West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS
NHS Trust

TRUST BOARD MEETING – 17 September 2009

Title of the Paper:	**Flu Pandemic**
Agenda item:	**128/09**
Author:	**Russell Harrison, Director of Delivery and Lead Director for Flu Planning**
Trust Objective:	***Objective 1 – Patient Safety***

Key issues
Report on
- The Trust's preparedness to respond to the anticipated second wave of pandemic flu

Purpose
- To provide assurance to the Board that all measures are being taken to prepare the Trust for the anticipated second wave of pandemic flu

Risk Implications for the Trust (*including any clinical and financial*	**Mitigating Actions** *(Controls):*
Failure to have appropriate plans in place will potentially compromise patient safety if patients are not provided with the appropriate level of care	The following plans have been put in place: • Command and Control Arrangements • Pandemic Flu Plan • Surge Plan • ICU Capacity Plan • Staff Vaccination Plan

Level of Assurance that can be given to the Trust Board from the report [significant, sufficient, limited, none]:
Significant

Links to Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE 1 - 5)
N/A
Legal Implications:
None noted at this time

Recommendation to the Trust Board:
The Trust Board members are asked to:
- note the work undertaken over the summer to finalise plans for meeting a surge in activity during the anticipated second wave of the pandemic
- note the work that has been undertaken to prepare the plans for additional intensive care capacity and the specific concerns raised in relation to the requirement to triple that capacity
- note the work that has been undertaken by the human resources department to identify the knowledge, training and skills of all staff in order to assist with the re-deployment of staff should this be required
- note the work that is being done to ensure that there is a plan in place to provide vaccination to all staff categorised at highest priority and who wish to receive the vaccine
- confirm that they are happy with the preparations that are being made and
- confirm that they are assured that appropriate preparations have been made, such confirmation being passed on to the Primary care Trust and the Strategic Health Authority

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS
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Agenda Item: 128/09

Public Board Meeting, 17 September 2009

Flu Pandemic

Presented by: Russell Harrison

1. Purpose

This paper provides information to the Board on the preparations that have been undertaken and continue to ensure that the Trust is able to respond to the expected second wave and possibly more, of flu pandemic expected during the autumn/winter period.

2. Background and Current Position

2.1 In March 2009 the Board received a report from the Medical Director outlining the arrangements that were in place to respond to a flu pandemic should it be declared. On June 11th 2009 the World Health Organisation finally declared a pandemic based on their levels of surveillance and the known spread of the H1N1 virus worldwide. The first cases in the UK were in Scotland with a general spread across the country following. The first cases in West Hertfordshire were reported at a school in Bushey. Levels of enquiry and patient activity subsequently increased. The first cases that were seen in the Trust were children.

2.2 Since 8th July 2009 51 patients have been admitted with suspected swine flu – following testing none of these was confirmed. The Trust has had sufficient capacity to accommodate all of these patients in individual rooms in the first instance until confirmation or otherwise of their status. One patient became unwell and was admitted to the intensive care unit, although this was not as a direct result of their flu status as they had other, underlying medical issues. There have been no deaths reported in the Trust of patients with the H1N1 virus.

2.3 Since the peak of activity over the summer the Trust's Silver Command team has been meeting weekly to review the situation and respond to any logistical issues. Whilst a number of staff have called in sick with flu like symptoms the numbers have been relatively small and their absence has not affected the ability of services to continue to provide full cover. Arrangements were put in place for all sickness absences related to flu to be reported to Occupational Health in order that full records could be maintained. In addition, all staff were asked to identify what additional training and skills they had that could be used should the staffing situation become difficult and require some degree of re-deployment. In the first wave this has not been necessary, however, this information will be invaluable should the anticipated second wave prove to be more disruptive in terms of staff absence.

2.4 During the summer the Trust has been working on refining the plan that was presented to the Board in March. A more detailed plan setting out how each service will deal with a surge in flu related activity has now been finalised. In addition, the

Trust has been required to put in place plans, which demonstrate how it would respond to significant increases in intensive care activity. Plans are in place to double and triple current intensive care capacity. It should be noted, however, that whilst a doubling of current activity is practical, serious reservations have been expressed about the practical implications of tripling the current capacity in the light of current infrastructure across the Watford site, the lack of suitably trained staff (and the likelihood that staff numbers will be reduced as people become infected themselves), the lack of appropriate equipment and uncertainty about the ability of third parties to maintain the supply chains for both consumables and non consumables. These concerns have been expressed to both the Primary Care Trust and the Strategic Health Authority. We are currently awaiting the outcome dialogue between the Strategic Health Authority and the Department of Health on the issue of the procurement of additional equipment.

2.5 The Trust is also finalising the arrangements for staff vaccination. It is anticipated based on the current information that vaccine will be available in early October following trials and licensing. The Occupational Health department is leading on the plans to ensure that staff are prioritised in line with the national guidance and that staff are able to receive the vaccine. The staff vaccination programme will be undertaken as soon as the vaccine becomes available. It should be noted that staff will also be offered the seasonal flu vaccine in the normal way.

2.6 On September 15th 2009 the Trust will participate in an exercise that is being run by the East of England Strategic Health Authority which will test the current plans and where necessary identify further refinements that are needed.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Board is asked to:

- note the work undertaken over the summer to finalise plans for meeting a surge in activity during the anticipated second wave of the pandemic
- note the work that has been undertaken to prepare the plans for additional intensive care capacity and the specific concerns raised in relation to the requirement to triple that capacity
- note the work that has been undertaken by the human resources department to identify the knowledge, training and skills of all staff in order to assist with the re-deployment of staff should this be required
- note the work that is being done to ensure that there is a plan in place to provide vaccination to all staff categorised at highest priority and who wish to receive the vaccine
- confirm that they are happy with the preparations that are being made and
- confirm that they are assured that appropriate preparations have been made, such confirmation being passed on to the Primary care Trust and the Strategic Health Authority

Russell Harrison
Director of Delivery and Lead Director for Flu Planning
September 2009