

Dear Colleagues,

**Re: Swine Flu: Guidance/Role of the Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector**

In the event of a 'Swine Flu' Pandemic, as a Community, Voluntary Organisation, or Faith Community, you have an important role in delivering self care messages and support to local communities in Sunderland. As organisations, you may also need to think about the impact of 'swine flu' on the way you deliver your current services.

We would like to invite you to a meeting on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>, 10am to 11am at Sunderland CVS, Riverview House, West Wear Street, Sunderland to discuss how you can assist us in delivering self care messages to local communities.

Currently, 53 countries have officially reported over 16,000 cases of 'swine flu' (influenza A H1N1) infection, including 115 deaths. There would appear to be significantly increasing numbers of new cases identified in Australia, Panama and Japan. School outbreaks are occurring in the UK, as widely reported in the media.

Whilst we cannot predict how 'swine flu' may develop, change or merge with less/more virulent and less/more infectious viral strains over the coming months, it is clear we are closer to a Pandemic situation than at any time for the last 40 years. We also have an opportunity at the moment to do as much planning as we can to be prepared, but also to carry out more detailed work around business continuity planning and how we can cascade information about self care to as wide a group of people as possible.

Nationally, regionally and locally there is activity underway to increase our preparedness for whatever this outbreak may bring.

The NHS South of Tyne and Wear Flu Pandemic plan recognises the valuable role the voluntary, community and faith sectors have to play in helping us deliver and distribute self care information, give us feedback on the type of information and methods needed to help spread the self care message and how we can help vulnerable people to remain in their own homes during any future phases of the pandemic.

We look forward to seeing you on the 24<sup>th</sup> June (refreshments will be available).

If you have any queries or would like any more details about the meeting, please contact Paul Gray on 0191 529 7186 or email [paulj.gray@sotw.nhs.uk](mailto:paulj.gray@sotw.nhs.uk)

To book your place call Wendy Hadlington on 0191 565 1566 or e-mail at: [wendy.hadlington@sunderlandcvs.co.uk](mailto:wendy.hadlington@sunderlandcvs.co.uk)

Yours sincerely,

*Gillian McDonough*  
**Chief Officer**  
SCVS

*Mark Overton*  
**Public Health Network Manager**  
NHS South of Tyne & Wear

