

# Health Protection Agency

## Pandemic Influenza Contingency Plan

Planning Checklist:  
Regional Microbiology Network



# HPA actions during an Influenza Pandemic by WHO Phase and UK Alert Level

## Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist

This edited version of the HPA Pandemic Influenza Contingency Plan has been produced to be used as a performance management tool by the Regional Microbiology Network (RMN).

It includes only those actions which are the responsibility of the RMN.

Similar documents are being produced for the other Divisions and Centres across the Agency with responsibilities during the WHO Pandemic Phases and UK Alert Levels.

You should use this document as a tool to ensure you are able to respond at each of the WHO Phases and UK Alert Levels.

The full plan, including background information and details of the WHO Phases and UK Alert Levels, is available on the HPA website at:

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics\\_az/influenza/pandemic/fluplan.htm](http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/pandemic/fluplan.htm)

## Roles and responsibilities of the Regional Microbiology Network

Regional Microbiology Network (RMN) laboratories will provide a specialist PCR-based diagnostic service for influenza A, influenza B and the most likely pandemic influenza subtype (currently H5). The laboratories will also provide timely reports on patients with laboratory-proven influenza and bacterial infections associated with influenza.

## How to use this as a Performance Management Tool

Complete the third column under each phase with red, amber or green to indicate your level of preparedness:

Red = Action not started  
Amber = Action in progress or partially completed  
Green = Action completed

Review your pandemic preparedness regularly as planning progresses.

Please contact your local Health Emergency Planning Adviser if you have any queries about implementing the Plan, or the HPA Pandemic Influenza Office ([pandemic.flu@hpa.org.uk](mailto:pandemic.flu@hpa.org.uk)) with scientific queries.

# 1. Actions\* during the WHO Phases 1 & 2

WHO PHASES 1 & 2: INTERPANDEMIC PERIOD		
<b>Definition</b>		
<b>Phase 1</b>		
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.		
<b>Phase 2</b>		
No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.		

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
Regional laboratories send positive specimens to the Cfl Influenza Laboratory	All Regional Laboratories	

# 3<sup>1</sup>. Actions during the WHO Phase 3: Pandemic Alert Period

WHO PHASE 3: PANDEMIC ALERT PERIOD		
<b>Definition</b>		
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		

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
With Head of Influenza Laboratory Cfl coordinate network of novel influenza subtype (currently H5N1) Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) diagnostics across the HPA	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	
Practice and maintain competence / capability for novel influenza subtype (currently H5N1) PCR diagnostics across nominated laboratories	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	
Develop and maintain capability for 24 / 7 provision of novel influenza subtype (currently H5N1) PCR diagnostics across nominated laboratories	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	
With Director Respiratory Systemic Infection Laboratory develop and maintain capability for routine surveillance of secondary bacterial pathogens associated with influenza	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	
Maintain proficiency testing of laboratories for programmes above	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	
Ensure Regional Laboratory staff have access to and are trained in the use of the avian influenza database	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	
Practice and maintain competence /	Head of Regional	

\* The actions listed in each phase assume that the actions in the previous phase have been implemented. Where a phase or phases are passed over eg a move from Phase 4 direct to Phase 6, the actions in the intermediary phases should also be implemented.

<sup>1</sup> The section numbering moves directly to 3 in order to match WHO Phases

capability for novel influenza subtype currently H5N1 including Devolved Administrations' nominated laboratories	Microbiology Network	
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## 4. Actions during the WHO Phase 4: Pandemic Alert Period

### WHO PHASE 4: PANDEMIC ALERT PERIOD

#### **Definition**

Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localised, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
Report possible clusters or outbreaks of influenza-like illness to HPU Directors	All Regional Laboratories	
Undertake novel influenza subtype diagnostics to support the management of cases and clusters	All Regional Laboratories	
In communities with travel/family-related contact with countries affected by the novel virus, implement enhanced virological sampling or routine respiratory specimens, regardless of timing in relation to normal "influenza season"	All Regional Laboratories	
In communities with travel/family-related contact with countries affected by the novel virus, implement enhanced virological sampling of routine respiratory specimens, regardless of timing in relation to normal "influenza season"	All Regional Laboratories	

## 5. Actions during the WHO Phase 5: Pandemic Alert Period

### WHO PHASE 5: PANDEMIC ALERT PERIOD

#### **Definition**

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)

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
Review strategy for diagnostic investigations in non-reference laboratories in phase 5 and 6	Head of Regional Microbiology Network in collaboration with Head of Influenza Laboratory (Cfl)	
In collaboration with Cfl review existing occupational health guidelines for laboratory staff including guidelines and SOPs for safe-handling and identification of novel virus in non-reference laboratory setting and ensure dissemination an implementation across LaRS laboratory network	Head of Regional Microbiology Network in collaboration with Head of Influenza Laboratory (Cfl)	

## 6.1<sup>2</sup>. Actions during the WHO Phase 6: Pandemic Period, UK Alert Level 1

### PHASE 6: PANDEMIC PERIOD, UK ALERT LEVEL 1

**Definition**

Pandemic phase: increased and sustained transmission in the general population

**Alert Level 1**

Virus/cases only outside the UK

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
Ensure regional laboratories have appropriate tests and testing capability in place to deal with first UK cases	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	
Provide rapid diagnostic service for first suspected UK cases	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	

## 6.2 Actions during the WHO Phase 6: Pandemic Period, UK Alert Level 2

### PHASE 6: PANDEMIC PERIOD, UK ALERT LEVEL 2

**Definition**

Pandemic phase: increased and sustained transmission in the general population

Alert Level 2

Virus isolated in the UK

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
none		

## 6.3. Actions during the WHO Phase 6: Pandemic Period, UK Alert Levels 3 & 4

### PHASE 6: PANDEMIC PERIOD, UK ALERT LEVEL 3 and 4

**Definition**

Pandemic phase: increased and sustained transmission in the general population

**Alert Level 3**

Outbreak(s) in the UK

**Alert Level 4**

Widespread pandemic activity in the UK

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
none		

## 6.4 Actions during the WHO Phase 6: End of the First Pandemic Wave

### PHASE 6: END OF FIRST PANDEMIC WAVE

**Definition**

<sup>2</sup> In WHO Phase 6, the second digit of the section numbering denotes the UK Alert Level

End of first pandemic wave; return to inter-pandemic period

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
Ensure restocking of laboratories	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	
Carry out internal debrief to contribute to the overall HPA debrief report	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	

## 6.5 Actions during the WHO Phase 6: Second or Subsequent Waves

### PHASE 6: SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT WAVES

**Definition**  
Based on past experience, a second wave of outbreaks caused by the new virus may be expected to occur in many countries

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
Review actions taken and adapt existing plans in the light of lessons learned	Head of Regional Microbiology Network	

## 7. Actions during the Post-Pandemic Period

### POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD

**Definition**  
WHO will announce when the pandemic period is over. In the UK the pandemic will be deemed to have ceased when the epidemiological indices have returned to background levels

**Key planning assumptions**

- This or a similar virus is likely to remain in circulation
- It may take months or even several years for some national services to recover

Action	Implementer	Red/Amber/Green
Evaluate the impact of the pandemic. Identify lessons learned and disseminate new scientific learning through appropriate channels	All Regional Laboratories	