

Information Update from Department of Health

Swine Flu – Thursday 30 July

Health Secretary Andy Burnham said:

"There are early signs that the rate of increase in swine flu infections may be slowing down. This is encouraging, but there will be no let-up in our preparations. Even if the number of infections starts to fall, they may rise again, possibly much faster, as we enter the main flu season in the autumn.

"There are two key areas; critical care and vaccination strategy, where we need to finalise our plans to ensure that we are on a sound footing going into Autumn.

"On critical care, work has been ongoing within the NHS to plan for how to manage the service in the main flu season. Today, I've asked Ian Dalton, the National Director for NHS Flu Resilience, to work with the 10 Strategic Health Authorities to produce a Critical Care Plan for the NHS by the end of next month. This will draw upon the excellent work the Health Service has already done and will set out the actions they need to take to increase the number of critical care beds, ready for the autumn.

"By the end of August, we will also publish a vaccination plan that will include decisions on priority groups and the method of delivery.

"We already have plans in place to cope with a second wave of swine flu. We have enough Tamiflu for everyone who needs it and we are first in line for the vaccine. The National Pandemic Flu Service is up and running and is taking pressure off GPs and NHS Direct leaving them free to deal with other patients most in need.

"The NHS is doing an excellent job and I want to thank NHS staff for their hard work and dedication."