
To: COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PLANNING POLICY BOARD

On: 29 OCTOBER 2019

Report by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PLANNING

**Heading: CONSULTATION: INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS:
GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES IN
SCOTLAND – RENFREWSHIRE RESPONSE**

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Scottish Government launched a consultation on Influenza Pandemic Preparedness: Guidance for Health and Social Care Services in Scotland.
 - 1.2 A paper was presented to this Policy Board on 20 August 2019 outlining the guidance. As highlighted, the response was being prepared for the deadline of 13 September 2019 and as requested, the response is now attached to this paper as Appendix 1 for the information of members.
 - 1.3 The response is broadly supportive of the content of the guidance with the most significant issue raised in relation to the guidance being the requirement for greater clarity around the role of Health and Social Care partnerships as Category 1 responders in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Within the guidance this is currently not clear and the response from the Council reinforces the need to make this clear and notes the requirement and the duty of Category 1 responders set out in the Act.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board:
 - (i) notes the consultation response by Renfrewshire Council on Influenza Pandemic Preparedness: Guidance for Health and Social Care Services in Scotland attached to this paper as Appendix 1.
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3. Background

- 3.1 The UK National Risk Register 2017 identifies pandemic flu as the highest risk facing the nation.
- 3.2 Influenza (commonly known as 'flu') is a widespread and familiar infection, especially during the winter months. Illness caused by the influenza virus is usually relatively mild and self-limiting. However, some groups of people such as older people, young children and people with certain medical conditions, may be more at risk of severe infection or even death.
- 3.3 Pandemic flu is different from seasonal influenza. It occurs when a new flu strain emerges in the human population and spreads from person to person worldwide. As it is a new virus, the entire population is susceptible as very few people have immunity to it. Therefore, healthy adults, as well as older people, young children and those with existing medical conditions, may be affected. The lack of immunity in the population means that the virus has the potential to spread very quickly from person to person, leading to more people becoming severely ill and potentially many more deaths.
- 3.4 Influenza Pandemic Preparedness documents have been developed to provide guidance for local authorities and health and social care organisations in Scotland to understand the challenges of a pandemic and their roles and responsibilities during various phases.
- 3.5 The document highlights that pandemic planning is taking place at a UK level, with the four UK nations working together to update the UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy 2011, on which this guidance is based. It also emphasises key messages from recent national pandemic flu exercises – of agencies planning together to enable an integrated response; and further developing plans to respond to significant increases in demand for services.
- 3.6 Reflecting the particular integrated health and social care landscape in Scotland, this document sets out an expectation that NHS Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCP) will work closely together to develop scalable plans and enhance each other's as well as the overall resilience of their respective sectors.
- 3.7 The guidance document sets out a strategic approach and principles for combatting a new influenza virus, namely:
 - **Precautionary** – Plan for an initial response that reflects the level of risk based on information available at the time, accepting that uncertainty will initially exist;
 - **Proportionality** – Plan to be able to scale up and down in response to the emerging epidemiological, clinical and virological characteristics of the virus and its impact at the time.
 - **Flexibility** – Plan for the capacity to adapt to local circumstances that may be different from the overall UK picture, for instance in 'hotspot' areas.

- 3.8 The guidance further highlights the planning assumptions for excess deaths, scenario planning and the legislative framework – work where the Council will have a significant role alongside the Health and Social Care Partnership.
- 3.9 Planning and preparedness for an influenza outbreak in Scotland is currently robust and strong. The West of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership has produced a Mass Fatalities Plan to be used in the case of an outbreak and Renfrewshire Council has a local framework document working alongside this wider regional plan.
- 3.10 The Civil Contingencies Service co-ordinates and leads on work with services in Renfrewshire Council and local partner agencies to prepare and update Business Continuity Plans regularly, with a specific focus on preparations for a potential flu pandemic.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
3. **Community/Council Planning** –

Renfrewshire is well – By reviewing and contributing to the guidance, Renfrewshire Council is in a stronger position to prepare and react to an influenza pandemic. This includes ensuring staff and communities are well and able to continue to function during a pandemic flu.
4. **Legal**– none
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology**– none
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - Duty to notify by providing information about potential victims of trafficking will ensure that victims receive appropriate support and assistance contributing to the core component of a human rights approach to ensure equal protection and equal access to support services
8. **Health & Safety** – none
9. **Procurement** – none.
10. **Risk** – This risk of pandemic flu is covered by the national planning assumptions rather than Council Risk Registers.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **Cosla Policy Position** - not applicable

13. **Climate Risk** – not applicable

List of Background Papers

None

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**CONSULTATION: INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS: GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES
IN SCOTLAND – September 2019**

Organisation Responding	Renfrewshire Council/Renfrewshire HSCP
Q1.	What are the most helpful elements of the guidance?
<i>Response</i>	The guidance is detailed and sets out the different phases for a pandemic flu outbreak. The Health and Social Care partnership will take cognisance of this guidance. It is helpful as it links to other key guidance/planning documents e.g. Planning Assumption for Excess Deaths that Renfrewshire Council and Civil Contingency Service currently have a plan in place for. The ties into the legal framework are also noted to be helpful including the wider resilience planning through the Resilience Partnerships.
Q2.	What are the least helpful and/or superfluous parts of the guidance?
<i>Response</i>	There are no parts that are seen as unhelpful as it is noted that it is difficult to plan for exactly what may happen with a Pandemic Flu outbreak.
Q3.	Is there additional guidance, not currently included, which would significantly improve the document?
<i>Response</i>	No.
Q4.	Does the guidance accurately describe the multi-agency context in Scotland – including suggested arrangements for co-ordinated local planning arrangements across partners?
<i>Response</i>	Clarification is required around Sections 5.6 and 5.8. It is our understanding that the HSCP are part of Renfrewshire Council and therefore has a duty to “respond” in the same way that any specific service/department within a Cat 1 organisation does. If they are a part of the NHS (and not Renfrewshire Council) they therefore are still a CAT 1 responder.

Q5.	Are the suggested actions at Annex A helpful and sufficiently comprehensive?
<i>Response</i>	The Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership has a pandemic flu plan, created using a standard template that the Scottish Government Guidance is based upon. Following recent meetings with the Scottish Government, this plan is currently being updated and this links to the Actions details within Annex A.
Q6.	Other Key Areas Not Covered Above?
<i>Response</i>	There is nothing at this time.