

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Pandemic Flu

1 Definitions and Background

A pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus, for which people have no immunity, emerges and starts spreading as easily as normal influenza. A severe form of avian influenza or 'bird flu' – called H5N1 – has affected poultry flocks and other birds in several countries since 2003. Humans have also caught the infection, as a result of close and direct contact with infected birds and the majority of these have subsequently died. There is no firm evidence that H5N1 has acquired the ability to pass easily from person to person. However, concern remains that the virus might develop this ability, or that it might mix with human flu viruses to create a new virus.

The Government has requested public bodies and businesses to prepare plans for the possibility of such a virus reaching the UK and severely affecting normal life. The University College, therefore, has prepared plans to mitigate the effect of a pandemic flu on the staff, students and business of Newman University College.

2 Key Contacts

Principal
Registrar and College Secretary

3 Planning Assumptions

The Government advises that Pandemic Flu is most likely to arise in Asia and will take several weeks to reach the UK. The virus is likely to hit in waves with several months in between. No vaccine will be available for the first wave.

Anti-viral drugs (Tamiflu) have been stockpiled in the UK and will be used to reduce the severity of the symptoms and mortality rates. These are likely to be available to people once they contract flu and will be used to reduce the symptoms and slow the spread of the disease. The only other protection for our staff and students are rigid infection control procedures.

The virus will spread from person to person by breathing in air containing the virus produced when a person talks, coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread through hand/face contact after touching a person or surface contaminated with the virus.

There is some evidence to suggest that young people may be a primary target for the virus and that the students may be particularly at risk. Any infection will spread rapidly through the Halls of Residence.

4 Scenarios

Our planning has envisaged two basic scenarios. The first sees the spread of the disease as rapid and virulent. Many staff and students will contract the virus or have to stay at home to look after family. The University College will be unable to proceed to rapid cascade of closure.

The second scenario is one where spread of disease is slower and many staff will either not be infected or recover rapidly. Here, University College will continue to operate but with a reduced workforce and student population.

5 Aim

The aim of the Pandemic Flu plans is to enable the University College to continue its work as far as it is possible through a serious flu outbreak while having a fundamental regard for protecting the health and welfare of its staff and students.

If the pandemic becomes so severe that the University College cannot function, then a controlled close down will be implemented on the instruction of the Principal followed by controlled re-opening as soon as it is safe to do so.

6 Trigger Points

A number of trigger points for activities at Newman have been identified:

NTP1	When human strain of Bird Flu first identified
NTP2	When obvious significant spread of Bird Flu in area of origin
NTP3	First case of Bird Flu detected in UK
NTP4	First case of Bird Flu at Newman University College
NTP5	University College Closure
NTP6	University College Re-opening

These are different from the Government's four national trigger points which are:

- 1 When human strain of Bird Flu first identified
- 2 When first waves of flu hit Europe
- 3 First case of bird flu detected in UK
- 4 When effecting country badly and need to take emergency powers

7 Pandemic Flu Liaison Team

The University College has created a Pandemic Flu Liaison Team (PFLT) to plan and implement the University College's response. Membership:

Directorate
Heads of School
Bursar
Head of Estates
Head of Personnel
Head of IT Services
Health and Safety Officer
Head of Student Support
Senior Halls Tutor
The Chaplain
Students' Union representative
Academic and Support staff union representatives

8 Infection Control

The aim of infection control is to limit the spread of the virus around the University College and will be implemented as soon as Bird Flu arrives in the UK. It has a number of aspects:

Staff/students to undertake regular effective hand washing procedures and treatment with alcohol gels available in the student kitchen areas and into and out of halls and catering areas. Posters with instructions will be placed around the University College

All used tissues to be placed in yellow bin bags as hazardous waste

Cleaners to use rubber gloves, masks and prophylactic packs. Specialist procedures to be used for removing hazardous waste

Damp dusting of offices and learning spaces, use of antibacterial sprays on PCs

High level of cleaning in catering areas

Cleaners and other staff will be trained in these procedures by the Health and Safety Officer.

9 Emergency Declaration

A Declaration of Emergency will be issued by the PFLT once NTP4 (First case of Bird Flu at the University College) is hit. The Principal will become the

head of the PFLT which will assume complete authority to introduce the measures needed to control the situation. Decisions will be mandatory for good of all.

10 Communications and Information

The University College will seek to keep staff and students apprised of the situation on a day-to-day basis.

Rest rooms will be identified and stocked with kettles, blankets, hot drinks etc where staff and students can go if they start to exhibit symptoms to await collection by relatives.

A Communication Hub will be created in the Committee Room which will act as a clearing house for all information on absences, cancellation of classes etc. The members of the PFLT will form the base of the Hub supplemented by other available staff as appropriate. Elongated running hours will be required. The CHub might move to the bungalow if the University College closed.

There will be a Pandemic Flu website on which information will be posted for staff and students. Voice mail, the telephone cascade system and notice boards will be used to keep as many staff and students as up to date as possible.

11 Students

When the spread of bird flu is obvious around the area of origin, students whose regular home is overseas will be advised of the situation so that they can decide whether they wish to return home. Country to country travel may become restricted at a later stage. Students returning home should notify the Student Records/MIS that they are suspending studies.

Other students should to continue to attend University College.

Once the virus is present in the UK or at the University College, students based at home who become ill should stay at home until they are well. If they become ill at the University College, they should go immediately to one of the quarantine rooms and notify the Communication Hub. Arrangements will be made for a family member to collect them. If the University College remains open and they return to the University College, they should notify the Communication Hub.

Students who miss classes, exams or assessments will be considered by the University College on an individual or group basis through its mitigating circumstances policies.

12 Halls of Residence and University College Houses

Infection is likely to travel quickly within Halls. Depending on the virulence and the target age group of the virus, the University College may close the Halls and send students home.

If the virus attack is weak to moderate and/or some students have no option but to remain in Halls, a 'buddy system' will be encouraged to enable students to keep an eye on one another. Students will be advised to notify the Chub if they are in Halls. The University College will do what it can to support students in Halls but will not seek to place staff at risk. The University College has no medical facilities on site.

13 Staff and Revised Personnel Policies

The Declaration of an Emergency will trigger a temporary change in the working culture for staff which will include:

Staff should work at home if not required to teach or to provide an immediate service for University College, staff or students. Staff will be advised how to access electronic files from home and should continue their work as effectively as they can.

Staff are NOT to come into work if feeling at all unwell. They should notify the Communication Hub of their teaching or other commitments and stay at home until they are better or until it is obvious that they do not have flu.

Staff may also wish to stay at home because of the illness of family members, problems with transport, fear of infection etc. The University College assumes that all staff, while putting their families first, will do their best to support the University College through this period. On that basis, once the Emergency is declared and for the period of the Emergency only, revised absence reporting procedures will apply including the extension of self certification certificates for up to 4 weeks. Payment during sick absence will be extended to a minimum of four weeks (or existing contractual arrangement if longer) and will be extended to include looking after family illness or child care provision.

14 Medical Arrangements

The University College has no medical expertise on site. First aiders are only trained to offer immediate support to staff and students who are injured in accidents and should not be called to attend staff or students with suspected flu. Anyone becoming ill at the University College should notify the Communication Hub and then go home immediately or go to one of the rest

rooms after arranging for a family member to pick them up as soon as possible. The University College will make provision for rest areas to be as comfortable as possible with facilities to make hot drinks, the provision of flu relief remedies etc but any staff and students waiting there will largely be required to look after themselves.

The Hub will call the emergency services only if staff or students become extremely ill.

The local medical practices are not able to offer medical support to the University College. Staff and students should therefore seek further assistance if necessary from the medical practice with which they are personally registered.

15 Nursing a Sick Person

While the University College does not expect its staff to nurse colleagues who fall ill, staff and students will have relatives or friends whom they will want to look after. The following is general published advice which staff might find helpful to reduce the spread of the infection:

Disposable gloves should be used when handling a sick person, their used tissues and any thing else they have touched. Use a mask if one is available.

Wash your hands after touching a sick person or entering their room

Clean all surfaces regularly and thoroughly

Wash bedclothes at a high temperature

Use anti-viral tissues

Turn away from affected person when they are coughing or sneezing

16 University College Estate

Simple instructions for the operation of essential equipment/facilities eg boilers, stopcocks, mains/electric switches will be made available for all appropriate staff and basic training given so that essential services to the University College can be maintained as far as possible.

It will also be necessary for some staff to be trained in the lock down and opening up procedures for the University College buildings.

17 Financial Issues

The University College will make arrangements for the automatic payment of salaries.

18 University College Closure

The University College will only be closed when/if it becomes obvious that conditions are endangering the lives and health of staff and students or that absence is so severe that the University College is unable to continue its work. It is not expected that such a decision will be taken by Government and this decision is likely to be taken at a local level by the Principal.

Staff and students will be sent home until further notice.

The University College will then be secured with a core of Communications Hub staff only on site (if possible). Staff are asked to keep the Communications Hub apprised of their state of health so that the Principal can decide when it is appropriate to re-open the University College.

19 Mortality

It is anticipated that many staff and students will recover from pandemic flu but some deaths and bereavements may well occur amongst the University College community, their relatives and friends. The University College Chaplaincy Team will take the lead on doing what they can in accordance with the plans described in the Disaster Recovery Procedure.

20 Re-Opening the University College

Once the Principal takes the decision to re-open the University College, Estates staff will be asked to return first to re-open and check facilities. Support staff will then return to re-start the infra-structure, followed by academic staff and finally students will be re-called.

It may be necessary to repeat the Closure and Re-opening procedures several times if waves of flu hit the country.

Pandemic Flu Outbreak - Anticipated Time Line

Trigger Point		Actions
NTP1	When human strain of Bird Flu first identified	<p>Dispensers for alcohol gels placed around University College</p> <p>University College to purchase standard painkillers, flu relief etc</p> <p>PFLT starts to meet regularly to plan detailed communications to students and staff</p>
NTP2	When obvious significant spread of Bird Flu in area of origin	<p>Cleaning/catering staff trained in infection control.</p> <p>Students and staff notified of Pandemic Flu procedures</p> <p>Any Newman students abroad advised to return home</p> <p>Students from overseas advised of situation and may wish to return home</p> <p>Pandemic website to move to internet</p> <p>Directorate/CMG agrees succession planning list.</p>
NTP3	First case of Bird Flu detected in UK	<p>Posters and alcohol gels placed around University College</p> <p>Remind staff to update telephone cascades</p> <p>Obtain lists of students in halls</p> <p>Infection control begins</p> <p>Rest rooms to be stocked</p> <p>Field trips cancelled</p> <p>Staff advised how to pick up electronic files from home</p> <p>University College Pandemic Flu web site activated</p> <p>Phones to be placed in Committee Room for Communication Hub</p>
NTP4	First case of Bird Flu at Newman University College	<p>Principal and Heads of School join PFLT</p> <p>Declaration of Emergency in University College</p> <p>Communication Hub activated</p> <p>Revised personnel policies apply</p> <p>All committee meetings cancelled</p> <p>All social events cancelled</p> <p>Non essential staff to work at home as much as possible.</p> <p>Home students advised to lock up belongings and leave halls where possible.</p>
NTP5	University College	Principal decides to close University College

	Closure	Staff and students sent home Communications Hub only open Staff to notify Hub of state of health on regular basis
NTP6	University College Recovery	Principal decides to re-open University College Communication Hub will recall staff and then students as outlined