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# Pandemic Influenza for homecare providers

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Lesley Rimmer, Chief Executive

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# Disclaimer



- Pandemic influenza is a fast-moving subject and our understanding is evolving rapidly
  - Nothing in this presentation is intended to contradict advice from the competent government department or agency
  - In the case of any conflict, follow the advice from the competent agency
  - Providers should not base their action or inaction solely on this presentation
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# Pandemic 'Flu, the basics



- **Swine 'flu** is a disease of pigs, which is not usually transmissible to humans
  - Current swine 'flu virus is **type A influenza virus (H1N1)**, which can spread by human-to-human contact
  - **Pandemic 'flu** is a global outbreak of human-human transmission. The swine 'flu outbreak has been declared a pandemic.
  - It spreads quickly because few people have any immunity
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# Signs and symptoms of pandemic 'flu



**Sudden onset of:**

**Fever, cough or shortness of breath**

**May include:**

**Headache, tiredness, chills, muscle aches, joint pain, diarrhoea or stomach upset, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, loss of appetite**

**Symptom checker from NHS Direct helps rule-out other conditions: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/Sat/Topics/WizardStepOne.aspx](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/Sat/Topics/WizardStepOne.aspx) or call 0845 46 47**

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# Current virus status in England

(as of 9pm Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2009)



**1923**

Confirmed  
cases

**Cases concentrated in West  
Midlands (1006) and  
London (450)**

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# WHO & UK Alert Levels



## World Health Organisation (WHO) Phase



## UK Alert Level



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# Key contact details for England



- ◆ Swine 'Flu recorded information line: 0800 1513 513 and website [www.direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu)
  - ◆ Department of Health website regularly updated includes swine 'flu posters and leaflets for download and "Planning for Pandemic Influenza in Social Care" guidance: [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_093380](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_093380)
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# UKHCA's Pandemic 'Flu Guidance



- Updated regularly
- Contains information specific to England
- Addresses practice issues including difficult HR questions
- Signposts to other sources of information

Available free from  
[www.ukhca.co.uk/flu](http://www.ukhca.co.uk/flu)

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# Planning for pandemic



- Assume up to 50% of workforce may be affected either directly or indirectly
  - 15-22% of staff may be off work during the a peak-period of 2-3 weeks
  - 0.2-2% mortality rate
  - First wave likely to be 3-5 months
    - ◆ Subsequent waves weeks or months apart
    - ◆ Second wave could be more severe than the first
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# Implications for the workforce



- Incubation: 1-4 days (typically 2-3)
  - Infectious: up to 5 days after start of symptoms
    - ◆ Up to 50% of those infected will asymptomatic carriers
  - Expected time off work: 7-10 days
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# Anticipate absences from...



- Workers who are sick
  - Workers with caring responsibilities
  - Workers with younger children
  - Workers who are afraid
  - Problems with public transport
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# Staff reporting symptoms should



- Call in sick as soon as feeling unwell
  - Go home if on duty
    - ◆ Avoid using public transport if possible
  - Call GP or England NHS direct helpline on 0845 46 47
  - Take antivirals when indicated and available
  - Stay at home until symptoms resolve
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# What to do when service users report 'flu symptoms



- Careworkers should inform their manager
  - Make contact with family or GP/NHS helpline to make arrangements for antivirals.
  - Users may require hospitalisation, contact emergency services where indicated
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# Antiviral drugs and vaccination



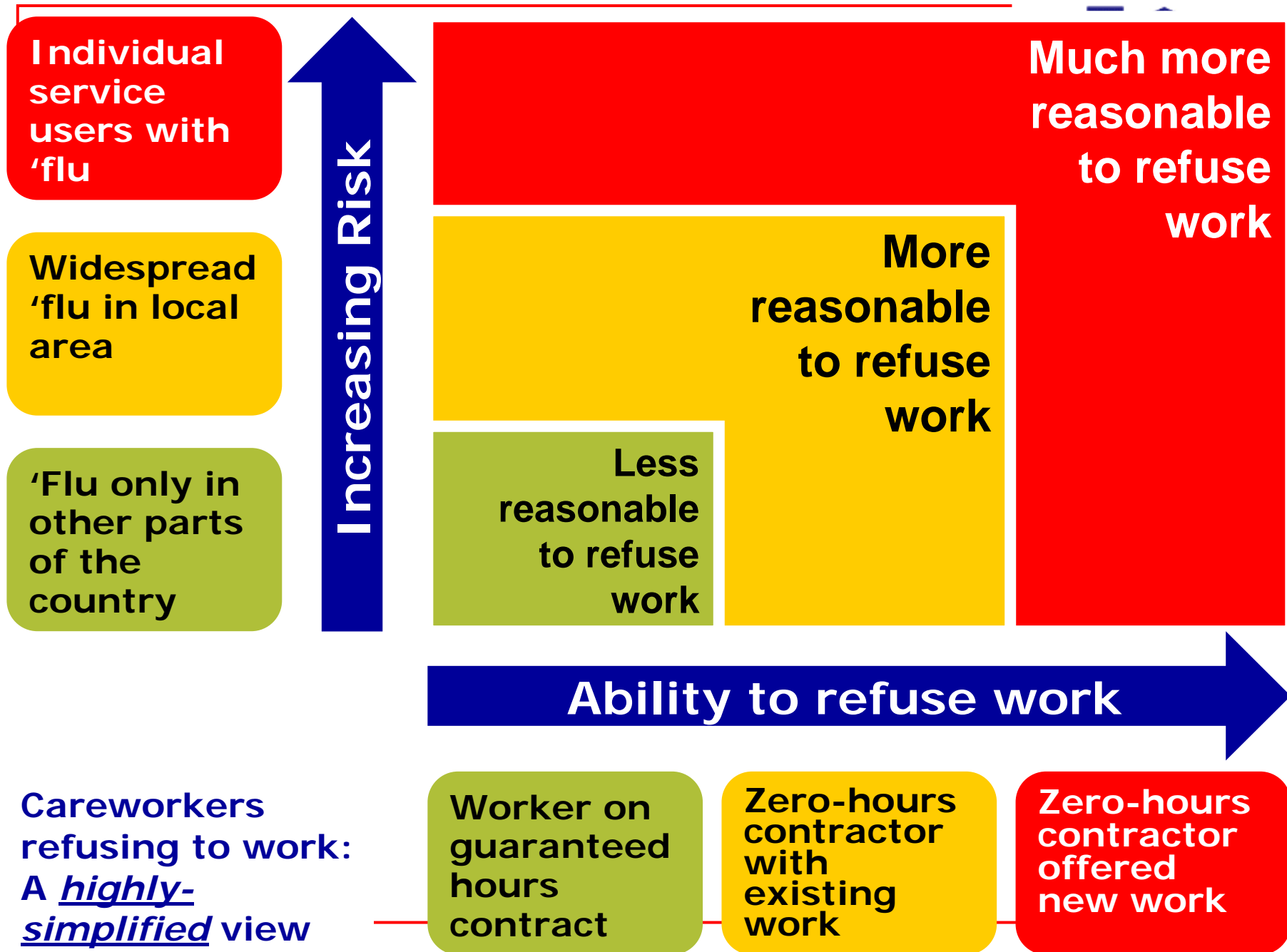
- Antivirals reduce length and severity of symptoms, being stockpiled to treat 80% of English population
    - ◆ Need to be started within 2 days of symptoms
    - ◆ Taking antivirals in advance isn't effective
  - Currently vaccine under development
  - UKHCA wrote to Department of Health and arrangements are being made for antivirals to be given to frontline health and social care staff who come into close contact with symptomatic individuals. More detail to be announced in next couple of weeks.
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# Managing staff before and during pandemic



- Keep staff informed about your plans
  - Listen to anxieties, try to answer questions
  - Anticipate increased levels of stress
  - Help staff keep a sense of proportion
  - Balance your need for continued operation with your staffs' ability to terminate their contract
  - Explain expectations about continued working
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# Training staff



- Emphasise importance of personal hygiene
  - ◆ Reinforce “Catch it, bin it, kill it”
- Train staff in:
  - ◆ Correct hand washing
  - ◆ Use of face masks (if using)
  - ◆ Cleaning contaminated surfaces
- Tell staff when they should go home if sick
  - ◆ Don't encourage unreasonable risks or heroism



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# Revise effective hand washing techniques with staff



- ✓ Use **warm water** comfortable to the touch, but not hot
  - ✓ Use **neutral detergent hand wash**, or a clean bar of soap
  - ✓ **Pay attention** to fingertips, thumbs & palms
  - ✓ **Dry hands** on disposable tissue or clean towel
  - ✗ **Don't rub hands** so vigorously that they become tender
  - ✗ **Don't use** a scrubbing brush
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# Hand washing should take place...



- **On arrival** at user's home:
  - ◆ Before donning gloves
- **After:**
  - ◆ Removing and disposing of gloves
  - ◆ Contact with sputum or used tissues
  - ◆ Contact with any body fluids
- **Before leaving** the service user's home.



UKHCA's hand washing guide is available free from  
[www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?id=112](http://www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?id=112)

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# Do surgical facemasks protect against 'flu?



“There is no convincing scientific evidence that the widespread issue of facemasks to healthy members of the public can stop this disease spreading.

“Moreover, they give can false reassurance, and can encourage people to ignore basic and straightforward hand hygiene measures which have proven effectiveness.”

Department of Health, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009

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# Factors to consider when buying masks



- Most appropriate use is when within 1m of contact with symptomatic people
  - Incorrect use/disposal of facemasks increases cross-infection
  - Specification for masks has been difficult to find, but advice from Department of Health is: **“2R fluid-resister surgical mask offering splash protection and a malleable noseband”**.
  - The Department of Health has officially stated that masks are being procured for social care staff in England. Detail of distribution plans via PCTs and councils to be announced. However DH suggests providers increase your supplies of other PPE (eg. gloves and aprons).
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# To be effective, facemasks should be...



- **Worn correctly:** Follow the manufacturer's instructions
  - **Changed frequently:** At least between service users  
Don't re-use single-use items
  - **Removed properly:** Minimal handling, preferably only by the ties or loops
  - **Disposed of safely:** Into refuse which should be discarded frequently
  - **Combined with good hygiene measures:** Hand washing should follow every removal of a mask
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# Working with your local councils



- Cooperate with councils where possible
    - ◆ Remember that we will all have to work together during a pandemic
  - Seek similar treatment between council and independent/voluntary sector workers – ‘flu won’t know the difference
  - Respond to council’s advice for ‘rationing’ care
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# Questions if you contract with local councils



- Will pandemic 'flu be classed as a *force majeure* event?
  - Will the council give a temporary relaxation of performance criteria and penalties?
    - ◆ Eg. Obligation to fill, fill rates, electronic monitoring
    - ◆ If so, when? If not, why not?
  - Will they pay a *reasonable* enhancement to the hourly rate?
    - ◆ You may have additional costs of PPE or enhanced pay
  - Have they understood zero-hours contracts?
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# If you don't currently contract with local councils



- Review your current charge rates
  - Contact local councils (give them your rates!)
  - Agree to supply under your TOBs, if possible
  - Get onto mailing lists for local information
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# Some ideas for your emergency plan



- Advance communications with users and workers
  - Do you have sufficient supplies, including Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves and aprons?
  - Is your phone system adequate + back-up plan?
  - Do you have next of kin & GP contacts for users?
  - Do you know which users will get help from their family?
  - Do you have plans to target care to most dependent users?
  - Plans for adjusting workers rosters?
  - Do you know which staff will increase their usual hours?
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# More ideas for your emergency plan



- Do you have plans to cover sickness of managers?
    - ◆ Enough staff able to authorise payments and deal with your bank
    - ◆ Do you have sufficient staff to run payroll?
    - ◆ Are all staff trained with any rostering systems?
  - Sufficient un-rostered staff to cover short-notice absence?
  - Do you have provisions for emergencies?
    - ◆ Careworkers unable to withdraw cash or get petrol
    - ◆ Service users without any food
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# How to contact us



**Pandemic 'flu information:**

**[www.ukhca.co.uk/flu](http://www.ukhca.co.uk/flu)**

**E-mail:**

**[enquiries@ukhca.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ukhca.co.uk)**

**Helpline:**

**020 8288 5291**

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