



Flu Pandemic Preparedness Planning

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RUSI
15 July 2005



Priority

World Health Organisation:

- *“Experts agree that another pandemic is likely to happen but are unable to say when.”*
- *“The specific characteristics of a future pandemic virus cannot be predicted ...”*
- *“Governments and their partners need to develop strategies and programmes to prepare for a pandemic.”*



Engagement

- Wide range of practitioners engaged in planning.
- Public information:
 - www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu
 - *UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan*
 - *Explaining Pandemic Flu*
 - *Pandemic Flu Key Facts*
 - *Pandemic Flu, important information for you and your family*



Planning Assumptions – the virus

- See *UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan* (Section 4.3):
 - *“A new pandemic will be due to a new sub-type of influenza A.”*
 - *“Such a strain could first emerge anywhere, including the UK, but is most likely to emerge in China or the Far East ..”*
 - *“In the event of a novel influenza virus causing significant outbreaks of human illness elsewhere in the world, it is unlikely that the UK could prevent importation; even closing all borders is likely only to delay importation ...”*
 - *“Spread from an origin in Asia is likely to follow the main routes of travel and trade.”*
 - *“Spread from the source country to the UK ... is likely to take less than 3 months ... modern travel may result in wide international spread even more rapidly than this.”*



Planning Assumptions – UK spread

- See *UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan* (Section 4.3):
 - “... it will take about ten weeks (or even less) from the first reported case in the UK until influenza activity across the country rises above the UK threshold for ‘baseline’ activity; it will then take a further 2-4 weeks until high levels are established across the country.”
 - “Once influenza levels exceed [the] baseline threshold ... influenza activity in the UK may last for 3-5 months, depending on the season, and there may be subsequent waves, weeks or months apart.”
 - “All ages will be affected, but children and otherwise fit adults could be at relatively greater risk, particularly should elderly people have some residual immunity from exposure to a similar virus earlier in their lifetime.”



Planning Assumptions – UK impact

UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan:

- *“The most likely scenario, based on previous pandemics in the 20th century, is a cumulative clinical attack rate of 25% of the population (the figure advised by the WHO) over one or more waves of around 12 weeks each, weeks or months apart. 10% and 50% attack scenarios have been considered. The second wave may be the more severe.”*
- *“The impact of overall case fatality rates between 0.37% and 2.5% have been considered.”*

	10% attack rate	25% attack rate	50% attack rate	
Range of possible excess deaths, UK population	0.37% CFR	21,500	53,700*	107,500
	1.00% CFR	56,700	141,800	283,700
	2.5% CFR	141,800	354,600	709,300



Workstreams

- Gathering information and getting it to those who need it, at all levels.
- Modelling – the virus; its spread; its impact; response measures.
- The medical response – separate presentation
 - Vaccines.
 - Anti-virals purchase, distribution and use.
 - Treatment protocols and clinical guidelines
- Management of the dead.
- British nationals overseas
- Ensuring business continuity
- Communications.
- Crisis management arrangements.
- Exercises and other testing and assurance.



Business Continuity Planning Assumptions

- Current planning assumptions are based on models of earlier pandemics and may alter as the characteristics of the new virus become known.
- Assume peak sickness absenteeism of 10% for 1-2 weeks.
- Care responsibilities and fear of infection will add to this.
- Assume **cumulative** 25% absenteeism over 3-4 months.



Business Continuity - suggestions

- Check that generic contingency plans are applicable to a pandemic.
- Check in particular that core activities can be sustained over several weeks.
- Identify essential functions, posts and individuals whose absence would critically affect business continuity.
- Check the dependencies.
- Factor in health and safety responsibilities.
- Note the possible consequences of steps to contain the spread of infection. Could result in higher levels of absence from work.
- Be flexible. Plans may need to change as evidence about the virus emerges.