

Pandemic influenza

Supplementary information for
third sector organisations



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Executive Summary

The threat of a potential worldwide influenza pandemic presents a real and daunting challenge to the health, social and economic well being of any country. Planning and preparing now will help to lessen its impact and aid in the UK's recovery from an influenza pandemic. The UK Government and key partners across all of society are therefore working together now to take every practical and proportional step to ensure that the UK prepares well for the pandemic – this guidance document forms part of that effort.

Over half a million third sector organisations play a key role in strengthening communities within the UK. The third sector ranges from small community groups to large national or international organisations. It encompasses big household name charities as well as many smaller, grassroots organisations. Comparison, based on what each does, or by the resources available to them, is difficult though they are similar in their independence from state and market together with their desire to make a positive difference to the lives of others.

This document gives background information and highlights key areas for consideration to support third sector organisations to plan, prepare and respond to pandemic influenza. By planning well, third sector organisations could play a key role in contributing to the success of the general response to, and recovery from, a pandemic.

Throughout a pandemic, especially at times when illness peaks in the population, third sector organisations may receive additional requests for help, particularly from health and social care partners, who need to be freed up to provide critical care. You may wish to consider how your services or activities may be utilised, enhanced or expanded to help and what support volunteers and staff may need to take on new, enhanced or expanded roles.

Your ability to provide this help will depend on your current capabilities, your knowledge of the likely needs of your current service user groups and the effect a pandemic may have in reducing your own capacity and resources. Addressing this now will help you consider the potential impact of your decisions and choices on your partner organisations and the statutory services.

This information brings together the UK's planning assumptions and the Government's response strategy for the various aspects of an influenza pandemic that will be particularly relevant to third sector organisations. It also draws on existing good practice across third sector organisations in the UK and abroad.

The information will help those at different levels in all third sector organisations in their consideration of the direct impacts that a pandemic will have on their organisations and networks and the ways in which they can protect themselves and others. It will, at the same time, help in the wider response to the pandemic and minimise its impacts for all of society.

The information also recognises that planning for a pandemic, and responding to one while it is happening, involves many difficult decisions which may have the potential to create tension between the needs of individuals/organisations and the needs of the wider population. In some cases, this may mean that difficult decisions may have to be made for the greater good of the UK population as the benefits to be gained from these actions has been judged to outweigh its potential impacts.

In all its pandemic influenza planning, the UK has robustly applied the ethical framework already set out by the Government for responding to this threat. This means:

- Everyone matters
- Everyone matters equally – but this does not mean that everyone is treated the same
- The interests of each person are the concern of all of us, and of society
- The harm that might be suffered by every person matters, and so minimising the harm that a pandemic might cause is a central concern.
- Working together to plan for, and respond to, a pandemic
- Helping one another
- Taking responsibility for our own behaviour, for example by not exposing others to risk

The UK Government aims to ensure that its approach to influenza pandemic planning and response is open and transparent. Those issues considered contentious, and the proposed government plans to deal with them, are discussed openly within this document to stimulate informed planning and discussions at all levels of society including within third sector organisations.

Although pandemic influenza remains one of the most severe natural challenges likely to affect the UK, by working together and preparing proportionately, we can all do a great deal to lessen its potential impact on our health, social and economic well-being.

1 Introduction

1.1 Aim

This information aims to encourage and support third sector organisations in planning for a human influenza pandemic. It provides a brief background on pandemic flu, its potential impact on the UK, the proposed government response and the implications for third sector organisations.

It also explains the role third sector organisations could play in helping to facilitate the response to a pandemic within their local areas.

It is intended that this document be read in conjunction with the National Framework for Responding to an Influenza Pandemic. The National Framework describes, in detail, the Government's strategic approach to and preparations for an influenza pandemic, and sets out the UK planning assumptions for the different phases of a pandemic.

This document does not attempt to duplicate the information in the National Framework; however where necessary information has been summarised and included. Cross-references to the relevant sections of the National Framework have been included where appropriate.

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/pandemicflu/guidance/national.aspx

1.2 Audience

This document contains information for third sector organisations in England and Wales. The Scottish Government and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland may issue parallel information.

1.3 Using this guidance

This document should be read in advance of a pandemic influenza to ensure that robust preparations/plans are enabled to be put in place by third sector organisations.

This guidance is comprised of four sections:

1. Introductory remarks.
2. Generic pandemic influenza background information.
3. Details of the proposed government response to a pandemic that may be of particular interest to some third sector organisations.
4. Information to facilitate planning and response within third sector organisations. This section is subdivided into guidance on how to protect your organisation, business continuity planning to maintain and expand existing functions, and information on new functions that third sector organisations may consider to facilitate the response.

In order to help you develop and implement your plans for a possible flu pandemic, we recommend that everyone who is responsible for third sector organisation planning should read this guidance and the checklist provided at Annex A. You should also take note of Annex B, which provides links to a wide range of other sources of information and guidance.

1.4 Further information

Annex B provides a number of links to additional information. Any further questions or feedback on this document should be directed to the Pandemic Flu Preparedness Team in the Department for Health if they relate specifically to the implications of pandemic flu for the voluntary sector (pandemicflu@dh.gsi.gov.uk), and to the Civil Contingencies Secretariat at the Cabinet Office if they relate to emergency planning (CCSAssessmentsTeam@cabinetoffice.x.gsi.gov.uk).

2 Pandemic influenza background

2.1 What is pandemic influenza?

Flu is a familiar infection in the UK, especially during the winter months. The illness, caused by the flu virus, can be mild or severe and, at times, can lead to death. Some groups of people are more susceptible to flu than others, in particular: older people; young children and those with certain medical conditions. Pandemic flu is different from ordinary flu because it occurs when a new flu virus emerges into the human population and spreads from person to person worldwide – all countries will be affected. As it is a new virus, the entire population will be susceptible because no one will have any immunity to it. Therefore, healthy adults as well as older people, young children and people with existing medical conditions will be affected. The lack of immunity in the UK population will mean that the virus has the potential to spread very quickly between people. This will result in many more people becoming severely ill and many more deaths.

2.2 What will an influenza pandemic look like?

This section should be read alongside Section 3 of the National Framework. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/pandemicflu/guidance/national.aspx

One of the main challenges faced by those planning against an influenza pandemic is that the nature and impact of the pandemic virus cannot be known until it emerges and therefore response arrangements must be flexible enough to deal with a range of possibilities and be capable of adjustment as they are implemented.

Until then, planning should be based on the assumptions set out in 'A National Framework for Responding to an Influenza Pandemic' and as summarised below. These assumptions have been derived from a combination of current virological and clinical knowledge, expert analysis, extrapolations from previous pandemics and mathematical modelling:

- Duration and timing – A future influenza pandemic could occur at any time. It may come in two or more waves several months apart. Each wave may last two to three months across the UK as a whole. If a pandemic flu strain emerges overseas, it will almost certainly reach the UK; while this may take around a month, planners cannot rely upon having that much forewarning. Once the pandemic arrives, it is likely to spread throughout the country in a matter of weeks.
- Depending upon the virulence of the influenza virus, the susceptibility of the population and the effectiveness of countermeasures, up to 50 per cent of the population could become ill and up to 750,000 additional deaths (that is deaths that would not have happened over the same period of time had a pandemic not taken place) could occur by the end of a pandemic in the UK.

- Increased staff absenteeism levels (resulting from illness, caring responsibilities, school closures, public transport closures, death etc) throughout the pandemic period. As a rough working guide, organisations employing large numbers of people, with flexibility of staff redeployment, should ensure that their plans are capable of handling staff absence rates of up to 15-20 per cent (in addition to usual absenteeism levels). Small organisations, or larger organisations with small critical teams, should plan for level of absence rising to 30-35 per cent at peak, perhaps higher for very small organisations with only a handful of employees.
- In the absence of early or effective interventions, society may also face much wider social and economic disruption, lower production levels, shortages and distribution difficulties.

2.3 Signs and symptoms of flu

It is likely that the signs and symptoms of pandemic flu will be the same as for ordinary flu but may be more severe and cause more serious complications.

The most significant symptoms are the sudden onset of:

- Fever
- Cough or shortness of breath.

Other symptoms may include:

- Headache
- Tiredness
- Chills
- Aching muscles
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Loss of appetite.

2.4 Incubation and infection periods

The incubation period (time between contact with the virus and the onset of symptoms) ranges from one to four days, for most people it will be two to three days.

People are most infectious to others soon after they develop symptoms though they can continue to shed the virus, for example in coughs and sneezes, typically for up to five days (seven days in children). People become less infectious as their symptoms subside and once symptoms are gone, they are considered no longer infectious to others.

2.5 What should you do if you have symptoms?

If you develop symptoms:

- Stay at home
- Follow advice issued by the Department of Health
- Phone your employer or occupational health department
- Do not go to work until you are fully recovered.

2.6 How is pandemic flu caught and spread to others?

Flu, including pandemic flu, is spread from person to person by close contact. Some examples of how it can be spread include:

- Coughing and/or sneezing by an infected person within a short distance (usually one metre or less) of someone
- Touching or shaking the hand of an infected person and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands
- Touching surfaces or objects (e.g. door handles) that have become contaminated with the flu virus and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.

2.7 What should individuals do to protect themselves and others from pandemic flu?

- Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing and/or sneezing. Dispose of the tissue promptly and then wash your hands. Tissues should be disposed of in domestic waste and do not require any special treatment. Do not use handkerchiefs or reuse tissues. This practice contaminates pockets or handbags which will recontaminate hands every time they go into those pockets or handbags.
- Clean hands frequently, especially after coughing, sneezing and using tissues. Soap and water is an effective means of cleaning hands, however handrubs (microbicidal handrubs, particularly alcohol-based) can be used as an alternative.
- Minimise touching your mouth, eyes and/or nose, unless you have recently cleaned your hands.
- Use normal household detergent and water to clean surfaces frequently touched by hands.
- Clean your hands as soon as you arrive home.

3 How will pandemic influenza plans affect third sector organisations?

The UK government has been making preparations for a pandemic for many years – these preparations are based on limiting the health, social and economic impacts of a pandemic and facilitating recovery.

All government planning, including those specific aspects outlined below, have been subject to widespread consultation and the feasibility, merits and ethical impacts of the specific response options have been considered fully. The fundamental principles of equal respect and concern have been applied to all policies relating to influenza pandemic.

The proposed UK response actions that may directly impact on third sector organisations, as likely providers of new and additional services that would need to be provided in a response to a pandemic, are described below. Full details of the response arrangements being planned by the UK are available at: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/pandemicflu.aspx.

3.1 Distribution of antivirals

While they are not a cure, antiviral medications may reduce the length and the severity of flu symptoms. Their targeted use may be an important countermeasure in shortening the period that individuals are able to pass on the infection to others. To be effective the first dose should be taken within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms

The government plans to make antiviral medicines available to people with symptoms during a pandemic and is building stocks of oseltamivir (Tamiflu). The stocks will be sufficient to treat all those expected to get ill (i.e. 50% of the population).

Strategic objectives for antiviral distribution are to:

- deliver antivirals to those who need them within the desired timeframe
- ensure that the majority of symptomatic patients stay at home in order to prevent spread of the virus.

Arrangements for accessing antivirals at times of high demand are critical to the national response to a pandemic. A multiple pathway system is proposed with novel methods, such as antiviral collection points, working alongside traditional mechanisms for accessing medication. Local and national messages will be issued in the event of a pandemic, and should be monitored.

The expectation is that voluntary organisations would be well placed locally to assist in the distribution of antivirals.

In order to minimise the spread of influenza it is important that, where possible, symptomatic patients do not leave their house. With this in mind, the concept of 'Flu Friends' has been developed.

3.2 Flu Friends

People will be encouraged to build a network of 'flu friends' from amongst their family, friends and neighbours who may be willing to support them should they become ill. A 'flu friend' would collect antiviral medication from the nearest antiviral collection point and deliver it back to the ill person. If they wish, they may also offer other support, such as shopping, to ensure that the ill person has basic supplies. It will be important to ensure that those delivering antivirals, such as flu friends, are aware of the instructions for taking the medication.

Everyone may be vulnerable during a pandemic although people with pre-existing circumstances or conditions may find that this vulnerability could increase. **Third sector organisations have a key role to play in supporting other organisations to identify and to meet the needs of these individuals who may be vulnerable or socially isolated in communities. For some organisations, this flu friend service would be an extension of their daily service provision in the community.**

Third Sector organisations that may have the capability to provide capacity as 'flu friends' to vulnerable or socially isolated and hard-to-reach groups should contact their Local Authority's Emergency Planning Office.

4 Planning guidance for third sector organisations

Planning will support service users, volunteers and staff to manage the additional pressures and challenges that may arise during a pandemic. It will tell them what to expect and what to do to develop an effective, co-ordinated response.

Third sector organisations offer a wide range of services to the public and as such are rightly regarded as a crucial resource to engage with in building civil resilience. There are several good reasons for this, including a wide network of volunteer organisations across the UK, providing a prepared and skilled network of volunteers combined with experience of dealing with people at times of crisis and difficulty. Given the far reaching consequences of a pandemic, it is essential that third sector organisations are fully engaged in multi-agency pandemic influenza planning in order to ensure that these voluntary resources are maintained and, if possible and appropriate, utilised during a response to ensure that the UK public are offered as much support as is reasonably possible.

With this in mind, a staged planning process for third sector organisations is recommended (to be carried out with partners within your Local Resilience Forum):

Step 1	Protecting your organisation prior to the onset of the pandemic and in response to the pandemic by raising internal organisational awareness through the dissemination of key messages.
Step 2	Planning for the continuity of core activities considered to be essential within your organisation.
Step 3	Planning to be able to cope with an increased demand for some services as a result of the unique circumstances surrounding a pandemic.
Step 4	Planning to be able to facilitate the response to the pandemic and potential new demands for services that may be required as a direct result of a pandemic.

In particular, third sector organisations may wish to build into their plans what role they can provide in identifying and supporting vulnerable groups and socially isolated individuals who may not otherwise have a 'Flu Friend' to collect antivirals on their behalf.

4.1 Step 1 – Protecting your organisation

During a pandemic, applying good respiratory and hand hygiene practices and encouraging compliance with public health advice are likely to make the most important contribution to the UK's overall response. Good respiratory and hand hygiene practices, for example, will play an important role in slowing

the spread of a pandemic, whether people are attending work, socialising, travelling on public transport or using public places.

In order to protect others and reduce the spread of infection, anyone with symptoms consistent with an influenza-like illness (ILI) should stay at home and minimise social/family contact until symptoms have resolved. They should only go out if absolutely necessary.

Those who do not have symptoms consistent with an ILI should continue normal activities for as long and as far as that is possible. They can reduce – but not eliminate – the risk of catching or spreading influenza by avoiding unnecessary close contact with those who have symptoms consistent with an ILI and adopting high standards of respiratory and hand hygiene at all times.

Simple measures will help individuals to protect themselves and others. The necessary measures include:

- Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing and/or sneezing. Dispose of the tissue promptly and then wash your hands. Tissues should be disposed of in domestic waste and do not require any special treatment. Do not use handkerchiefs or reuse tissues. This practice contaminates pockets or handbags which will recontaminate hands every time they go into those pockets or handbags.
- Clean hands frequently with soap and water, especially after coughing, sneezing, and using tissues. Soap and water is an effective means of cleaning hands, however handrubs (microbicidal handrubs, particularly alcohol-based) can be used as an alternative.
- Minimise touching your mouth, eyes and/or nose, unless you have recently cleaned your hands.
- Use normal household detergent and water to clean surfaces frequently touched by hands.
- Clean your hands as soon as you arrive home.

With this in mind, third sector organisations should consider the following in advance of a pandemic:

- Ensure that adequate supplies of cleaning materials are readily available (or, if you contract others to provide cleaning services, check that they have contingency plans) and that there are procedures for regular cleaning of hard surfaces.
- Ensure that hand hygiene facilities are adequate and working properly; if/when updating or repairing facilities, consider installing automatic or foot-operated taps, dryers and waste bins. Ensure that you have stocks of tissues, paper towels and soaps.
- Consider how you might use hand cleansers¹, for example at the entrances to rooms or sites without hand-washing facilities.
- Check that you have procedures for isolating (with appropriate supervision) anyone who falls ill within your organisations.

¹ The term 'hand cleansers' is used in this guidance for a range of cleansers and sanitisers available as gels, handrubs, wipes and sprays. You should follow the manufacturers' guidance on the use of such materials.

- Ensure that your staff and volunteers are all aware of the relevant procedures that will be put in place during a pandemic and of the infection control guidance contained here.
- Remind parents and carers that children displaying flu symptoms should stay at home.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) – facemasks

The infection control measures described above should not be neglected at the expense of less effective methods such as facemasks.

Broadly speaking, the only circumstances, where the use of facemasks by healthy individuals may play a part in reducing the risk of infection would be the situation where someone was in close contact/caring (less than one metre) for an ill or symptomatic individual.

However, the use of personal protective equipment, such as facemasks, is easy for individuals to misuse or misapply and may also engender a sense of the wearer being “protected” and being less rigorous in applying other, more important, protective measures.

Simple and generic guidance has been developed by the UK Government which aims to allow individuals and employers to consider the type of the work they do and situations where there may be the potential for exposure to the influenza virus. It can be found at

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/187638/flu_businesses_risk_guidance.pdf

and includes guidance on how to:

- Describe the steps that can be taken to moderate any potential exposure to the influenza virus.
- Set out a simple but comprehensive approach to considering the more effective measures that might be used to reduce the risk of infection in occupational settings during an influenza pandemic.
- Put into context the relative value of personal protective equipment (PPE), including the wearing of facemasks, when compared to other environmental and organisational approaches.
- Provide a matrix that employers can use to assess their particular occupational setting.

Third sector organisations are advised to use this guidance to assess infection control requirements and guidance for people within their organisation and build this into their business continuity planning.

4.2 Step 2 – Planning for the continuity of core activities

An influenza pandemic is likely to result in significant increases in the levels of absenteeism within all organisations. Modelling suggests that organisations employing large numbers of people, with flexibility of staff redeployment, should ensure that their plans are capable of handling staff absence rates of up to 15-20 per cent (in addition to usual absenteeism levels). Small organisations, or larger organisations with small critical teams, should plan for

level of absence rising to 30-35 per cent at peak, perhaps higher for very small organisations with only a handful of employees.

It is therefore important that third sector organisations prepare business continuity plans which will enable them to maintain the continuity of critical core activities. This includes identifying core activities i.e. those upon which society is most dependent and other activities which are less critical and could therefore be curtailed.

The Cabinet Office has produced a detailed checklist for businesses specifically relating to pandemic influenza. It identifies important and specific activities which organisations can do to prepare for a pandemic. Annex A of this document also provides business continuity planning guidelines. The checklist can be found at:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/132464/060516flubcpchecklist.pdf

In a pandemic, communications will be key. In light of this, organisations may wish to develop a communications strategy, which could cover:

- internal communications with staff and volunteers within the organisation
- communications with other local organisations and those individuals/groups in the community supported by third sector organisations
- updates on the state of play
- useful contact information – for instance, numbers for staff within the organisations, numbers for other organisations – particularly where organisations are supporting other organisations or co-ordinating volunteers/work
- whether staff should attend to undertake volunteer work (and, if so, where they should attend).

Decision-making

All organisations will experience reduced capacity, mainly due to workforce shortages, and this could bring difficult decisions and choices. In particular, third sector organisations may wish to consider:

- Your current capabilities and knowledge of the needs of service user groups and partner organisations
- Novel ways of reaching your volunteer network which will reduce the levels of resources required. For example, newsletters, tapes and CDs or the Internet may be utilised to keep your organisation in touch with service users
- Your duty of care to service user groups and particularly whether they may be made vulnerable, or more vulnerable, by the decisions you take²
- Legislative and insurance issues, taking account of criminal records checks and safeguarding procedures

² For example, a decision to suspend a befriending service may increase the isolation of its service users and put additional pressure on statutory authorities to support them in their homes

- Your duty of care to your volunteers and staff, in particular their health and safety
- The impact on your organisation's fundraising and income generation.
- The impact on contracts, service level agreements, memoranda of understanding
- Whether continuing or expanding an activity will support the statutory authorities and its impact on the overall response and recovery process
- Whether, if you have the capacity, you could make yourselves known to other organisations with a view to offering volunteers, trained staff, accommodation or other support.
- Whether the decision to scale down or suspend an activity may put additional significant pressure on statutory authority to provide
- Exit strategies you may require to put in place in order to withdraw from new or enhanced activities at the end of the flu pandemic

Maintaining essential activities

Third sector organisations may wish to:

- Consider how business critical services will be managed and maintained if key individuals are absent and volunteer and staff availability fluctuates
- Consider options for partnership working with other third sector organisations to share resources, pool or gain access to available third sector hours
- Consider the support required for volunteers and staff – both practical and emotional – how this will be given and monitored
- Plan advance training of volunteers and staff to ensure that a range of people have the minimum competence to be able to be redeployed to deliver business critical services.

Suspend or scale down activities

Third sector organisations may wish to:

- Consider how your actions may impact on your statutory or private partners
- Take legal advice on implications where there are contracts, service level agreements or memoranda of understanding
- Consider how you may redeploy your volunteer and staff resources
- Consider both the practical and emotional consequences of scaling down or suspending activities³.

Workforce considerations

Particular workforce issues for consideration by third sector organisations:

- There may be conflict between voluntary commitments and employment obligations and/or personal responsibilities

³ For example, a home visiting service assessed as non-business critical could be enhanced to offer a means to support people to self-care within their own home thus taking pressure off the statutory authorities to provide

- Volunteers may be requested by their primary employer to take on additional work to cover colleague illness
- Retired volunteers may be asked to return to work as a short-term stopgap to support their previous employer or undertake other work
- Greater demands may be expected of volunteers who are grandparents to fulfil the child-care role within their family unit, particularly if schools and early years establishments are closed
- They may have other care responsibilities that take precedence over voluntary work
- Volunteers with pre-existing circumstances or conditions that may make them more vulnerable during a flu pandemic may not be in a position to continue with their voluntary work or take on new voluntary roles
- Ensure that volunteers and staff have competence to provide emotional support to service users affected by personal crisis as a result of pandemic flu.

‘Convergent/spontaneous’ volunteers

People may approach your organisation wishing to help out solely for the period of the emergency (‘convergent/spontaneous’ volunteers). Managing them may divert your organisation’s resources away from business critical activities. You should plan how you will communicate with them and manage their expectations. Your planning could consider the potential for taking advantage of these approaches, what ‘convergent/spontaneous’ volunteers could do and what may be the legal, insurance and training requirements.

You should also share your plans with other organisations locally to make best use of such offers of assistance; perhaps one volunteer organisation could agree to co-ordinate the management of convergent or spontaneous volunteers at a local level.

4.3 Step 3 – Planning to be able to cope with an increased demand for some services

In addition to maintaining delivery of core activities, third sector organisations should also plan on the basis of an increased demand for specific services. Other organisations have made appropriate arrangements in their flu plans to help them deliver their services, e.g. by extending use of volunteers and by prioritising essential activities.

In particular, third sector organisations may wish to:

- Consider what more you may offer to support the general response and whether you may be in a position to expand, enhance or provide new activities
- Consider knowledge and skills that may be required to provide an enhanced or new activity
- Consider what additional training may be required for volunteers and staff to upskill or cross-skill and how to build and maintain their competence.

- Consider what risk assessment processes may be required for volunteers and staff undertaking new or enhanced roles
- Consider what safe systems of work require to be introduced to ensure that your volunteers and staff are protected
- Consider legislative and insurance issues – CRB and safeguarding
- Establish boundaries and be clear about what you can and cannot do or what you may or may not offer.

You will also need to think about the fact that people including workers and volunteers may be bereaved. Ensuring that care is provided for everyone who is bereaved will be important. You will wish to consider the cumulative effect of sickness and bereavement on some personnel.

4.4 Step 4 – Planning to be able to facilitate the response to the pandemic and potential new demands

Third sector organisations are regarded as a critical resource to the response to a pandemic. They are likely to be able to facilitate some aspects of the response to a pandemic. With this in mind, consideration should be given to:

- Third sector organisations, through their diverse and sometimes specialist roles and work, can reach vulnerable and socially isolated individuals and populations which emergency planners may not be able to do. It is important that all groups are made aware of guidance being issued by central government, including essential infection control messages and how to access the relevant medical countermeasures.
- You will need to think about care for members of your family and staff who are ill – who visits them and how they are trained in infection control. Visiting people could help monitor those who are ill when statutory services are stretched.
- **You could encourage and even organise staff from your organisation and your wider network to be Flu Friends to collect antivirals, essential supplies and food for those in the community that are unable to do so themselves.**
- You should approach your Local Authority Emergency Planning Officer to offer help if you feel you can do any of the tasks covered in this information.
- It is important to bear in mind that, while the measures detailed in the guidance will be necessary in the event of a pandemic, they will be discontinued as soon as it is clinically safe to do so, post pandemic.
- If you or your organisation is experiencing difficulty in linking in at a local level to other voluntary organisations or the local resilience forum you could seek advice from the Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum via its chair: mwoodhea@redcross.org.uk or its secretary: mannis@redcross.org.uk.

Annex A

Checklist for third sector organisations

Key Considerations	FLEXIBLE, REALISTIC PLANNING AND PREPARATION TAKING ACCOUNT OF A RANGE OF IMPACT SCENARIOS
<p>Plan and prepare now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the level of awareness of pandemic flu within your organisation? • Have you told your volunteers and staff what to expect and what to do? • Do they know about hand and respiratory hygiene? • Do they know about self-care measures should they become ill? • Do you have robust infection control measures in place within the workplace? • Have you started planning and preparing? • Have you nominated people who will lead on planning within your organisation? • Have you involved your service users and volunteers in your planning? • Have you involved partner organisations in planning and are you part of theirs? • Have you explored potential partnerships with other third sector organisations to offer support and pool or share resources? • Have you developed internal and external communications plans? • Do you have key contact information for volunteers, staff, partner organisations and suppliers? • Are you actively involved with your local resilience forum? • Have you held an internal exercise to test your plans, or taken part in external exercises? 	
<p>Maintain business critical activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you prioritised the functions that are essential to ensure your continued organisational viability? • Has your planning taken account of a range of impact scenarios? • What are the key dependencies? • Have you planned contingency arrangements should your key resources be disrupted? • Have you considered legal and financial implications? • How will you ensure you meet your duty of care to your service users? • Are clear decision pathways and lines of accountability in place (up and down)? • Do you have mechanisms in place to support volunteers and staff - guidance on safe working practices, risk assessment procedures, PPE, psychosocial support mechanisms? 	

<p>Suspending or scaling down existing activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a range of impact scenarios, what activities do you plan to suspend or scale down? • Have you assessed the impact on your service users? • What may be the impact on statutory/private partners or suppliers? • What may be the impact on your income? • Have you taken legal advice on implications for contracts and service level agreements? • What may be the impact on staff (contracts of employment)? • What are your plans to redeploy your volunteer and staff resource? • Have you considered the risk to your reputation? • How will you communicate your decisions internally and externally? • What are your plans to scale up or restore suspended activities? 	<p>FLEXIBLE, REALISTIC PLANNING AND PREPARATION TAKING ACCOUNT OF A RANGE OF IMPACT SCENARIOS</p>
<p>Enhance or expand existing activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you, your partner organisations or service users identified a potential need for enhanced or expanded provision? • Do your capabilities and resources enable you to respond within a range of impact scenarios? • How will you develop, support and monitor volunteer and staff competence? • Does your planning include exit strategies? 	
<p>New activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered what more you could potentially offer to support the general response? • Have your service users, partner organisations or suppliers identified a potential gap in provision? • What is your capacity to respond within a range of impact scenarios? • Can you redeploy existing resources? • How will you develop, support and monitor volunteer and staff competence? • Will you need to recruit or can you share or pool resources with other third sector organisations? • Does your planning include exit strategies? 	
<p>Post pandemic recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is post pandemic recovery considered in your planning? • Have you considered the long-term implications of the pandemic on your organisational systems and structure? • Have you considered the long-term psychological and social support your workforce may require? • Have you considered how long it may take to re-establish normal working practice? • What mechanisms can you put in place to ensure lessons learnt support you to prepare, plan and respond to future emergencies? 	

A generic business continuity management toolkit, produced by Cabinet Office, is available at:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Dealingwithemergencies/Preparingforemergencies/DG_175927

Annex B

Other information and resources

For the most up-to-date information including further advice on health communication in a pandemic, see www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu, www.hpa.org.uk and www.direct.gov.uk.

For information on pandemic flu from the Welsh Assembly Government wales.gov.uk/topics/health/protection/communicabledisease/flu/guidance/?lang=en

Department of Health guidance documents:

- *Pandemic Flu: a national framework for responding to an influenza pandemic*
- *Responding to pandemic influenza: The ethical framework for policy and planning*

Both documents can be downloaded from the DH website: www.dh.gov.uk

National hand and respiratory hygiene campaign 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_080839

Hand-washing poster

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_063674

Pandemic Flu – frequently asked questions

www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Flu/PandemicFlu/FAQonly/DH_065088

Further guidance for employers on disposing of waste is available on Health & Safety Executive website at www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/influenza.htm

For more information on business continuity planning, see

Cabinet Office UK Resilience www.ukresilience.gov.uk and

Workplace/business resilience – business continuity during pandemic flu

www.ukresilience.gov.uk/pandemicflu/guidance.business.aspx

For more information on the work of the Local Resilience Forum:

www.ukresilience.gov.uk/preparedness/ukgovernment/lrfs.aspx

For more information on preparing for a pandemic in social care

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_093380

For more information on faith communities planning:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/influenzapandemic>