

Flu update for third sector parties

Tuesday 1 December

Welcome

Welcome to the fourth edition of the 'Flu update for third sector organisations.' It provides you with the latest news from the Department of Health about the prevention and management of seasonal and pandemic flu, for both your employees and those people who access your services.

Swine flu vaccination programme update

The first stage of the vaccination programme for at risk groups and health and social care staff is well underway and it has been announced that the programme will be extended to children over six months and under five years. This group will be contacted and offered vaccine once GPs have completed vaccination of the first priority groups.

JCVI (the panel of experts that provide advice on vaccination issues) has recommended that the main carers for older or disabled people should be encouraged to take up vaccination. This is to protect the welfare of those being cared for if their carer falls ill. The Department of Health is discussing how best to implement this advice with carers' organisations before issuing further information about how the programme will be delivered.

Vaccinations for people in at risk groups

At risk groups include adults and children over the age of six months with long-term health conditions which make them more likely to become seriously ill if they catch swine flu. These conditions are:

- * Chronic respiratory disease
- * Chronic heart disease
- * Chronic renal disease
- * Chronic liver disease
- * Chronic neurological diseases
- * Diabetes mellitus
- * Immunosuppression caused by a disease or treatment for a disease

At risk groups also include pregnant women and those who live in the same house as someone whose immune system is compromised by disease or treatment.

People in these groups are being invited by their GP to go to an immunisation clinic or to make an appointment at a GP surgery to have their vaccination.

Vaccinations for social care staff

Frontline social care staff are also eligible for priority vaccination. Being vaccinated against swine flu is the easiest way to protect staff and the people they care for, and help stop the spread of the swine flu pandemic.

If your workforce provides social care services you can find the definition of eligible frontline social care workers [here](#). Local authorities are finalising vaccination programmes to address staff from all sectors of social care. This includes the independent sector, personal assistants and LAs' directly managed staff. The Department of Health has made financial support available for this and details are [here](#).

Information about the swine flu vaccine

Two swine flu vaccines are available, Pandemrix and Celvapan. Both have been licensed by the European Medicines Agency and are suitable for use by pregnant women.

Similar vaccines containing another flu virus strain (H5N1) have been clinically tested in trials involving over 5,000 people, which showed that people tolerate the vaccines well. Experience with seasonal flu vaccines has shown that changing the strain of virus in a vaccine does not substantially affect the safety profile.

General information on swine flu and the vaccination can be found [here](#).

Vaccination programme marketing materials

Advertising announcing the availability of vaccine for at risk groups launched on 9 November 2009. The nationwide campaign includes press and radio ads.

A leaflet, Swine flu and pregnancy - how to protect yourself and your baby has also been produced. This is being distributed to GPs, antenatal clinics, midwives and Sure Start Centres.

In addition a film has been produced by West Midlands SHA to encourage public take up of the vaccine. All of these materials are available from the FTP site.

Swine flu vaccination communications materials for the social care sector are available [here](#).

Flu friends – communicating an important message

As part of preventing the spread of swine flu we're encouraging everyone to identify their flu friends. These are friends or relatives who could collect food and medicines for you if you catch swine flu, so that you can stay at home and prevent spreading the virus to others. It's an important message and any help that third sector organisations can give in communicating it is appreciated.

Some third sector organisations are also offering a flu friend service to the people they support. This can help to take pressure off the statutory sector and enable them to focus on critical care. At the DH workshop in October the Red Cross shared its flu friends initiatives. For more information on this go to its [website](#). It encourages other organisations to liaise with Local Resilience Forums to coordinate emergency response planning at a local level.

New respiratory and hand hygiene campaign launched

The Department of Health has launched a new campaign focusing on the importance of good respiratory and hand hygiene (RHH) in helping to slow the spread of swine flu. The campaign, which includes TV ads, bus and tube posters, demonstrates how easy it is to spread germs and what to do to protect yourself .

If you can use and distribute these assets, they are available along with all the other campaign materials on the FTP site (log in instructions below).

Seasonal flu case study films released

It is still important to remember the threat of seasonal flu for which a separate vaccination is required. As part of the communications campaign promoting awareness of seasonal flu, our PR team has created some filmed case studies that can be used by partners. There are three films available:

- * One contains an interview of a person with diabetes and their experience of the benefits of the seasonal flu jab,
- * The second contains an interview with a person who has asthma
- * The third piece combines footage of a case study and an interview with Professor David Salisbury, Director of Immunisation at the Department of Health.

These can be viewed at:

www.newspr.coionline.tv/seasonalflu/case1.wmv

www.newspr.coionline.tv/seasonalflu/case2.wmv

www.newspr.coionline.tv/seasonalflu/combinedfilm.wmv

Reminder about the National Pandemic Flu Service

The NHS launched the National Pandemic Flu Service (NPFS) in England in July to enable people to check their swine flu symptoms and access antivirals and advice without the need to visit their GP. Using the service reduces the pressure on GP surgeries so it's important that people continue to use the service.

Please remind your staff and service users that, if they think they have swine flu, they should access the NPFS by:

- * going online at www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu or
- * calling 0800 1 513 100

People should contact their GP directly rather than using the NPFS if:

- * they are pregnant,
- * they have a serious underlying condition
- * they have a sick child under one
- * their or their child's condition suddenly gets much worse.

Don't Forget....

Q+A

The Q+A should answer all of your queries on flu and the swine flu pandemic. It is updated regularly and can be found on NHS Choices [here](#).

Advertising materials

The pandemic flu advertising materials are all available to be used by third sector organisations. As they are large files they are available to download from a dedicated FTP site.

To access the FTP click on the following link:

<http://doh-ftp1.iweb-ftp.co.uk>

Username: doh-ftp

Password: doh7321

If you have any problems accessing these files or if you require something that is not on there, please contact our partnership marketing team at flu@23red.com.

Get in touch

If you would like to speak to our partnership marketing team about ways to promote awareness of what to do during the flu pandemic, please email flu@23red.com or call 020 7843 5900 and ask to speak to Jo or Gemma.

If you have colleagues who you think would like to be added to the circulation list of this bulletin, please email their name and email address to flu@23red.com.