

FLU PANDEMIC - AS A RETAILER ARE YOU PREPARED?

A STRAIGHTFORWARD GUIDE FOR RETAILERS

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and UK Government say a pandemic is **GOING TO HAPPEN** and you need to be ready to deal with the potential impacts on your business.



How will this white paper help you and your business?

Coping with a pandemic will be very difficult for everyone. This paper will help you to identify all the issues you should consider and the action you need to take to enable you and your business to survive and your staff to be supported before, during and after the pandemic.

This white paper seeks to provide you with the information and guidance to help you carry out pandemic planning for your business. It contains information on three key subjects:

(1) **People** (2) **Supply chain** (3) **Technology**.

These subjects have been captured in the form of checklists that will guide you through the key considerations and actions.

What is a pandemic?

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak spreading around the world affecting hundreds of thousands of people, across many countries. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity and for which there is no vaccine. Past pandemics have spread globally in two and sometimes three waves. Each wave could last six to eight weeks and be separated by several months. Not all parts of the world or of a single country are expected to be severely affected at the same time. If a second wave occurs, it may be more severe than the first. There have been three major pandemics in the last century: 1918-19 'Spanish' Flu (20-40 million deaths), 1957-58 'Asian' Flu (1 million deaths), 1968-69 'Hong Kong' Flu (1 million deaths) - UK Department of Health

www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu

What is bird flu?

Like humans and other species, birds are susceptible to flu. There are 15 types of bird, or avian, flu. The most contagious strains, which are usually fatal in birds, are H5 and H7. The type currently causing concern is the deadly strain H5N1 which can prove fatal to humans. Migratory wildfowl, notably wild ducks, are natural carriers of the viruses, but are unlikely to actually develop an infection. The risk is that they pass it on to domestic birds, which are much more susceptible to the virus - World Health Organisation (WHO)

www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en

The World Health Organisation warns that the H5N1 Bird Flu virus is constantly mutating to be easier for humans to catch and when a pandemic strain develops there will only be a 60-90 day window from the start to a worldwide pandemic. Any business without a robust pandemic preparedness plan will find it impossible to react once the pandemic has begun.

UK and WHO Alert Levels

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed an alert system to help inform the world about the current threat of a pandemic emerging. The alert system has six phases, with Phase 1 having the lowest risk of human cases and Phase 6 posing the greatest risk of pandemic. Similarly, the UK Government has developed an alert system which consists of five levels (0 to 4). Please see the table at the front of the checklists, which shows how the UK and WHO Alert Levels compare.

Likelihood

Globally there have been a number of deaths as a result of humans contracting the H5N1 virus following close contact with infected birds. Our lack of resilience as humans to this virus currently within the bird population has already been clearly demonstrated and if, as described above, the H5N1 virus does mutate and become a strain that humans can pass on to one another, the whole world is at risk.

How will a Pandemic affect you and your business?

Predictions vary in terms of how long a pandemic will last and what the rate of sickness will be. As a general guide, it is predicted that a pandemic will last between 8-15 weeks. It is anticipated that at any one time there could be 25% sickness and up to 50% absence due to people needing to stay at home to look after children or other family members, schools may close and there may be a general reluctance to go out to work due to concern over contracting the virus.

http://www.ukresilience.info/upload/assets/www.ukresilience.info/060710_revised_pandemic.pdf

You cannot survive without your staff, customers and suppliers:

- Without staff you cannot serve your customers
- Without customers you cannot sell anything
- Without suppliers you have no stock to put on the shelves

You must have your own plans in place to ensure that you are in the strongest position possible to continue trading. There are many unknowns over the scale of impact, what we do know, however, is that when a pandemic occurs it is likely to be significant.

What have you got to protect you and your business?

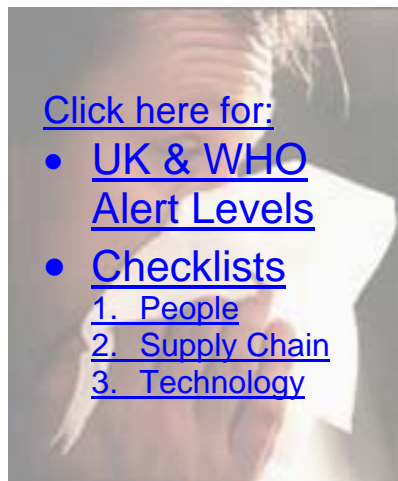
The Government has plans in place to help ensure key services such as water, gas and electricity will remain available. Treatment with antiviral drugs (e.g. Tamiflu) can be expected to shorten the duration of the disease (by 1 day) and can help reduce the likelihood of complications and serious illness such as pneumonia. The Government is not planning to make Tamiflu available as a preventative treatment. Currently, antivirals are only available in the UK as prescription drugs.

<http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/medicines/100004852.html>

How to find your way around

To help you find your way around this document, we have provided links (click the links in the boxes below) which will take you directly to what you want to look at:

Links to documents:



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PANDEMIC WHITE PAPER FOR RETAILERS

1. FLU PANDEMIC - PEOPLE ISSUES

Can you trade without your staff?

Key message:

Your staff are your greatest asset and as an employer you have a duty of care to ensure that you and your staff can operate in a safe and secure environment. Your staff also have a responsibility for their own safety and welfare whilst working. Without your staff you don't have a business.

All organisations should consider the following key areas in order to maintain this duty of care when preparing to face a pandemic situation:

Policies

As a business you should consider reviewing policies that cover:

- **Pay and Sickness**
Although a pandemic situation does not change the legal rights of employees, clarity between employer and employees over what is agreed practice and what is not e.g. laying off staff, sickness duration, sickness certification is essential to avoid unnecessary dispute and effectively manage the running of the business
 - **Leave and attendance**
Staff may need to be at home due to family bereavement, to care for close family who are ill and children if schools are forced to close
 - **Customer facing staff**
There may be a natural resistance by staff when facing customers who could be carrying the virus. Consider introducing physical measures to protect and increase the confidence of your staff, such as keeping a distance at tills – chip and pin capabilities may offer this opportunity
 - **Home working**
Where practical it could be sensible to allow staff to work from home, helping to avoid the spread of infection in your workplace
 - **Shift working**
Splitting work into shifts will reduce the spread of infection and help you spread your limited resources to cover extended operating hours
 - **Meetings**
Restricting business meetings and limiting participants will help to reduce the spread of infection
 - **Cross training / multi-skilling**
There will be activities in your business that only certain individuals have the knowledge or skills to perform e.g. payroll / deliveries / banking. This may require you to train others in case of long term absence of particular staff members
 - **Managing visitors and customers**
Any visitor onto your premises could bring the infection with them. This could be passed onto your staff and other visitors. You may need to restrict visitors and implement a process to better control the movement of customers to limit close contact
 - **Redeployment of staff to other sites**
The forced closure of one site could enable another site to maintain operations when staffing resource is limited
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- **Priorities**
With possibly up to 50% less staff you should concentrate on your core activities, that allow you to operate effectively
http://www.ukresilience.info/upload/assets/www.ukresilience.info/060710_revised_pandemic.pdf

Hygiene

Applying effective hygiene controls can help ensure that the spread of a pandemic is limited. The following should be considered:

- **Good hygiene**
If applied both in the workplace and at home, good hygiene will reduce the risk of the infection spreading. Good practices are to use alcohol-based cleaners and to increase the frequency of cleaning regimes
- **Protective Equipment**
The Government Chief Medical Officer commissioned the Health Protection Agency to review the scientific evidence for the use of facemasks by the public during a flu pandemic. This review did not find any clear evidence that such a policy would be of benefit. For more information, see the Health Protection Agency (HPA) website (FAQ page):
http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/pandemic/pandemicflufaq_prevent.htm
- **Correct use and disposal of hygiene materials**
A virus can be spread through the incorrect use of tissues when sneezing and the incorrect disposal of them. As such correct methods should be promoted, i.e. cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when coughing / sneezing and dispose of the tissue immediately. Proper methods of disposal should also be provided
- **Appoint Hygiene Co-ordinator**
The workload and co-ordination could be considerable as staff, customers and suppliers will require awareness and training. Adherence to such standards will need to be monitored

Travel

Throughout a pandemic the ability to travel could be heavily impaired and in addition the movement of people will help the spread of the virus. You should therefore consider:

- **Travel to and from work**
Your staff may not be able to get into work due to public transport restrictions. As such, flexibility on the part of the business and its staff may be needed in the hours worked
- **Business travel**
Restricting or cancelling either domestic and/or international business travel will help to avoid staff infection

Communications

You need to ensure that you keep staff, customers, and suppliers informed that your business is safe, protected and operational. Good communications will also help you to actively support the welfare of staff who may be ill or unable to get into work for associated reasons

- **Staff Engagement**
Working with employees to promote understanding in the workplace regarding the potential changes that may be necessary, to dispel any uncertainty, and to provide education on the issues faced
 - **Suppliers**
To maintain effective management of the supply of stock when resources are limited
 - **Customers**
To actively encourage customers to continue to shop with you throughout a pandemic
 - **Reopening**
Staff will need to know where and when to go back to work and customers will need to be informed that you are back open for business
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o **Methods**

Various actions should be considered throughout the pandemic phases such as:

- Create a staff forum prior to a pandemic
- Use staff notice boards with daily updates
- Provide daily e-mail updates both to work and home
- Provide signage instructing customers and visitors as to the protocol they should adopt whilst on the premises
- Consider regular calls to staff who are at home ill or indirectly affected to support their position

However, during a pandemic, staff may well be dispersed from their normal place of work; in some cases staff may become isolated at home so other methods of communication could be more appropriate.

2. FLU PANDEMIC – SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES

Will your business survive without the right products to sell?

Key message:

Your customers and your supply chain are critical to the continuity of your retail business. As a retailer you need to have sufficient stock of the products your customers want to buy, available when your customers want to purchase them. If you are unable to meet this demand not only will your income (sales / profit) be reduced, but your customers will shop elsewhere and may not return to you once the pandemic is over.

Your supply chain will be disrupted during a flu pandemic. To reduce the impact on your supply chain you should consider the following:

Sales

As a retailer you need to understand how your customers are likely to react in a flu pandemic and what your priorities will be.

- **Customers**
There may be insufficient stock of products to satisfy all your regular customers and people who do not normally shop with you will do so if you have products that are in short supply.
Customers may change their shopping habits to avoid physical contact and switch to ordering through the post, over the phone or via the internet if you offer these services.
How you treat your customers during the pandemic will be remembered long afterwards.
- **Products / services**
Demand for products and services will change. Demand for essential goods and services is likely to increase immediately before and during the pandemic, while discretionary spend on non-essential products will decline. This will change again after the pandemic as people make purchases deferred during the pandemic.

Stock management

During a pandemic you will need to have enough stock available to meet your customers' demands and manage surplus stocks to minimise the financial impact on your business. If you have more than one shop and store your surplus stock in one place, or you deliver to your customers you may also be affected by the absence of your driver(s) or possible fuel shortages. In order to reduce the impact on your business you should consider the following:

- **Stockholding**
Production and distribution difficulties may lead to shortages of certain products. This situation will be worse for products with a short shelf life or where just-in-time manufacturing or ordering principles are currently followed. It will take time for production and distribution to return to normal after the pandemic and for stock to become available at the levels before the pandemic.
Sales of non-essential or discretionary products will fall significantly resulting in high levels of stockholding of these products in your warehouses and shops, reducing the space available for additional stock of products that are in demand, and adversely impacting your cash flow.
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- **Stock disposal**
If your products are seasonal or have a limited shelf life, your ability to dispose of surplus stock of non-essential or discretionary products through seasonal sales will be significantly reduced.
- **Deliveries to your shops** (if you have more than one shop)
Drivers will also become ill with flu and there may be fuel shortages
- **Deliveries to your customers** (if appropriate to your business)
Drivers will also become ill with flu and there may be fuel shortages

Suppliers

Without stock, other items and key services you rely on to keep trading, you will go out of business.

- **Key suppliers**
It is likely that your suppliers will not be able to fulfil contracts and meet service level agreements during the pandemic, as they will also be affected by staff absence and supply chain problems
- **Suppliers plans**
Although a supplier may be key to your business, you may not be regarded as one of their key customers. Your key suppliers may not be prepared for a flu pandemic
- **Alternative sources of supply**
Different countries and different parts of the same country may be affected very differently. Some countries may close their borders, which may mean that you will need to find alternative sources of supply

3. FLU PANDEMIC – TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

Can you operate without IT?

Key Message:

We are all dependant on technology to run our businesses on a day-to-day basis. What you must understand is how the provision of your services depends upon computers, computerised equipment such as cash tills, credit card (Chip & PIN) equipment, telephones and facsimile (Fax).

Computer Equipment

You may rely on key pieces of equipment, which if they failed would stop your business in its tracks. Note that third party support and emergency services, such as the Fire Brigade, will also be affected by the pandemic.

Computer Room and Systems

Many businesses rely wholly upon computer systems to function. Specialist staff will be needed to maintain these and controls will be required to ensure that these systems remain secure and operational. External power supply may be interrupted or erratic.

Like you, your support company may be adversely affected by the pandemic, so ensure that you are able to cover the following during a pandemic period:

- **Security**
Your computer room needs to be kept secure and access restricted to only those technical staff that need to be in there to support the equipment.
- **Power Supply**
The environment of the room needs to be maintained for the optimum running of the equipment (temperature control).
Fire detection and suppression systems must work to avoid the loss of data and equipment.
An **Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)** should support the equipment so that a controlled shut down can be initiated if a power failure occurs. The UPS should ideally be in a separate room to the equipment (to minimise fire risk).
- **Recovery**
You need to ensure that copies of data, software licences, set-up discs and instructions for your support teams are available to minimise disruption if you need to recover your computers and business data.
Copies of Software Licences or License Agreements and set-up discs should be kept off site securely and protected from fire.

Personal Computers (PCs)

Your staff, and therefore your business, rely upon these essential tools. Your staff may need PCs to keep working and important data needs to be accessible throughout the pandemic period.

- **Back-up and Support**
Back-ups of key data need to be taken regularly and Technical Support will be required for your PCs in order to keep your business operational and your staff working, whether at work or on the move.
 - **Working away from the office**
For those that can work from home or on the move, it might make sense to keep them away to minimise the spread of infection. If staff are recovering from illness, they might be able to work from home even though they might not be able to travel to work. The technology to enable working from home should be tested now, so you are prepared when a pandemic strikes.
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Telephony & Communications

During a pandemic, the ability to communicate with your staff, colleagues, customers and suppliers is vital. If you do not have effective communication plans, your business will be impacted.

- **Mobile phones**
Mobile phones may help your business in a pandemic if staff are working from home. You need to ensure that you can support staff with spares if critical to your operation.
- **Fax**
Your Fax support service may not be able to maintain the equipment in case of failure. Consider a spare, or work with a business neighbour to provide a reciprocal arrangement for cover.
- **Call Centres**
Can you maintain your call centre service during a flu pandemic if the support company cannot provide maintenance cover?
- **Web Sites**
If you have the staff to maintain an internal or external web site, it is a great way to keep consumers, customers, suppliers and staff informed about your businesses activities, such as opening times, office hours, support and contact details specifically concerning the pandemic.

Taking Cash and Paying Staff & Suppliers

Cash flow and the ability to pay staff and suppliers is a basic requirement of any business. During a pandemic situation, normal arrangements may not be effective. Review alternative arrangements to ensure staff and suppliers continue to work with you during the pandemic.

- **Tills and Cash**
Cash flow is essential to your business and this depends upon your tills and processes for cash, cheque and credit card management and banking. Ensure staff are trained to operate manually without tills and that you have arrangements for the safe-keeping of cash.
- **Payroll & Payments**
Your staff and suppliers need to be paid throughout the pandemic
- **Cash**
You need to ensure that if you collect cash or have a cash delivery to pay staff, you have sufficient cover for this activity if you or the primary staff member is absent.
- **Record Keeping**
You need to ensure that you can cover the business record keeping, enabling compliance with the Revenue and Taxation Department, once the pandemic is passed and you recover your business operations.

Business Processes & Controls

If staff are affected by pandemic flu you need to ensure that your business continues to work effectively. Staff may be called upon to perform different tasks to cover for absence. Clear, documented guidance and procedures will help during such a situation.

It is important to stop fraud and theft and your management controls should not hamper your operations during a pandemic

Security

The value of your business is in its staff and physical assets. These must be protected during emergency conditions that may be in place during a pandemic.

You may not be able to call upon a supplier of security services if they have been impacted by their staff's illness. Therefore, you and your staff may need to ensure that your physical security and access controls for your premises can be maintained. This includes card-access readers, CCTV, perimeter alarms, and power outages.

PANDEMIC CHECKLISTS FOR RETAILERS

Pandemic Flu Checklists

Reviewing and preparing for the affects of disruption on your business is not an easy task. However, if you wish to continue to trade and minimise the impact that a pandemic might have upon your business, you should consider the various actions that could help with this.

The following checklists have been developed to help you and your team prepare your business for a potential pandemic event. They contain information that you should consider in the light of your business and the tasks your staff perform.

The checklists have been arranged by three broad sections: People, Supply Chain and Technology. Each section is divided into key areas where likely problems or issues will occur. Included are suggestions on the things that you ought to consider taking action on.

You can use this document to assign responsibility or ownership for a particular action or issue. Tracking tools have been included so that you can assign a date by which the actions ought to be completed and whether these activities apply before, during or after the pandemic (see key below).

Finally, an area for comments or to note progress has been included to allow you to monitor and manage these preparations so as to minimise the disruptive impact on your business.

Key	UK ALERT LEVELS	WHO PHASES
Before	Alert level 0	Phases 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
During	Alert levels 1, 2, 3 & 4	Phase 6
After	Alert level 0	Phase 1

UK Government and WHO Pandemic Alert Levels

The table below shows how the UK Government and WHO Pandemic Alert Levels compare:

UK Alert Levels	WHO Phases
Inter-Pandemic Period	
Level 0 UK not affected <i>OR</i> UK has strong travel/trade connections with affected country <i>OR</i> UK affected	Phase 1 No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection or disease is considered to be low. Phase 2 No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.
Pandemic Alert Period	
Level 0 UK not affected <i>OR</i> UK has strong travel/trade connections with affected country <i>OR</i> UK affected	Phase 3 Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no new human-to-human spread, or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact. Phase 4 Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localised, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans. Phase 5 Large cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localised, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk).
Pandemic Period	
Level 1 Virus/cases only outside the UK	Phase 6 Pandemic phase: increased and sustained transmission in the general population. Past experience suggests that a second, and possibly further, waves of illness caused by the new virus are possible 3-9 months after the first wave has subsided depending on seasonality. The second wave may be as, or more, intense than the first.
Level 2 Virus isolated in the UK	
Level 3 Outbreaks(s) in the UK	
Level 4 Widespread activity across the UK	

Source: Health Protection Agency Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan, page 12
http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/pandemic/fluplan.htm

Checklist: People Issues

Section		PEOPLE								
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress
POLICIES	Pay and Sickness	Although a pandemic situation does not change the legal rights of employees, clarity between employer and employees over what is agreed practice and what is not e.g. laying off staff, sickness duration, sickness certification is essential to avoid unnecessary dispute and effectively manage the running of the business		You should, if circumstances dictate and if contractually possible, include a statement covering the possibility of laying staff off for a period of time if circumstances demand			✓			
				Determine what is an acceptable time to be off sick with pandemic flu (to include suitable quarantine period post infection) and whether you would want to pay sick pay for the duration of this period			✓			
				You may wish to accept alternative evidence from those affected with the virus, particularly if GP's are overloaded with cases and staff cannot obtain an appointment to get a sick note)			✓			
	Leave and Attendance	Staff may need to be at home due to family bereavement, to care for close family who are ill and children if schools are forced to close		Decide what is an acceptable amount of paid leave for a member of staff who's close relative is seriously ill or has died as a result of pandemic flu and requires care			✓			
				Decide what is an acceptable amount of paid leave for a member of staff who's child is forced to be at home due to school closure or their inability to get to work			✓			
	Customer Facing Staff	There may be a natural resistance by staff when facing customers who could be carrying the virus. Consider introducing physical measures to protect and increase the confidence of your staff, such as keeping a distance at tills – chip and pin capabilities may offer this opportunity		Decide if the store format should be arranged such that you can distance the customer from the staff at the point of payment			✓	✓		
				Maximising the use of Chip and PIN payment methods will provide the opportunity to further distance staff from customers. You should consider where possible restricting transactions to this method only			✓	✓		
				The provision of the correct hygiene and protective equipment/materials could reduce the chances of cross contamination (customer to staff). Advanced procurement could avoid delays if demand suddenly increases			✓	✓		

Section		PEOPLE								
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress
POLICIES	Home Working	Where practical it could be sensible to allow staff to work from home, helping to avoid the spread of infection in your workplace		If you consider it appropriate for staff to work from home, can you provide the resources? Refer to Technology checklist			✓			
	Shift Working	Splitting work into shifts will reduce the spread of infection and help you spread your limited resources to cover extended operating hours		Consider the practical length of operating hours and the supervision needed throughout			✓	✓		
	Meetings	Restricting business meetings and limiting participants will help to reduce the spread of infection		Avoid face-to-face meetings where possible - hold a teleconference instead. Your staff communications should not be in groups but through using notice board or handouts				✓		
	Cross Training/ Multi-Skilling	There will be activities in your business that only certain individuals have the knowledge or skills to perform e.g. payroll / deliveries / banking. This may require you to train others in case of long term absence of particular staff members		Identify any areas of activity in your business where no more than two people have the knowledge and skills to carry out specific tasks. Train additional staff in these areas who can backfill if required			✓			
	Managing Visitors and Customers	Any visitor onto your premises could bring the infection with them. This could be passed onto your staff and other visitors. You may need to restrict visitors and implement a process to better control the movement of customers to limit close contact		Determine your policy for controlling visitors onto the premises and provide the means to enforce the policy throughout a pandemic			✓	✓		
	Redeployment of Staff to Other Sites	The forced closure of one site could enable another site to maintain operations when staffing resource is limited		Determine your policy for redeploying staff to other sites			✓			
	Priorities	With possibly up to 50% less staff you should concentrate on your core activities, that allow you to operate effectively		Consider objectively the main activities in your business and prioritise them by level of importance. (i.e. an absolute minimum to allow you to keep running). Also, recognise the hours it would be possible to remain open with reduced staff			✓	✓		

Section		PEOPLE								
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress
HYGIENE	Good Hygiene	If applied both in the workplace and at home, good hygiene will reduce the risk of the infection spreading. Good practices are to use alcohol-based cleaners and to increase the frequency of cleaning regimes		The use of correct cleaning and hygiene materials could reduce the chances of contamination			✓	✓	✓	
				Your organisation should develop and implement as standard practice detailed hygiene protocols and regimes, and train staff to ensure rigorous application and enforcement			✓	✓	✓	
				Provide information sheets and educational and awareness sessions for all staff in line with government briefing notes			✓	✓	✓	
	Protective Equipment	The Government Chief Medical Officer commissioned the Health Protection Agency to review the scientific evidence for the use of facemasks by the public during a flu pandemic. This review did not find any clear evidence that such a policy would be of benefit. For more information see the HPA FAQ web page		The provision of protective equipment may provide some protection. Advanced procurement could avoid delays if demand suddenly increases			✓	✓		
	Correct Use and Disposal of Hygiene Materials	A virus can be spread through the incorrect use of tissues when sneezing and the incorrect disposal of them. As such correct methods should be promoted, i.e. cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when coughing / sneezing and dispose of the tissue immediately. Proper methods of disposal should also be provided		You should provide information sheets and educational and awareness sessions for all staff as to how to use and dispose of tissues correctly, in line with government briefing notes			✓	✓		
				You should purchase suitable disposal receptacles in preparation for relevant areas in line with government briefing notes			✓	✓		
				You should develop detailed disposal protocols and regimes, and train staff cleaners to ensure rigorous application and enforcement			✓	✓		
	Appoint Hygiene Coordinator	The workload and co-ordination could be considerable as staff, customers and suppliers will require awareness and training. Adherence to such standards will need to be monitored		Your organisation should identify suitable person(s), define their role and responsibilities and provide suitable training in advance of a pandemic situation			✓	✓		
	TRAVEL	Travel To and From Work	Your staff may not be able to get into work due to public transport restrictions. As such, flexibility on the part of the business and its staff may be needed in the hours worked		Consider alternative means of getting employees into work, re-deploying to other sites				✓	
Business Travel		Restricting or cancelling either domestic and/or international business travel will help to avoid staff infection		Consider alternative means and technology for doing business that avoid all unnecessary business travel (do the benefits of travel outlay the risks of doing so?)			✓	✓		

Section		PEOPLE									
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress	
COMMUNICATIONS	Staff Engagement	Working with employees to promote understanding in the workplace over: the potential changes that may be necessary; to dispel any uncertainty, and to provide education on the issues faced		Set up a flu pandemic staff communications team whose task is to develop communications processes and content and to include staff /union representatives			✓	✓	✓		
	Suppliers	To maintain effective management of the supply of stock when resources are limited		Set up a flu pandemic supplier communications team whose task is to identify key suppliers, the communication issues in time of pandemic and to establish an understanding of their responses to pandemic situations			✓	✓	✓		
	Customers	To actively encourage customers to continue to shop with you throughout a pandemic		Set up a flu pandemic customer communications team whose task is to develop communications processes, mechanisms and content to provide assurance to customers over the measures adopted and to highlight the policies to which your customers need to adhere.			✓	✓	✓		
	Reopening	Staff will need to know where and when to go back to work and customers will need to be informed that you are back open for business							✓	✓	
	Methods	<p>Various actions should be considered throughout the pandemic phases such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a staff forum prior to a pandemic • Use staff notice boards with daily updates • Provide daily e-mail updates both to work and home • Provide signage instructing customers and visitors as to the protocol they should adopt whilst on the premises • Consider regular calls to staff who are at home ill or indirectly affected to support their position <p>However, during a pandemic, staff may well be dispersed from their normal place of work. In some cases staff may become isolated at home so other methods of communication could be more appropriate.</p>		Task to teams detailed above.			✓	✓	✓		

Checklist: Supply Chain Issues

Section		SUPPLY CHAIN										
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress		
SALES	Customers	There may be insufficient stock of products to satisfy all your regular customers and people who do not normally shop with you will do so if you have products that are in short supply		Identify your key customers based on their value to your business in the long term and list them in order of priority			✓					
				Consider your approach if the products you sell are in short supply. Ration to everyone? Sell only to key customers or regular customers?			✓					
		Customers may change their shopping habits to avoid physical contact and switch to ordering through the post, over the phone or via the internet if you offer these services		Identify any current capacity constraints for these services and whether it would be possible to increase the capacity quickly, and how this would be achieved			✓	✓				
				Consider whether you could offer these alternative services, particularly if your products would be regarded as non essentials			✓	✓				
				If you have more than one shopping channel, decide which you will prioritise and how you will communicate any changes to your customers			✓	✓				
		How you treat your customers during the pandemic will be remembered long afterwards		Implement pre-planned actions						✓		
				Based on your understanding of your different types of customers, treat them as appropriate to ensure that your business will survive and flourish after the pandemic e.g. access to products in short supply						✓		
				Communicate accurate, consistent, timely and appropriate information to your customers						✓		
				Ensure that you brief your staff regularly so that they know the latest position and what they should do to manage the business according to the priorities, etc.						✓		
				After the pandemic, identify opportunities to attract new customers							✓	

Section		SUPPLY CHAIN								
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress
SALES	Products/Services	Demand for products and services will change. Demand for essential goods and services is likely to increase immediately before and during the pandemic, while discretionary spend on non-essential products will decline. This will change again after the pandemic as people make purchases deferred during the pandemic		Identify the essential products your (key) customers are likely to require and prioritise them based on your assessment of their importance to your (key) customers, likely level of demand and profitability to your business			✓	✓		
				Identify which products customers will postpone buying during the pandemic and assess the likely impact on your business and it's profitability			✓			
				Consider whether there are any opportunities to extend your current ranges to include products and/or services that customers may require in a pandemic. Identify what you should do now to establish these			✓			
				Implement pre-planned actions					✓	
				Monitor sales of products with short shelf life closely					✓	
				The situation during the pandemic will be changing rapidly and you will need to monitor developments and be able to respond very quickly					✓	
				After the pandemic monitor sales closely and respond to trends. Be aware that there may be another pandemic wave and essential products will be required again. The level of demand will be unpredictable, as customers may have hoarded stock						✓

Section		SUPPLY CHAIN									
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress	
STOCK MANAGEMENT	Stockholding	Production and distribution difficulties may lead to shortages of certain products. This situation will be worse for products with a short shelf life or where just-in-time manufacturing or ordering principles are currently followed. It will take time for production and distribution to return to normal after the pandemic and for stock to become available at the levels before the pandemic		Review existing stock levels for all products, prioritising the key products that will be in demand during a pandemic. Decide when you will increase your stock levels			✓				
				Identify products with short shelf life / expiry dates as this will need to be taken into account in determining appropriate stock levels during a pandemic. Consider people's desire to buy in advance or to buy more than they need			✓				
				If you are intending to increase your stock levels of products, assess how much additional storage space you will need and how you will provide this			✓				
				Consider whether you will have any increased security requirements because of the products you sell and how you will address these			✓				
				Monitor the situation and respond by implementing pre-planned actions			✓	✓			
				After the pandemic build stocks of non-essential / discretionary products as they become available to ensure you are able to meet demand						✓	
		Sales of non-essential or discretionary products will fall significantly resulting in high levels of stockholding of these products in your warehouses and shops, reducing the space available for additional stock of products that are in demand, and adversely impacting your cash flow		Identify products that are likely to be regarded as non-essential or discretionary during a pandemic and assess the impact of a significant fall in sales on the storage space you will have available and your cash flow. Decide your strategy(s) for managing these products				✓			
				Monitor the situation and respond by implementing pre-planned actions				✓	✓		
				After the pandemic monitor stocks of products with short shelf life and take appropriate action							✓

Section		SUPPLY CHAIN								
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress
STOCK MANAGEMENT	Stock disposal	If your products are seasonal or have a limited shelf life, your ability to dispose of surplus stock of non-essential or discretionary products through seasonal sales will be significantly reduced		Assess the potential impact on your business if you rely on seasonal sales to dispose of surplus stock e.g. storage space, cash flow			✓			
				Consider your options and decide your strategy(s) for disposing of surplus stock and minimising the loss of revenue to your business			✓	✓		
				Determine the best approach to writing off the value of stock that you are unable to sell			✓			
	Deliveries to your shop(s) if appropriate	Drivers will also become ill with flu and there may be fuel shortages		Consider how you will transfer stock from where you hold it to your shop(s) if your drivers are absent and / or fuel is in short supply			✓			
				Determine how frequently you have to make deliveries to your shop(s). It may be possible to make less frequent deliveries to make the best use of your available drivers and limited fuel			✓			
	Deliveries to your customers if appropriate	Drivers will also become ill with flu and there may be fuel shortages		Assess the likely level of demand from your customers and how you will continue to make deliveries to your customers. It may be possible to make less frequent deliveries that make best use of your available drivers and limited fuel			✓			

Section		SUPPLY CHAIN								
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress
SUPPLIERS	Key Suppliers	It is likely that your suppliers will not be able to fulfil contracts and meet service level agreements during the pandemic, as they will also be affected by staff absence and supply chain problems		Identify the key suppliers of your priority products and your options if they are unable to maintain supply to their customers (you) during a pandemic			✓			
				Identify the key suppliers of the key items you need to keep your business operating e.g. till rolls, bags, and identify your options if they are unable to maintain supply to their customers (you) during a pandemic			✓			
				Identify the critical services you rely on to keep your business operating e.g. carriers, maintenance contractors, security, etc. and identify your options if they are unable to maintain their service to their customers (you) during a pandemic			✓			
				Implement pre-planned actions and maintain close contact with your key suppliers to understand the situation and implement appropriate responses to ensure that you can obtain sufficient stock to keep your business trading				✓		
	Supplier Plans	Although a supplier may be key to your business, you may not be regarded as one of their key customers. Your key suppliers may not be prepared for a flu pandemic		Assess how critical your business is to each of your key suppliers / service providers. This will help you understand the extent to which your needs are likely to be a priority for them.			✓			
				Try to establish what plans your key suppliers / service providers have made for a pandemic and ideally meet with your key suppliers / service providers to review their plans in detail. Determine their capability, geographic locations, the flexibility of their plans and arrangements			✓			
				Monitor your suppliers' performance during the pandemic, e.g. availability of stock, keeping you informed, how easy they were to contact and deal with			✓			

Section		SUPPLY CHAIN										
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress		
SUPPLIERS	Supplier Plans	Continued		After the pandemic review the performance of your suppliers, particularly those who supply key products or services, and take appropriate action. Be aware that there may be another pandemic wave and now may not be the time to terminate contracts with suppliers.					✓			
				After the pandemic seek reassurance from your key suppliers who did not deliver good service that they have identified corrective actions and implemented them					✓			
	Alternative Sources of Supply	Different countries and different parts of the same country may be affected very differently. Some countries may close their borders, which may mean that you will need to find alternative sources of supply		Identify alternative suppliers both within the UK and overseas. Build relationships with these suppliers before the pandemic as they are unlikely to be willing or able to support new business during a pandemic at the expense of existing customers			✓					
				Identify local sourcing opportunities and build these relationships before the pandemic			✓					
				Implement plans for obtaining stock / services from the alternative sources you have identified					✓			
				Monitor stock availability from all sources closely and take appropriate action					✓			
				Review what happened and implement actions to ensure you are better prepared for the next pandemic wave. Be aware that customers may behave differently, that suppliers may not have time to build stocks to pre-pandemic levels; that some suppliers businesses may fail; that competitors may respond differently; that some competitors businesses may fail, etc.							✓	

Checklist: Technology Issues

Section		TECHNOLOGY								
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress
COMPUTER ROOMS AND SYSTEMS	Security	Your computer room needs to be kept secure and access restricted to only those technical staff that need to be in there to support the equipment		Limit access by using ID swipe cards and a pass code or a pass code enabled lock. Ensure that you have sufficient technical staff cover, with access to this secured area.			✓	✓	✓	
	Power Supply	The environment of the room needs to be maintained for the optimum running of the equipment (temperature control)		Consider a small diesel generator for running the air conditioning in the absence of an electrical supply			✓	✓	✓	
		Fire detection and suppression systems must work to avoid the loss of data and equipment		Ensure that fire detection and suppression equipment is checked weekly to ensure that it is operable.			✓	✓	✓	
		An Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) should support the equipment so that a controlled shut down can be initiated if a power failure occurs. The UPS should ideally be in a separate room to the equipment (to minimise fire risk)		If you do not have a UPS, consider buying and install one – siting it away from the computer room to reduce the risk of fire.			✓	✓	✓	
	Recovery	You need to ensure that copies of data, software licences, set-up discs and instructions for your support teams are available to minimise disruption if you need to recover your computers and business data		Ensure that recovery procedures are documented for support staff.			✓	✓	✓	
				Ensure that software set up discs and software licence numbers are available within the computer room to facilitate a swift recovery.			✓	✓	✓	
		Copies of Software Licences or License Agreements and set-up discs should be kept off site securely and protected from fire		Store all software licenses and copies of set-up disks securely off site in a fire proof safe.			✓	✓	✓	
		Your support company may be adversely affected by the pandemic		Ensure that for business critical systems that your own staff are capable of supporting and recovering, in case external support is not available.			✓	✓	✓	

Section		TECHNOLOGY									
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress	
PERSONAL COMPUTERS (PCs)	Back-up and Support	Back-ups of key data need to be taken regularly and Technical Support will be required for your PCs in order to keep your business operational and your staff working, whether at work or on the move		Map where key data is stored (in which directories and the names of the key files) to facilitate an effective recovery or access to key information during staff absences			✓				
				Task someone with making regular back-ups (the nature of your business will determine the frequency: daily/weekly/monthly)			✓	✓	✓		
				Store backed-up data securely on site or better still, off site			✓	✓	✓		
				Perform recoveries of your data to ensure that it will work and to detect back-up write errors within the tape rotation cycle			✓				
				Ensure that your support staff or contractors can maintain key equipment within the recovery time objectives that you decide upon (i.e. when do you need them to be working?)			✓				
				Identify business critical PCs and map which applications are running on that PC, e.g. the only PC with BACs software/ connection			✓				
	Working away from the Office	For those that can work from home or on the move, it might make sense to keep them away to minimise the spread of infection. If staff are recovering from illness, they might be able to work from home even though they might not be able to travel to work. The technology to enable working from home should be tested now, so you are prepared when a pandemic strikes.		Perform physical tests with key members of staff that could work from home to ensure that they have the equipment to connect - including Broadband access Support with a 'Help Line'			✓	✓			
				Ensure that staff know whom to call to obtain technical assistance to enable them to work remotely (provide the support number)			✓	✓	✓		
				Ensure remote workers have guidance documentation at home (or on their PC) to assist them with simple problem solving			✓				

Section		TECHNOLOGY									
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress	
TELEPHONY & COMMUNICATIONS	Mobiles	Mobile phones may help your business in a pandemic if staff are working from home. You need to ensure that you can support staff with spares if critical to your operation		Assign staff to support mobile phone users			✓				
				Back-up SIM cards weekly			✓	✓	✓		
				Install PC mobile phone support software and assign staff to support mobile phone users			✓	✓			
	Fax	Your Fax support service may not be able to maintain the equipment in case of failure. Consider a spare, or work with a business neighbour to provide a reciprocal arrangement for cover		Ensure that your FAX machine(s) are maintained. Assign technical staff to maintain if problems occur			✓	✓			
	Call Centres	Can you maintain your call centre service during a flu pandemic if the support company cannot provide maintenance cover?		Perform regular checks of equipment and systems to ensure that they continue to work			✓	✓			
				Have spare equipment and assigned support staff			✓	✓			
	Web Sites	If you have the staff to maintain an internal or external web site, it is a great way to keep consumers, customers, suppliers and staff informed about your businesses activities, such as opening times, office hours, support and contact details specifically concerning the pandemic		Ensure that you have the technical capability/support contract to make changes and maintain your site if important to your business			✓				
				An Intranet site for your staff to access remotely might be an effective way of keeping staff informed of what is happening with your business			✓	✓			
				Assign review and maintenance tasks to IT & Corporate Communications team						✓	
TAKING CASH & PAYING STAFF & SUPPLIERS	Tills and Cash	Cash flow is essential to your business and this depends upon your tills and processes for cash, cheque and credit card management and banking. Ensure staff are trained to operate manually without tills and that you have arrangements for the safe-keeping of cash		Devise and document internal emergency procedures for the storage of and taking of cash from customers. Train staff in the emergency procedures for cash management			✓	✓			
				Ensure that you have arrangements for the safe-keeping of cash/cheques/credit card slips, if tills and electronic transactions are not working. Increase Management checking of key transactions			✓	✓			
				Train staff (that require help) on the use of calculators, manual credit card slips and any emergency procedures for cash management			✓	✓			

Section		TECHNOLOGY									
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress	
TAKING CASH & PAYING STAFF & SUPPLIERS	Payroll and Payments	Your staff and suppliers need to be paid throughout the pandemic		If you rely upon one or two staff to authorise/process payment of the payroll and for supplies, ensure that if they were absent you could continue to pay your staff and suppliers			✓	✓	✓		
				Identify and train trusted staff to enable the payroll to be run and managed. Similarly, ensure that suppliers, services and Government departments are paid			✓	✓	✓		
				Ensure that training for any special equipment and the use of pass codes to enable payments to happen are given to trusted staff as a contingency, i.e. BACS transactions.			✓	✓			
				Consider backing-up your payroll details to a secure spreadsheet for emergency purposes			✓	✓			
	Cash	You need to ensure that if you collect cash or have a cash delivery to pay staff, you have sufficient cover for this activity if you or the primary staff member is absent		Document any procedures to avoid errors. Ensure that the Bank Mandate is up to date. Identify and train sufficient, trusted staff to cover for banking transactions			✓	✓			
Record Keeping	You need to ensure that you can cover the business record keeping, enabling compliance with the Revenue and Taxation Department, once the pandemic is passed and you recover your business operations		Identify and train staff			✓	✓	✓			
BUSINESS PROCESSES & CONTROLS		If staff are affected by pandemic flu you need to ensure that your business continues to work effectively. Staff may be called upon to perform different tasks to cover for absence. Clear, documented guidance and procedures will help during such a situation		Try to ensure segregation of duties where possible. However, due to staff illness this might not be possible			✓	✓	✓		
				Ensure that you have a paper-based system to capture key business data to work around a major systems failure, along with instructions for staff			✓	✓	✓		
		It is important to stop fraud and theft and your management controls should not hamper your operations during a pandemic		Devise methods for checking for errors or fraud				✓	✓	✓	

Section		TECHNOLOGY									
Key Areas	Issue	Considerations	Action Yes/No?	Suggested Action Required	Owner(s)	Due Date	Before	During	After	Comments/Progress	
SECURITY		You may not be able to call upon a supplier of security services if they have been impacted by their staff's illness. Therefore, you and your staff may need to ensure that your physical security and access controls for your premises can be maintained. This includes card-access readers, CCTV, perimeter alarms, and power outages		Identify staff that could double as receptionist/security guards and train them in basic duties to ensure security of the building or premises			✓	✓			
				Document an escalation procedure (especially for 'out-of-hours') and ensure that contact details for managers, equipment suppliers and emergency services are provided			✓				
				Rebrief guidance to all staff to close and lock doors/gates etc., when leaving the office/building			✓	✓			
				Lock away laptops and sensitive documents and equipment to avoid theft			✓	✓	✓		

FLU PANDEMIC WEB SITES

Alert Levels

World Health Organisation

Alert levels

www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html

Health Protection Agency website with description of UK govt alert levels (see p13)

http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/pandemic/documents/HPAPanFluContPlanSept06.pdf

Monitoring current situation regarding outbreaks of avian and pandemic flu

SciDev

Latest information from the science community

<http://www.scidev.net/dossiers/index.cfm?fuseaction=dossierItem&dossier=24>

Google Alerts

Arrange to receive daily news summaries under the search heading "pandemic flu"

<http://www.google.co.uk/alerts>

UK Government Websites/Information

Department of Health

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en

Department of Health

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/96/10/04119610.pdf>

Operational Framework for stockpiling, distributing and using anti-viral drugs in the event of pandemic influenza – October 2005.

Department of Health

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/17/54/04121754.pdf>

Guidance for hospitals and PCTs covering a whole range of hygiene issues and protective clothing/equipment some of which may be relevant for communication to employees

UK Health Protection Agency

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/avian/

National Health Service on Line

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/articles/article.aspx?articleId=1303

Health and Safety Executive

www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/pandemic.htm

UK Resilience Pandemic Checklist

Pandemic influenza checklist for businesses and a list of links for the UK

www.ukresilience.info/publications/060516flubcpchecklist.pdf

UK Resilience – Introductory advice to staff on planning for a flu pandemic

http://www.ukresilience.info/publications/intro_staffadvice_flu_planning.pdf

On line survey (until Feb 2007) of impacts of school closures
http://www.ukresilience.info/latest/human_pandemic.shtm.

Department for Education and Skills
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies/planning/flupandemic/>

Guidance in July 2006 re planning for possible school closures

Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs
www.defra.gov.uk

The Defra Helpline number is 08459 33 55 77. Currently the Helpline is available between the following hours Monday - Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday - Sunday 9am to 6pm.

European/International

New Zealand guidance on Pandemic Planning for Government interventions.
www.moh.govt.nz/pandemic

New Zealand business continuity planning guide for Pandemic and Pandemic Planning Information Kit.
www.med.govt.nz/templates/ContentTopicSummary_14451.aspx

Australian Government
http://www.qld.gov.au/services_for_queenslanders/health_and_communities/avian/index_avian.html

USA – Centres for Disease Control (CDC)
<http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

WHO
<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/nationalpandemic/en/>

European Centre for Disease Control
http://www.ecdc.eu.int/Health_topics/Pandemic_Influenza/Pandemic_Planning.html

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards
www.efsa.eu.int

Advice for Travellers

UK National Travel Health Network
Has useful links to other websites. Just be aware that this is dated April 06
http://www.nathnac.org/travel/news/avianinfluenza_traveladvice_070406.htm

Clinical updates on avian influenza
http://www.nathnac.org/pro/clinical_updates/avian_influenza_index.htm

Health Protection Agency
http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/avian/travel.htm

Health Protection Agency FAQs for travellers
http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/avian/avianflufaq.htm

International SOS
<http://www.internationalsos.com/en/index.htm?CFID=9509148&CFTOKEN=29929631>

Toolkits/Information from other Organisations

BCM planning notes on Pandemic
www.thebci.org/knowledgebase.htm

Pandemic Toolkit
A site intended for US audiences – developed by Roche
<http://www.pandemictoolkit.com>

Survive
Provides a selection of articles on pandemic flu
<http://www.survive.com>

Global Security
http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/ops/hsc-scen-3_pandemic-influenza.htm

PANDEMIC PLANNING - CURRENT GUIDANCE AND COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO NHS

Checklist for businesses for pandemic flu planning - 18 May 2006

The Guidance was produced by the Cabinet Office in consultation with the Health Departments and with other Government Departments

<http://www.ukresilience.info/index.shtm>

Health Protection Agency Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan – October 2005

Provides a framework for the Health Protection Agency's response to an influenza pandemic.

http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/pandemic/fluplan.htm
