Pandemic Flu Groups.

LRF Attendance

It was noted with disappointment that three of the four LRF Chairs were not in attendance. WP confirmed that the LRF chairs had been invited and that no apologies had been received from them. Reference was made to LRF engagement being taken forward by DCLG in England and the need for Welsh Government to also engage with the LRFs in Wales. DG emphasised the importance of having the LRF chairs on the group and asked that this be re-enforced with them.

ACTION: WP to reiterate the importance of LRFs attendance.

2. UK Pandemic Flu Review and Work Plan

DG discussed the PFRB High Level Work Plan, advising that the Review Board had agreed to extend the time period into a second year to address ongoing deliverables. DG asked if there were any questions regarding the Work Plan, none were asked and added that the next UK Pandemic Flu Readiness Board would meet at the end of February. WP alluded to the difficult timescales for some areas being set centrally.

The meeting discussed the importance of operational delivery, through the UK Review some key pandemic influenza strategic policies and guidance are updated notably the UK Pandemic Influenza Framework 2011 and the Cabinet Office Pandemic Influenza Guidance to LRFS.

3. Wales Engagement in UK Review

WP advised that it was the perception at a UK level that Wales and other devolved governments are lagging slightly behind England in some areas such as legislation and health and social care surge planning due to a lack of resource.

DG felt that Wales may be structurally better placed than the other regions because the emergency planning networks and joint working is quite robust and there was the experience of swine flu and full participation in Exercise CYGNUS.

He felt it important to build on what we already have in place and where appropriate amend pandemic flu guidance to take account of the outcome of the UK review.

He felt that this Group with the involvement of LRF representatives offered an effective and efficient mechanism for addressing any operational changes necessary both within national arrangements and at a local level.

WP confirmed that relevant documents for each of the Pan Flu Work-streams had been shared with the group and Welsh Government was represented on all of the Pan Flu Readiness Board work streams.

WP said that it was important to engage with the Department of Health in the drafting of the Pan-flu Bill as it was vital the finalised Bill was fit for purpose and took account of devolved matters.

4. Work Stream Current Position

4.1 Health Care Surge and Triage

In the absence of Name Redacted our representative on this sub group, DG advised that NHS England had progressed in producing draft surge guidance that combines both NHS and social care. Welsh Government had been asked to give a view on the document and this had been done.

DG confirmed that Welsh Government had issued its own Wales Health and Social Care Influenza Pandemic Preparedness & Response Guidance and proposed that this document would need to be considered in relation to the outputs from the Health Care Surge and Triage Workstream and be reviewed against the NHS England draft.

NR enquired into the timescale for the surge and triage guidance. DG said that a contentious issue in the English draft was the option of population triage and his understanding was that this would need to be considered by the 4 CMOs. That said he felt that work was needed to consider our current guidance in relation to the NHS England draft and identify any improvements

ACTION: **NR and **NR** to review NHSE document and identify areas to be included in Wales Health and Social Care Influenza Pandemic Preparedness & Response Guidance.**

4.2 Adult Social Care and Community Healthcare Sectors

NR talked through the paper and concerns were raised about the issue of data sharing. WP said that NHS in Scotland has a system in place for data sharing and that Wales needed to progress its system to a live-data depository.

NR said that it was difficult to define a 'Person of Risk' and that host virus interaction had to be considered. **NR** said that a more nuanced approach was required allowing for flexibility. WP acknowledged the problem with definitions and said that this was down to the changing nature of Pan-flu.

DG felt that in planning for and responding to a pandemic the LRF mechanism for mutual aid, including to social care needs to be robust. Within the LRF structures, local authorities engage usually through emergency planning leads and social care support may rely on this representation.

NR said that in her area the LRF sub group involves experts in social care, however it may need to be expanded to consider the outcomes of the review in these sectors.

DG suggested to **NR** that he may wish to consider whether and how the current Wales Health and Social Care Influenza Pandemic Preparedness & Response Guidance needed to be strengthened to take account of any outcomes from the UK Group.

ACTION: **NR to consider and advise on any changes to Wales Guidance.**

ACTION: HEPU to open a page on Resilience Direct to share documents.

4.3 Managing Excess Deaths

WP talked to the paper, and advised that the National Risk Assessment looks at a reasonable worst case scenario of 1.25%; he added that most LRF's would struggle to meet figures as they have a lack of temporary mortuary space and transportation.

NR said that there was an issue with funeral directors being slow at collecting bodies and that this would be heightened in a mass casualty situation, she suggested that an extension on service collection be explored.

WP said that we should look at ways of increasing 'body holding' which would in a pandemic. It was noted that bodies don't need to be kept in hospitals, just an NHS site.

WP added that the reasonable worst case scenario could increase or decrease, the NEMA contract was due to end in March 2018 and that currently there were 16 body refrigeration units in Wales. WP hoped that this number would be extended with body holding facilities increasing above 120 and mobile capacity enhanced.

WP said that he had doubts in regard to the delivery of what was agreed in the report and advised that the landscape for dealing with Excess Deaths was changing and that LRFs would need to revisit their plans.

NR said that it was difficult to engage with the private sector as funeral homes and mortuaries were often reluctant to engage, she said that new guidance may help aide engagement.

NR said that there was a risk of overwhelming facilities and that we needed to think more laterally about storage. He suspected that funeral services had built out waste and only supplied their service based on reasonable demand. **NR** suggested the recruitment of other businesses with refrigerator and transportation capacity. **NR** said that it was difficult to pin down lists of facilities and suggested working with Local Authority Estate Managers.

NR said that a plan was required to establish who could collect bodies from care homes and suggested an emergency register for body collection.

WP felt that a pandemic Bill could look at this and acknowledged that body transportation was an issue and added that previously there had been resistance on the part of local authorities to undertake body collection/transportation.

4.4 Health Communications

NR talked about the communication plan and acknowledged that the plan was beginning to reflect devolved nations. DG said that a UK communications approach is necessary and would support the UK Pandemic Framework that has been agreed by Ministers.

It was noted that the communications strategy would need to be discussed with other groups, such as the LRF's. SH emphasised the need for clear lines of

communication from the UK to local level, where appropriate. ML suggested the PHW protocol be extended to assist streamlined communications.

NR said that the plans were being worked through and were currently concentrating on the UK framework. Details at an operational level had not yet been looked at any details on message distribution and digital response would be considered after the plan had been issued.

NR noted that lines of communication had improved significantly and plans were in place for when traditional communications go down and that communications system would relate to all emergencies, not just Pan-flu.

NR noted that having a communication network for all emergencies would be a great benefit as we could use lessons learned in other areas to feed our own communication strategy.

4.5 Pan-flu Bill

WP said that the key focus of the Bill was health and social care but added that there was one treasury issue and that he was waiting for a response on, which may need to be included within the Bill.

NR added that the Bill needed to be relevant and consider a number of scenarios.

WP noted his concern that the people driving the Bill were not around for Swine Flu and so, are not in a position to learn from past experiences.

NR reiterated that the content of the Bill would be very important.

WP advised that we are involved in the development of the Bill and DG added that we would be getting legal support to ensure our interests whether devolved or not are properly covered. WP said that once in place, the Bill could be progressed through Parliament in a week in the event of a pandemic. He added that the Bill would remain flexible for amendment.

4.6 Sector Resilience

WP talked through the Resilience Report and noted the reassurances from devolved areas such as water, fire, health etc.

WP said that there would be a Local Government EP Managers meeting in February, whereby assurances would be sought against current planning assumptions for Pan Flu.

ACTION: WP to ask for assurances for Ministers from the LA EP Managers.

4.7 Other Cross Cutting Enablers

WP said that the Enablers are being fed into the Bill.

5. Planning Assumptions – Modelling Update

DG noted that there were upcoming workshops looking at the effects of staff absences, and that he expected planning assumptions to change.

NR advised that the SPI-M group were looking at formula for seasoned flu and considering what lessons could be learned from absenteeism in other scenarios, such as school closures in bad weather. She added that planning assumptions would need to include those who care for others and therefore be absent.

DG advised that the SPI-M group were also considering all matters relating to the modelling of anticipated aspects of an influenza pandemic and the potential implications for policy decisions.

DG felt that the workshops would be a good indicator as to any issues. **NR** confirmed that they would aim to engage in the events and report back to the Group.

ACTION: **NR** o report back to the Group.

7. Date of Next Meeting

ACTION: HEPU to look at dates for next meeting - 3rd/4th week of March.

Actions

Person(s)	Action Required
NR	Consider and advise on any changes to Wales Guidance. (4.2)
	Review NHSE document and identify areas to be included in Wales Health and Social Care Influenza Pandemic Preparedness & Response Guidance. (4.1)
HEPU	Open a page on Resilience Direct to share documents. (4.2)
HEPU	Arrange date for next meeting (3 rd /4 th week of March). (7)
Marion Lyons & NR	Engage with workshops and report back to the group. (5)
Wyn Price	To reiterate the importance of LRF's attendance at meetings. (1)
Wyn Price	Ask for assurances for Ministers from the LA EP Managers. (4.6)