



## **JEWEL AND ESK COLLEGE POLICY AND PROCEDURES FRAMEWORK**

### **Pandemic Influenza Contingency Plan**

#### **1.0 Purpose**

This document outlines the College's aim to provide a system for the College to plan for, respond to, and recover from a pandemic influenza, using the World Health Organisation pandemic alert phases to trigger College-level actions once evidence emerges of increased human-to-human transmission.

#### **2.0 Introduction**

2.1 A pandemic flu is different from an ordinary flu because it occurs when a new influenza virus emerges into the human population and spreads from person to person worldwide.

2.2 Pandemic influenza has the potential to affect severely the College, its employees and their families, and requires specific planning over and above that made for other disasters (see the College's separate disaster contingency plan). The impact of a pandemic influenza on employee sickness absence rates, public transport systems, suppliers and health services is complex and requires the extension of provisions contained in the College's primary business continuity plan. Pandemic influenza has the potential to affect all businesses and employers in the region, including those providing essential services on which the College relies.

2.3 This plan provides a system for the College to plan for, respond to, and recover from a pandemic, using the World Health Organisation pandemic alert phases to trigger College-level actions once evidence emerges of increased human-to-human transmission. The plan focuses on:

- enhanced protection for high-risk work sites and vulnerable students and employees
- raising students' and employees' awareness of the threat of a pandemic and testing their preparedness
- maintaining health surveillance and hygiene measures
- producing action plans that are specific to each of the College's locations, taking into account local healthcare provision and regulatory systems governing drug licensing and stockpiling

#### **3.0 Planning for a Pandemic Influenza**

3.1 The Health and Safety Manager is the College's designated pandemic influenza coordinator. The Health and Safety Committee, the Marketing Manager and the Student President will act as the pandemic response team. The members are:

- Director of Human Resources
- Health and Safety Manager
- Heads of Faculty

- Community Relations Manager
- Marketing Manager
- Head of Facilities Management
- Hard Services Manager (Facilities)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager
- Student Services Co-ordinator
- Information Services Team Leader
- Student's Association President
- EIS FELA Representative
- UNISON Representative

3.2 The functions of the pandemic response team include:

- maintaining the team's own awareness of global developments in pandemic influenza, including guidance on containment strategies and vaccines
- developing training and awareness materials for the College
- briefing the Board and Senior Management team (SMT)
- ensuring that students and external stakeholders are involved in planning for a pandemic e.g. schools, suppliers, insurers, and where relevant, the public

3.3 Goods, services and functions of the College that are essential to its operation and survival will be defined and the College will:

- carry out devolution planning e.g. plan which classes, functions and services can be carried out at another location
- develop an order of succession e.g. plan which classes, functions and services can be carried out by personnel other than those normally given the task and train non-essential back-up staff to perform essential tasks, as well as considering retraining recently retired employees
- stockpile essential supplies, materials and equipment
- ensure that maintenance plans are up to date to guarantee that all equipment essential to the College's operation is capable of sustained operation in the event of a pandemic
- prepare timelines for how long it will be possible for the College to carry out its essential functions without critical supplies, personnel and equipment
- produce forecasts of employee sickness absence during a pandemic using official Department of Health modelling, taking into account the potential impact of a pandemic on family members, schools, public transport and quarantine measures
- ensure that our occupational health service is involved in pandemic planning and where appropriate encourage a high take-up of annual influenza vaccinations amongst employees and students
- prioritise employees and students for vaccines and antiviral medications in accordance with the identified essential classes, functions and services
- put in place policies to enable flexible working and flexible studying e.g. home-working in the event of further infection
- put in place a pandemic influenza response team that will take steps to heighten awareness of the College's infection control procedures, particularly provisions covering hand hygiene
- provide specific training for all employees and students on personal, workplace and family protection and actions to take as a pandemic influenza develops, using the World Health Organisation phases
- ensure that our Employee Assistance Programme and Student Services are involved in the provision of appropriate support services, including grief counselling and psychiatric care

- ensure that adequate supplies of infection control materials i.e. alcohol-based hand cleaners, wipes, gloves are held in preparedness for a pandemic influenza
- consult the College's lawyers in relation to this contingency plan, paying particular attention to questions surrounding the quarantining of employees and students returning from personal travel to affected areas and whether or not they have been exposed to the virus but shows no symptoms should be kept away from the College

#### **4.0 Pandemic response**

Risk management techniques should be used to determine the required levels of transmission and contact interventions.

#### **5.0 Contact Interventions: Working practices and Social Distancing**

5.1 Employees and students who are fit to return to the College following an absence due to infection, and who have therefore developed immunity to the disease, might be considered for more high-risk, essential roles.

5.2 The College will involve employees and students' families in the pandemic influenza response, targeting communications and advice at whole families.

5.3 The College will assess the requirement of critical roles and review with reference to:

- the number of school-age children in families
- reliance on a single income
- reliance on public transport

5.4 Each faculty and section will establish flexible working policies, enabling employees to agree home-working, different work patterns or relocation to a site more local to the employee or student's home where appropriate. Workers will be required to work at least one metre away from colleagues to ensure social distancing, and managers will reconfigure work-site layouts to enable this to take place. Other social distancing responses are likely to include:

- advising employees and students to avoid face-to-face meetings and to instead use telephone conferencing, video conferencing, email and the internet wherever possible
- if this is not possible, meeting only in a large room and maintaining a distance of at least one metre between participants
- advising employees and students to avoid crowded places or heavily populated gatherings i.e. bars, night clubs, sporting events
- advising employees and students to avoid congregating at break times, including in the food court etc.
- avoiding travelling at busy periods on public transport i.e. staggered starting times

5.5 An auxiliary workforce will take on essential roles if these are jeopardised by sickness absence amongst core employees e.g. contractors, part-time workers and the recently retired. Essential employees who are totally reliant on public transport may be offered dedicated transport to and from work.

#### **6.0 Transmission Interventions: Infection Control**

6.1 During a pandemic influenza, the College will seek to reduce the overall and specific risks to employees and students by taking appropriate infection control actions e.g. strengthening guidance on coughing, hand washing, unnecessary contact such as

hand shaking. Basic health protection advice will be issued to all employees and students, including guidance on:

- avoiding close contact
- staying at home when sick
- covering mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing and coughing
- discarding the tissue immediately
- cleaning hands
- avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth

6.2 Additional protection measures will be taken to ensure that influenza can not spread through contaminated objects and surfaces, such as handles, railings and counters. Surfaces touched by hands will be cleaned at least daily using either soap and water or disinfectant.

6.3 Employees and students with flu-like symptoms will be required to stay at home until the symptoms disappear and will be allowed back to the College in extreme circumstances e.g. to sustain essential operations that cannot be performed by other individuals. Employees and students developing symptoms within the College will be accommodated in a designated isolation room while arrangements are made to transport them home. Precautions will be introduced for all those entering and leaving this room.

6.4 The incubation period (the time from being exposed to the virus to showing the symptoms of infection) for influenza virus is 1 – 4 days.

6.5 Employees and students at higher risk of developing influenza related complications i.e. pregnant individuals and those with compromised immune systems will be reassigned from high-risk areas.

6.6 Stockpiles of personal protective equipment will be held and used during a pandemic, with appropriate training and fitting.

6.7 The decision to close the College will be made by the Principal and Chief Executive and in their absence the Depute Principal.

## **7.0 Health Surveillance**

The College will implement health surveillance protocols and processes to monitor the health status of employees and students and their family members. A health surveillance questionnaire covering flu symptoms has been developed and will be used to assess the fitness for attendance at the College for those who suspect that they may have contracted the virus, and those who have had a period of sickness absence due to the condition. The health surveillance questionnaire will also be completed by all individuals returning from overseas travel to affected areas.

## **8.0 Communications**

The College will distribute an information pack to employees and students covering:

- information on the symptoms of influenza and modes of transmission
- personal protection and response strategies e.g. personal protective equipment, sneezing, coughing etiquette and hand washing
- containment of the virus through the use of social distancing and home-working
- reinforcing the message that employees and students should not come to the College if they are not well

- the implementation of the plan as trigger points are reached and passed
- liaison and communication with local businesses, communities, government agencies and the NHS.

## **9.0 Business and Personal Travel**

- 9.1 Only essential business travel will be permitted during a pandemic, and procedures for approving travel will be tightened, requiring authorisation from a member of the Directorate.
- 9.2 The pandemic response team will monitor travel plans and new procedures for notifying individual's location during periods of travel.
- 9.3 Individual's required to visit pandemic-affected areas on business will be provided with appropriate health advice and personal protective equipment. Individuals will have the right to refuse to travel to such areas.
- 9.4 Employees visiting affected areas for non-business purposes during a pandemic influenza may be required to stay away from work for a period of quarantine on unpaid leave.
- 9.5 The crisis response team will monitor and track the availability of direct and indirect support from the Government.

## **10.0 Pandemic recovery**

- 10.1 Unlike other disaster contingency planning, recovery interventions in the case of a pandemic influenza will need to take into account the likelihood of follow-on waves, which may place the College in a critical response phase for up to a year. The crisis response team will assess all physical, economic and social impacts of the pandemic and adjust recovery actions accordingly. Recovery actions will need to be balanced with actions to prepare the College for the next wave of the pandemic influenza.
- 10.2 Competition for skilled employees will be considerable and the College will need to examine its pay and reward strategies to ensure that it is able to attract and retain suitable employees.
- 10.3 Employees and students will be provided with assistance to access government and employer provided support services, including help and advice with personal, financial and psychological issues.
- 10.4 Communication and information-sharing channels with external stakeholders will be kept open during the recovery phase, and regular updates on recovery interventions and preparedness for subsequent pandemic waves will be provided.

## **11.0 Review**

- 11.1 The College will monitor and review to reflect College needs, experience and statutory obligations as necessary.
- 11.2 During a pandemic influenza virus, the crisis response team will implement actions appropriate to the World Health Organisation pandemic phase, and other trigger points used by government departments and official agencies. The team will monitor and assess actions as they are implemented to ensure that the plan is on target. The plan will be adjusted as necessary during a pandemic to ensure that the College's response is effective and flexible. It will be adjusted every 90 days during the early stages of a pandemic, and more frequently thereafter.

