

KNOCK CHILD CONTACT CENTRE

PANDEMIC FLU POLICY

INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. SYMPTOMS & PRECAUTIONS

Signs and symptoms of flu

It is likely that the signs and symptoms of pandemic flu will be the same as for ordinary flu but may be more severe and cause more serious complications. The most significant symptoms are the sudden onset of:

- Fever
- Cough or shortness of breath

Other symptoms may include:

- Headache
- Tiredness
- Chills
- Aching muscles
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Loss of appetite.

Incubation and infection periods

The incubation period (time between contact with the virus and the onset of symptoms) ranges from one to four days, for most people it will be two to three days. People are most infectious to others soon after they develop symptoms though they can continue to shed the virus, for example in coughs and sneezes, typically for up to five days (ten days in children). People become less infectious as their symptoms subside and once symptoms are gone, they are considered no longer infectious to others.

What should you do if you have symptoms?

If you develop symptoms:

- Stay at home
- Follow advice issued by the Department of Health and check your symptoms.
Latest advice can be found on the following website:
<https://www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk/>
- If possible, phone another Volunteer and arrange a swap
- Phone the Coordinator
- Do not return to the Knock Child Contact Centre (KCCC) until you are fully recovered. In any case, this should not be less than five days.

How is pandemic flu caught and spread to others?

Flu, including pandemic flu, is spread from person to person by close contact. Some examples of how it can be spread include:

- Coughing and/or sneezing by an infected person within a short distance (usually one metre or less) of someone
- Touching or shaking the hand of an infected person and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands
- Touching surfaces or objects (e.g. door handles) that have become contaminated with the flu virus and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.

What should you do to protect yourself and others from pandemic flu?

- Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing and/or sneezing. Dispose of the tissue promptly and then wash your hands. Tissues should be disposed of in domestic waste and do not require any special treatment. Do not use handkerchiefs or reuse tissues. This practice contaminates pockets or handbags which will re-contaminate hands every time they go into those pockets or handbags.
- Clean hands frequently, especially after coughing, sneezing and using tissues. Soap and water is an effective means of cleaning hands, however hand rubs (microbicidal hand rubs, particularly alcohol-based) can be used as an alternative.
- Minimise touching your mouth, eyes and/or nose, unless you have recently cleaned your hands.
- Use normal household detergent and hot water to clean dishes and surfaces frequently touched by hands. The flu virus survives for roughly 24 hours on hard surfaces and 2 hours on soft ones. Don't use a tea-towel or use a clean one each time.
- Don't share phones (fixed/mobile) or headsets
- Clean your hands as soon as you arrive home

2. PRACTICALITIES FOR KCCC

In a pandemic, communications will be key. In the light of this:

- The Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator should make the Chair (or in his absence, other Board members) aware if staff/volunteer illness significantly disrupts the service, so that appropriate decisions can be taken.
- Volunteers should be kept informed if the service is affected.
- Families using KCCC and referrers should be kept updated as appropriate.
- Emergency contact numbers should be kept up to date in the KCCC.
- If the Co-ordinator is ill, and the deputy coordinators are not available, a message should be left on the answer phone and a phone number and email address for the Chair should be given in the case of urgency.
- If the Co-ordinator is ill the email should explain this, giving contact details for the Deputy Co-ordinator.
- Deputy Co-ordinators should ascertain future meetings/arrangements for the Co-ordinator off sick and cancel.
- Staff and volunteers should be prepared to be flexible

3. HR ISSUES

Reasonable attempts will be made to protect you from infection at KCCC. Where a member of staff or volunteer is formally diagnosed as having contracted flu, the Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator will ask if your medical advice indicated any immediate risk of infection to others. If this is the case, individuals may need to be informed and asked to seek appropriate medical advice. This applies especially to staff and volunteers who are particularly vulnerable to infection or medically advised to actively avoid infection.

The closing of KCCC will only be considered if necessary. The Co-ordinator and the Chair will make the final decision

Sickness reporting procedures – Staff and Volunteers diagnosed as suffering from flu should stay at home. This is for 2 reasons:

- To ensure they recover and are able to return as soon as possible
- To minimise the risk of spreading infection.

Further advice

Northern Ireland Swine Flu Helpline: 0800 0514 142

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust

Early Years Services
124 Stewartstown Rd
Belfast BT11 9JQ
Tel: 028 9060 4208

Glen Villa
Newtownardsbracken Health Care Park
Saintfield Road
Belfast BT8 8BH
Tel: 028 9056 4977

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Pandemic-flu/pages/Symptoms.aspx>

<https://www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

POLICY ON INFECTIOUS (COMMUNICABLE) DISEASES

Purpose of the policy

In order to provide a convenient reference for the Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinators who may have to give guidance on the management of infectious (communicable) diseases this policy was created within KCCC.

It provides:

- Guidance on who to contact for help and advice in relation to problems with communicable diseases.
- Basic information on common communicable diseases and guidance on where to get further up to date information.

Infectious (communicable) diseases in general

From time to time infectious diseases will occur amongst staff, volunteers or their family members. A number of the more serious illnesses (measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, whooping cough, tuberculosis and polio) have largely been controlled by improvements in immunisation programmes.

Other diseases, such as diarrhoea and vomiting, can spread quickly through organisations, affecting staff and volunteers and then transmitting further to more vulnerable members of the community – for example, babies and the elderly. It is therefore important that NCCC *actively* promotes measures to control outbreaks.

Obligations upon infected members of staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers who know that they are infected with an infectious (communicable) disease or have come into contact with an infected person must disclose this to the Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator who will inform the Chair. They are obliged to avoid all actions likely to increase the risk of passing on the infection to others. Where an infected member of staff or volunteer informs the Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator of his/her condition or that of a family member, the information will be kept confidential unless, in the Chair's opinion, the interests of KCCC staff, volunteers or families dictate otherwise.

Should the Chair feel the information should be disclosed, he/she will tell the infected person that he/she has shared the information.

Responsibilities in dealing with infectious (communicable) diseases within NCCC

Notifiable Diseases

When staff or volunteers are diagnosed with any of the "Notifiable Diseases" it is the responsibility of the diagnosing GP to inform the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre Northern Ireland, McBrien Building, Belfast City Hospital,

Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7AB, telephone 028 9026 3765, fax 028 9026 3511 or email cdscni@hpa.org.uk.

A list of notifiable diseases in Northern Ireland is available at www.cdscni.org.uk/surveillance/noids.

Although notifying these diseases is not the responsibility of KCCC, these diseases may require urgent action to minimise risk to others within the organisation. These diseases present risks that go beyond the organisation and need to be brought to the attention of the health authorities quickly.

We therefore ask the Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator in consultation with the Chair to inform the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre NI when any disease on the above list is diagnosed. This will allow us to offer appropriate advice based on the individual situation quickly.

Minor Communicable Diseases

In other cases, infectious diseases may present only minor health risks – but nevertheless be a source of considerable anxiety. Examples of these diseases include threadworm and ringworm. Further information about minor communicable diseases can be found at www.hpa.org.uk or by contacting your GP.

What about pregnant staff?

A number of diseases carry specific risks for pregnant women or their unborn child. Please contact your GP for medical advice.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required. A copy can be accessed on the Centre's website: www.knockccc.org.uk.