

SWINE FLU BRIEFING 29TH MAY

1. Current situation

The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced Phase 5. A pandemic has not been declared. The UK Alert Levels only apply in WHO Phase 6, when a pandemic is declared.

UK

There are 185 confirmed cases of influenza A(H1N1) in the UK, including 72 in London. No confirmed cases have yet been reported in Brent.

International

Regular updates on the evolving international situation are available from the WHO. As of 06.00 26 May, 46 countries have officially reported 12,954 cases of influenza A(H1N1) infection to WHO. This includes 92 confirmed deaths: 80 in Mexico, ten in the USA, one in Canada and one in Costa Rica.

2. Operational Response in Brent

- There have been two meetings of this multi-agency strategic Influenza pandemic committee (IPC), chaired by Mark Easton/ Jim Connelly
- There were daily and then every other day operational group meetings until this week. This group is now meeting weekly as the pandemic flu planning group and last met yesterday chaired by Penny Toff
- A number of work streams have been set up including communications, clinical and public health, training, staffing, finance, distribution centres and intermediate care and vulnerable groups
- Individual cases and contacts of probable and confirmed cases are being tested and treated with antiviral medication. This is carried out by the district nursing team in conjunction with GPs and the local Health Protection Unit. To date the numbers treated in Brent are very small (less than 20). A database has been set up to track these patients when results come back to ensure we have a clear picture of influenza A(H1N1) in Brent
- Pro-active plans are being developed so that NHS Brent can respond rapidly and effectively in the event of an outbreak in a nursery, school, college, care home or other institutional setting
- NHS Brent has been represented at NWLHT meetings and Harrow IPC
- An interim pandemic flu project manager will be employed from 1st June 2009

3. Antiviral Distribution Centres

- A first distribution centre has been identified and operational policy and procedures established and tested (see below)
- A second centre in the south of the borough has been identified
- A third site in the north-east of the borough is under discussion
- An initial supply of anti viral medication has been received
- Staffing arrangements for the distribution centres are almost finalised
- DH has provided action cards for the various roles within the centre
- Algorithms have been developed for assessment of adults and children

- Operational policy and procedures for a local flu telephone line have been developed (currently suspended following DH guidance)

4. Home visiting service

- A co-ordinated home visiting service is being set up across Brent staffed by GPs one hub each in the north and south of the Borough
- A courier service has been engaged to distribute anti viral medication to patients without a flu friend and to residential care homes

5. Social and Intermediate Care

- Categories of vulnerable patients in the community have been identified, care packages are being defined and arrangements are being made to ensure they receive necessary support during a pandemic
- A separate vulnerable childrens' sub-group is also carrying out this process for vulnerable children
- A database of all vulnerable residents is being compiled
- Intermediate care planning is being undertaken to respond to the anticipated discharge of patients to the community during a pandemic

6. PPE

- A 15 week stockpile of protective equipment has been ordered and some of this has now been delivered. This includes face masks, aprons, gowns, alcohol, gel etc
- Some of this stockpile is being shared with partners in the acute trust and social care
- Further arrangements are being made for the storage of this stockpile

7. Communications

- Leaflets have been sent to every household by DH
- Over 100 GPs and pharmacists attended a briefing
- Regular updates have been cascaded to GP practices, pharmacists and community services
- Two senior staff briefings have been held followed by directorate meetings
- Over 600 staff have had swine flu awareness training and role-specific training has begun
- A letter has been sent to all voluntary sector organisations
- PCT staff have been kept up to date through the intranet and website
- Advice to front line staff has been cascaded to PCT and partner organisations
- Communications materials are being developed in anticipation of WHO pandemic alert phase 6 being declared. These include signage for all services, a house flyer drop, press releases and simplified patient information leaflets, including translated materials and audio and Braille versions

8. Next Steps

- Continue with arrangements and development as above
- Continue to respond to individual cases in line with HPA guidance
- Second and third distribution centres to be developed and tested
- Further specific training programme development and implementation
- Review and update Flu Pandemic Plan
- Phased return to normal functioning whilst maintaining vigilance