

## NHS Education for Scotland

### Pandemic Flu/Emergency Planning HR Policy and Staffing Plan

This resource can be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please email [altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk) to discuss how we can best meet your requirements



September 2009

17 November 2009

Updated 14 December 2011

## **1. Introduction**

**1.1** The purpose of this HR Policy & staffing plan is to enable NHS Education for Scotland (NES) to:

- continue with the delivery of the corporate plan;
- enable us to provide the service with the support it requires in managing a flu pandemic
- to be able to redeploy staff across NES in support of the delivery of critical service and
- Redeploy staff into the service should this be required

This plan has been developed taking into account the guidance issued by Scottish Government<sup>1</sup> and will be implemented by the Business Group should the need arise.

**1.2** The NES Internal 'Pandemic Flu Co-ordinating Group' will be re-established and is the central reference point for processing all information internal and external in relation to pandemic flu. The remit of the group would include

- Co-ordinating NES internal and external activity in respect of pandemic flu
- Advising and informing NES Business Group and NES Board on issues related to pandemic flu

**1.3** The overall approach has been to assess the implications and make appropriate arrangements for the management of staffing resource in preparation for a flu pandemic. The following issues are addressed in this plan:

- The delivery of business critical services in the event of key staff or a critical number of staff being affected by pandemic flu
- The impact on critical business services of medically qualified or other appropriately qualified staff being directed to front line service delivery
- The need to be able to contact and where appropriate mobilise members of staff
- Ensure appropriate communication and welfare plans are in place to support staff affected by the pandemic flu outbreak.
- General advice and support to all staff on how to manage the risks associated with pandemic flu in the work place

**1.4** On behalf of NHSS, NES coordinates and manages Scottish Medical Training and other specialist training application and assessment processes.

---

<sup>1</sup> UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy 2011

In developing this plan, NES has assessed the risks in terms of its staffing support for these processes and is monitoring carefully the impact on its resource requirements in the event of any changes in the timing of medical and other specialist recruitment for 2012.

## **2. Pandemic Flu**

**2.1** Pandemic flu has the potential to affect NES staffing in three ways:

- Staff may themselves become infected and this could lead to high levels of sickness absence
- Staff with caring responsibilities may be adversely affected by public health measures e.g. the closure of schools. Staff may wish to stay at home to care for dependent children or other family members; child care facilities such as nurseries could also be affected
- Additional problems caused where staff are unable to travel to work due to transport problems

**2.2** In mapping the workforce NES has:

- Identified staff that have the skills that would be utilised by the front line service during a pandemic and mapped this resource against critical business areas
- Identified the staff travel arrangements (to and from work) for key members of staff who do not have the option of working flexibly from home. Staff have been given information on lift share websites and HR will continue to identify other practical tools to support staff in attending work.
- Mapping key members of staff/staff working in critical business areas that may not have the flexibility to work from home and have dependents, particularly school age children, who they would need to care for. During a pandemic this group of staff may face difficulty in attending for work if schools are closed.

Our workforce analysis has shown that due to the nature of our core activity large numbers of staff including those delivering critical business activity are able to work from home and there is a common skills base across our clerical and administration functions that can be redeployed across the organisation should the need arise. NES ensures on an annual basis that all staff emergency contact details are up to date.

**2.3** The impact of NES staff supporting the service in its management of pandemic flu on the delivery of our corporate plan has also been identified. The Business Group has the responsibility for redeploying resources to ensure all corporate plan targets are met.

**2.4** It is also recognised that the wider group of NES staff may be asked to volunteer to undertake other duties out with their normal job description in territorial boards in particular. In partnership, NES will consult with staff and respond to any such request made by Scottish Government at the appropriate time.

### **3. Business Critical Activities & internal Risks**

**3.1** NES has separately identified critical business activities, the key skills requirements and contingency delivery options should the need arise. Based on our analysis of our workforce, the following issues are most likely to have an impact on our service delivery:

- Dependent care responsibilities (in the event of school closure/nursery closures, illness of dependants)
- The need to continue to refine our remote IT access provisions in order to ensure large numbers of staff are able to work at home
- Key activities which are supported by small numbers of staff

The following contingency plans have been put in place to manage the above risks:

- All staff contact details are updated on an annual basis so as to enable rapid redeployment of staff should the need arise
- Full review of the use of remote IT access tokens to ensure as wide a coverage as possible of the ability to work from home
- Identification of a 'second named person' to progress critical business activity
- Ensuring robust file paths should critical members of staff be absent and files have to be accessed
- Use of retired administration staff to support clerical/administration functions (if required)

**3.2** The Business Group has responsibility for redeploying staff across the organisation to support key activities as well as the redeployment of staff should a particular business activity cease. While transport to and from work has not been identified as a critical issue for NES we are never the less encouraging the use of video conferencing and other forms of flexible working e.g. time off in lieu or authorising overtime payments should the need arise.

**3.3** At this stage it is not envisaged that NES would seek to employ significant number of temporary additional staff and would look to redeployment and/or prioritising of business activities should the need arise. Redeployment is a preferred option provided it does not compromise the control of infection.

### **4. Redeployment Plans**

Appendix 1 gives further information on the arrangements being put in place for the redeployment of staff should the need arise.

In the event of any redeployment arrangements being implemented NES has identified the contingency arrangements in support of critical business activities.

Appendix 2 outlines the NES H1N1 Vaccination Programme.

## **5. Raising Awareness**

**5.1** NES will issue communications to staff raising awareness on the signs and symptoms of flu and the need to stay at home if they have symptoms of flu like illness. Advice has also been given on reducing the risk of transmission of the disease to other members of staff. HR policies have been reinforced in line with Scottish Government guidelines to promote the early recognition of illness and to support staff remaining at home. (See section on Monitoring Absence below).

## **6. Monitoring Absence**

**6.1** NES has put in place information systems which will enable the tracking of levels of absence due to pandemic flu. HR has ensured NES is following national guidelines in the reporting and coding of sickness absence due to pandemic flu. This will enable reporting to Scottish Government as required.

**6.2** Staff have been advised that if they feel unwell with flu like symptoms they are not to attend for work and to contact NHS24. A communication protocol has been developed and HR Business Partners will work with line managers in maintaining contact with members of staff during their absence from work in the normal way. Members of staff with a long term health condition should contact their line manager or their HR Business Partner to discuss their individual circumstances.

**6.3** In the event of the extension of the period of self certified sick leave to 14 days NES will follow appropriate Scottish Government Guidance on this.

## **7. Sick Pay Entitlement and other Leave Arrangements**

**7.1** Sick pay entitlements for staff are in line with Section 14 of the Agenda for Change – NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook.

**7.2** NES will treat requests for paid leave for staff with children under the age of 14 sympathetically under PIN Policy Guidance in the event of pandemic related school closures. NES would look to agree such arrangements should other arrangements not be practicable.

**7.3** The NES Special Leave Policy may also be utilised to enable an employee to deal with an emergency situation involving a dependant. In these circumstances the Special Leave Form must be completed and returned to the HR Business Partner stating that the dependant has swine flu.

## **8. Members of staff who are Pregnant**

**8.1** NES understands that pregnant women may have concerns about a number of issues with regard to pandemic flu. NES will deal with concerns sympathetically and in partnership including recognising our responsibilities under Health & Safety legislation. NES will follow guidance issued by the Scottish Government and will place this on the intranet when the final

guidance becomes available. HR will provide up to date information leaflets at the initial maternity meeting with the employee.

**8.2** NES will exercise care in the event of having to consider the redeployment of pregnant members of staff and will undertake work place risk assessments to identify any potential risks involved. The evidence that women may have increased risk of complications from any type of flu would be included in any risk assessment.

**8.3** In the event of any member of staff having concerns about attending work because of fear of infection, the line manager with the support of HR will look to provide reassurance and proactively look at making alternative arrangements e.g. working from home wherever practicable.

## **9. Occupational Health, Counselling & Support**

NES has occupational health, counselling and other support mechanisms in place to support staff at this time. HR Business Partners are also available to support managers and staff with questions and advice. Further details are available in the NES Occupational Health Policy at <http://intranet.nes.scot.nhs.uk/documents/publications/classh/020409>  
[Occupational Health Policy](#)

## **10. Terms and Conditions of Service**

**10.1** Subject to any revised national workforce guidance, it is recognised that there may need to be discussions in the Partnership Forum at local level to limit annual leave (and other forms of leave e.g. parental leave) to sustain services. NES is not anticipating the need to impose a blanket ban on leave. Where staff are employed on a temporary basis during the pandemic this will be at appropriate rates of pay (i.e. Agenda for Change or other agreed terms as appropriate).

**10.2** NES recognises that the Working Time Regulations 1998 will remain in force during a pandemic however its application during a pandemic may need to be reviewed. The application of the directive is not a significant issue for NES however if specialist staff e.g. IT support staff were faced with significantly increased workloads, NES would review the position and in partnership seek an appropriate solution.

## **11. Disclosure Process**

**11.1** NES understands that Disclosure Scotland are currently developing a contingency document which will cover revised procedures during a pandemic. It is recognised that during a flu pandemic, Disclosure Scotland may be unable to process new disclosure requests due to a combination of increased demand reduced capacity. Should this happen NES will follow

Scottish Government guidance on alternative procedures<sup>2</sup> which involves a thorough risk assessment based on the following:

- Potential risk to patients
- Whether the post involves unsupervised patient contact
- Whether the post involves the staff member working with others who have been disclosure checked
- Whether adjustments can be made to the post to reduce risks
- The most recent disclosure information available
- Whether there are references which can be followed up

NES notes that in the event of revised procedures being implemented there is no change to the law.

In relation to Immigration sponsorship and GP Recruitment NES had previously identified potential risks around possible delays in the process which would have been compounded should pandemic flu impact on the appropriate government agencies. However, NES has now secured the sponsor license for sponsoring Tier 2 migrants so this is no longer a major concern.

## **12. Financial Implications**

Business Group is regularly monitoring the financial impact of pandemic flu on our staffing and other costs. In relation to staffing, additional costs could arise in the form of overtime/additional hours costs or increased travel costs if staff are relocated to other office locations.

## **13. Equality and Diversity**

NES has issued this plan to the Equality and Diversity Adviser and no equality and diversity issues have been identified.

## **14. Information Governance**

The NES Lead for Information Governance is the Information Governance Manager who advises the Business Group and the NES Pandemic Flu Coordinating Group on all data and confidentiality issues. Plans continue to be referenced by the Caldicott Guardian who is a member of the Business Group. NES neither holds nor receives patient identifiable information in relation to pandemic flu.

## **15. Collaboration with Other Boards**

NES will continue to collaborate with other boards particularly special health boards where there is the potential to redeploy staff across organisations.

---

<sup>2</sup> These procedures will not apply in relation to people working in child care positions



## **16. Partnership Working**

NES will work in partnership with staff side colleagues including the Partnership Forum and will adopt a partnership working approach to staffing and related issues.

## **17. Endorsement of the Chief Executive**

The HR Policy and Staffing Plan has been endorsed by the Chief Executive and is a standing item on the Business Group agenda.

HR and OD  
September 2009  
17 November 2009  
Updated 14 December, 2011

## **Redeployment of Employees during a Pandemic**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to set out a position statement as to how requests to redeploy employees to other posts within NES and NHS Scotland will be dealt with in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak.

### **Introduction**

It is recognised that during situations such as a pandemic flu outbreak it may be necessary for business continuity to seek redeployment of employees to both critical and non-critical work areas within NES or within the NHS more widely.

### **Requests for Redeployment – internal or external**

It would be anticipated that redeployment to other posts or duties would normally be on a voluntary basis agreed by all parties (per PIN guidelines), and on the basis of relevant skills. This is most likely to involve staff with nursing or medical qualifications, but any of our staff may also be asked to assist with critical areas of NHS business.

Where a member of staff was expected to work at a lower level grade there would be no detriment to salary/hourly rate, or to expenses payable. Where staff are asked to undertake the full duties of a post that is graded at a higher band the employee will be entitled to receive an acting up allowance.

### **Procedures**

NES will identify a number of key staff who hold clinical qualifications and who could potentially be redeployed to support frontline clinical services on a temporary basis.

On that basis NES will issue the attached letter to all key staff asking if they would consider being redeployed to support frontline clinical services.

In addition NES has set out their H1N1 Vaccination Programme which is attached as Appendix 2.

HR staff will be in a position to offer advice and support on all matters relating to redeployment, including vaccination policies for staff moving to front line services.

## **DRAFT LETTER**

Dear Colleague

### **NHS Education for Scotland (NES) H1N1 Potential redeployment and Immunisation Programme**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Business Group in relation to the above.

You will probably be aware that Scottish Government has identified a number of priority groups to be offered immunisation against the H1N1 virus. In terms of staff, this would be those working at the frontline - having contact with patients on a regular basis. Ordinarily, this would not include staff employed by NHS Education for Scotland (NES). However, like you, NES employs a number of staff who hold clinical qualifications and are registered with the regulating body.

It is difficult to predict how the anticipated second wave of the H1N1 virus will affect the Scottish population over the winter period, but it is important that we prepare for the worst case scenario. If this transpires, then it is possible that you will be asked if you wish to be redeployed to support frontline clinical services on a temporary basis. In light of this, the Business Group has decided that all clinical staff employed by NES on a full time basis (including secondees) should be offered the immunisation.

We would appreciate if you could confirm whether or not you would consider redeployment to support frontline clinical services and wish to take up the offer of vaccination. Your personal details, such as name, address etc would need to be passed to our Occupational Health Providers, therefore, we would also require your permission to do this. We would appreciate if you could complete the attached form and email this back to Dorothy Wright, Director of Workforce, on email address: [Dorothy.Wright@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Dorothy.Wright@nes.scot.nhs.uk) by (INSERT DATE)

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Dorothy or me. In the meantime, we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Wright  
Chief Executive

## **NHS Education for Scotland**

### **Redeployment Programme**

I **agree** to being redeployed to support frontline clinical services and confirm my registration status is up to date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

or

I **do not agree** to being redeployed to support frontline clinical services.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

**Please delete as appropriate**

### **H1N1 Immunisation Programme**

I **wish** to receive the H1N1 vaccination and I agree to my personal details being passed to Occupational Health Services (OHS) for the purposes of the Immunisation Programme.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

or

I **do not wish** to receive the H1N1 vaccination and I do not consent to my personal details being passed to Occupational Health Services (OHS) for the purposes of the Immunisation Programme.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

**Please delete as appropriate**

**Please return this form to Dorothy Wright email:**

**[Dorothy.Wright@nes.scott.nhs.uk](mailto:Dorothy.Wright@nes.scott.nhs.uk) by (INSERT DATE)**



## **H1 NI Vaccination Programme in National Health Education Scotland**

### **1. Introduction**

This plan has been prepared by the Director of Human Resources in consultation with NES Business Group colleagues. The Business Group- chaired by the Chief Executive- has set up an H1 NI planning and coordination group reporting to them to ensure effective planning of immunisation arrangements along with the development of organisation contingency plans.

The operational lead for the implementation of this immunisation plan is the Director of Human Resources.

This document sets out the NES staff immunisation plan which has been discussed in partnership with the Employee Director within NES.

### **2. Communication**

In the development of this plan NES has sought information on other special health boards on their immunisation plans. Internally NES has in place regular communication vehicles that have provided NES staff with information on all aspects of pandemic flu and will continue to use these to communicate to staff immunisation plans.

NES staff re in membership of various national immunisation planning groups including the H1NI Pandemic NHS Boards Group, Service Delivery Group and the Information Resources Group.

### **3. Governance**

This is embedded in the proposed delivery model (see section 6 below)

### **4. Planning Assumptions**

- Scottish Government Ministers have announced that contracts have been exchanged to provide vaccine for 100% of the population as part of the national (UK wide) immunisation programme against influenza A H1NI(v).
- Priority clinical groups for immunisation have been agreed in principle.
- There is a presumption that health & social care workers will be amongst the priority clinical groups for immunisation with appropriate prioritisation.

- NES has identified as part of its internal staffing plan those members of staff who could be called into the service to perform appropriate medical functions.
- NES staff are not engaged in direct patient care and health delivery and will not form part of any identified priority staffing group

## **5. Target Groups**

As set out in the planning assumptions NES staff are not engaged in direct patient care and health delivery and will not form part of any identified priority staffing group. NES has a staffing establishment of 622 staff.

NES has however identified those members of staff who could be called into the service to support appropriate frontline clinical services.

## **6. Proposed Delivery Model**

NES Plans to advise staff to attend their own GP Practice in order to receive the appropriate influenza A H1N1 (v) vaccine. Governance arrangements will be covered by the protocols that have been put in place for this delivery method. NES has staff based across Scotland.

For members of staff who have been identified and have confirmed that they are willing to be redeployed to support front line clinical services, the H1N1 (v) vaccination has been offered via National Services Scotland (NSS) Occupational Health Service. Detailed arrangements have been passed to those staff on the process that they should follow to receive the vaccination

## **7. Storage & Delivery of Vaccine and consumables**

In view of the proposed delivery model there is no requirement to consider this as part of this plan.

## **9. Staff Training**

In view of the proposed delivery model there is no requirement to consider this as part of this plan.

## **9. Reporting**

NES may be required to report to Health Protection Scotland on a weekly basis on the uptake of the H1N1 vaccination which has been offered to NES staff willing to be redeployed.

## **10. Costings**

NES has not identified any direct costs as part of this immunisation plan apart from occupational health costs which will be small and will be absorbed within current budgets.

## **11. Implications for Service Delivery**

NES does not anticipate any significant impact on service delivery as the result of the implementation of this plan. NES staff will be encouraged to attend their GP Practice in their own time however managers will be given guidance to ensure staff have the flexibility to attend within normal working hours if this is required.

## **12. Contingencies**

NES will keep this plan under regular review particularly in the light of the role of GPs in the delivery of the mass immunisation programme. NES will also continue to consult with other special health boards with a view to a partnership approach to alternative arrangements should this be required.

***Dorothy Wright Director of Workforce  
NHS Education for Scotland December 2011***