Flu Friends – A possible alternative

Margaret Lally
Who can be a flu friend?
Who can be a Flu Friend?

> You, Me, Most People

> Someone who will collect anti-virals for a symptomatic individual

> Someone who will provide other practical and psychosocial support e.g. shopping, telephone checks

> Part of the local community’s resilience mechanisms
Enabling others to help

> The public!
Why are we talking about them?

> Most people will know who their flu friend is (family, friends)

> But not everyone will have a flu friend

> Older people who have no surviving relatives or whose family/friends live far away, migrants or new comers to a community, people who are geographically isolated etc., may not have a flu friend.
An Alternative to…..

> People going to GPs/pharmacists – potentially spreading the virus and also putting additional demand on the system

> People not getting the help they need when they need it and possibly becoming more seriously ill

> A centrally controlled delivery system

> PCT/SS needing to use scarce resources to organise deliveries and provide support
Why the Voluntary Sector?

- Commitment to help the most vulnerable
- Has already got a large volunteer workforce
- Linked into local communities, can identify the most vulnerable and recruit volunteers
- May already be working in partnership with statutory sector
How Does It Work?

> Arrangements will vary between local PCTs and the voluntary organisation they are working with.

> British Red Cross (BRC) is only one player; many other voluntary organisations also involved. Models will vary.

> BRC’s model is that we are undertaking the work on behalf of statutory partners and targeting the most vulnerable who do not have a friend nor supporter who can easily help them.
How Does It Work?

> Referral has to come through PCT. May be linked to other services e.g. in North Wales BRC providing surge capacity for flu assessment line

> Procedures and process map set up and agreed

> Will provide a 24/7 service but in most cases would expect to deliver the antivirals during the working day
How Does It Work?

> Primarily provided by volunteers all of whom will be CRB checked and follow BRC policies
> Patient ID checked when anti virals handed over
> Telephone support provided; some additional tasks may be taken
> Will ring again in a couple of days time to check how the patient is doing
> Who benefits. Some case stories………………..
Issues

> Identification of vulnerability
> Efficient management of resources
> Having the right systems in place
> Security of personnel and drugs
> Cost recovery
> Building the relationship for the future

> Lets not mystify the role – we can all do it!