



[Issue 26](#)

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Current situation updated

The national pandemic flu service was launched at 3pm today.

The new service provides flu advice over the telephone and on the web. It also has the authority to prescribe antiviral medicine.

The service should relieve some of the current pressures on the system – particularly in primary care and A&E, and should ensure that GPs can focus their efforts on treating patients with more serious symptoms.

The launch of the service changes some of the procedures GPs and healthcare staff have become used to and this edition aims to present a clear picture of the new system.

The contact details for the service are 0800 1 513 100 or via the website www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

Most people in this country have been affected only mildly by the flu. This remains the position for people living in Devon.

Advice to GPs updated

People needing advice or treatment are now being advised to contact the national pandemic swine flu service by phone or over the web.

Patients will be able to contact the service if they suspect they have swine flu and those diagnosed with the illness will be given an authorisation number.

A flu friend (see below) can then use this to pick up medicine from a local antiviral collection point.

As a precaution, public information will advise certain groups to contact their doctor rather than use the national pandemic flu service.

This includes those:

- ✓ With a serious underlying illness
- ✓ Who are pregnant
- ✓ Who have a sick child under one year old
- ✓ Whose condition or whose child's condition suddenly gets much worse
- ✓ Whose condition is still getting worse after 7 days (5 days for a child)

Of course, some patients listed above may not notice this advice and use the internet and telephone service anyway. They will still be able to do so and will be given treatment or advised to contact their doctor as appropriate.

Most patients presenting at a surgery or calling with symptoms should be advised to self-isolate at home and contact the national pandemic service.

However, GPs should continue to provide diagnosis for those people in high risk groups and, as before, if they feel it is clinically appropriate to swab for the virus, they can do so. GPs should also assess all symptomatic children under one for the appropriate antiviral treatment.

High-risk groups:

- ✓ People with chronic lung disease, including people who have had drug treatment within the last three years for asthma
- ✓ People with chronic heart disease
- ✓ People with chronic kidney disease
- ✓ People with chronic liver disease
- ✓ People with chronic neurological disease
- ✓ People with suppressed immune systems
- ✓ People with diabetes
- ✓ Pregnant women
- ✓ People aged 65 years and older
- ✓ Children under five years old.

Contact tracing and prophylaxis is not normally carried out but may be considered in line with the guidance below from the Health Protection Agency (HPA).

http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1247038677052

The HPA has also issued detailed prescribing guidance for oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza):

http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1243581475043

Advice to GPs about antiviral collection updated

You can now use FP10 forms instead of the pre-printed swine flu treatment forms. This should make the process easier for you. Please note that you must strike through the FP10 form and endorse it with the words "No Payment AV".

In every case, you should fax the prescription form to the antiviral collection point and then phone to check that it has been received (numbers below). Please note that the FP10 can be used in antiviral collection points in neighbouring PCTs. You must include dosage instructions and in the case of children, their weight.

You must ensure the patient is given the signed original copy of the prescription to hand over to their flu friend (see below). If you have remotely

assessed a patient you won't be able to give the prescription to the patient, but you should still fax the prescription form and then post the original to the antiviral collection point. If no fax nearby, you should at least phone the antiviral collection point.

If you have a face to face consultation with the patient, then once they have the FP10, they should be asked if they have a flu friend. A flu friend is a family member, friend or neighbour who can collect the prescription on their behalf. Please note that on no account should the patient collect the antiviral medicine themselves.

Antivirals will only be given to flu friends if they are able to produce a form of ID. That is their passport, driving licence or utility bill. The flu friend must also take some ID referring to the patient. This is a new requirement.

If you fax a prescription form outside of opening hours, you must tell the patient the opening hours of the collection point to enable their flu friend to collect their medication from 8am the next day.

Blood supply conservation updated

NHS Blood and Transplant Service and the Department of Health have written to hospital trusts about ensuring the blood supply chain is able to deal with increased demand

Hospitals have been asked to take measures to conserve blood supplies as part of national planning and preparedness.

GPs are requested to ensure that if a patient is referred to secondary care for a specialist opinion (with the possibility of needing surgery) then tests to determine the patient's Hb (red blood cell count) status and any subsequent treatment of anaemia begin as soon as possible.

This will reduce the need for blood transfusion and cancelled operations.

Antivirals for children

We sent a letter to GPs which clarified the prescribing of Tamiflu for children. It is extremely important that you see this letter. If you are a GP and have not seen this, click here: <https://nww.devonpctinfo.nhs.uk/Prescribingpost>

Decision to admit or send to A&E

The Department of Health has issued detailed guidance on hospital admission criteria for adults and children, along with a referral form. This is available here:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_100941

If you refer a patient to accident and emergency please phone ahead to let the department know they are coming. Medical staff can then make the necessary arrangements to care for the patients.

Swine flu reporting

In line with the move to treatment-only the Health Protection Agency (HPA) is no longer providing daily updates on the number of confirmed cases. The HPA is instead issuing a weekly media alert covering the various surveillance systems to monitor the ongoing situation. This will also be available in the news section of the agency's website at www.hpa.org.uk.

Swine flu information sheet updated

It has come to our attention that some GP practices may be leaving our swine flu information sheets in reception areas. Please do not do this.

The information sheet has only one purpose. It should only be handed to patients diagnosed with swine flu.

If you require additional literature for waiting patients please visit <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx> or www.devonpct.nhs.uk where you can download specific information aimed at them. We have also sent additional patient leaflets and posters to each of our 107 practices.

Advice to community hospital staff updated

If a patient presents with flu-like symptoms, they should contact the national pandemic flu line in the first instance. If they are in any of the high-risk groups they should seek medical advice from their GP – over the phone.

If a flu friend would like more information to take with them, please give them the swine flu information sheet (attached). We have also sent general information to each of the antiviral sites.

Central alerts system (CAS): pandemic flu alerts updated

We will continue to circulate to the chief medical officer pandemic flu alerts to all professional groups when we receive them from the Department of Health's CAS.

CAS is a web-based system for issuing patient safety alerts and other safety critical guidance to the NHS and other health and social care providers.

We appreciate that the swine flu update will overlap with some of this information and ask you to understand that this is necessary to ensure people have the information they need.

Advice to schools

Schools have now broken up for the summer holidays.

All schools were sent letters drafted by the Health Protection Agency in conjunction with Devon Primary Care Trust and Devon County Council. These cover three scenarios: no cases at the school, one suspect case and an outbreak. All will be addressed from the head of the school/college affected and will be sent to parents.

Schools needing additional advice and information should call the Devon County Council helpdesk on 01392 383369.

Advice to nursing homes

Nursing homes in Devon will shortly receive additional information about swine flu via letter. New advice has been added to the Devon PCT website.

Antiviral collection points

There are 11 antiviral collection points now open in the Devon PCT area.

The collection points, mostly in community hospitals, are intended to be used by “flu friends” (see below) to collect antiviral medicines.

The antiviral collection points (below) are open from 8am to 6pm, seven days a week with the exception of Tiverton hospital which is open 24-hours and Barnstaple, which opens Monday to Friday.

The location of the antiviral collection points are based the latest available demographic data for the county. No one in Devon is more than 30 minutes away from a collection point.

Decisions to open additional sites are reviewed on a regular basis, taking into account the geographical spread of the virus.

At the moment the available evidence does not support opening further sites although this may change at short notice.

Please do not direct patients to the two walk-in centres in Exeter, GP surgeries or accident and emergency departments – unless it is clinically appropriate to do so.

Antiviral collection points:	Telephone:	Fax:
Honiton Community Hospital	01404 540540	01404 540550
Whipton Hospital	01392 208366	01392 208366
Exmouth Community Hospital	01395 279684	01395 224270
Tiverton Community Hospital	01884 235400	01884 235532
Newton Abbot Community Hospital	01626 324 500	01626 324701
Totnes Community Hospital	01803 862622	01803 869486
Tavistock Community Hospital	01822 612233	01822 610025
Bideford Community Hospital	01237 420200	01237 478036
Ilfracombe Tyrell Hospital	01271 863448	01271 864871
Lynton Resource Centre	01598 753310	01598 753832
Barnstaple Health Centre	01271 371761	01271 321686

Advice to GPs over where to collect prophylaxis doses

As of July 17 GPs following HPA guidance over prophylaxis should direct people needing the medicine (unless symptomatic) to one of the community pharmacies below. The sites have been chosen because they are close to antiviral collection points in Devon. No antiviral treatment doses are available from here.

Location	Pharmacy	Telephone number
Exeter	Sainsbury supermarket, Hillbarton Road, Pinhoe, Exeter	01392 469687
Honiton	Lloyds Pharmacy, Honiton Group Surgery, Marlpit Road, Honiton	01404 42762
Exmouth	Clarepharm Pharmacy, Claremont Grove, Exmouth	01395 222878
Tiverton	Lloyds Pharmacy, Tiverton Hospital, Kennedy Way, Tiverton	01884 235400 and request
Newton Abbot	Boots Pharmacy, Albany Street, Newton Abbot	01626 363195

Totnes	Boots Pharmacy, Babbage Road, Totnes	01803 862356
Tavistock	Lake Pharmacy, West Street, Tavistock	01822 612104
Bideford	Lloyds Pharmacy, Abbotsham Road, Bideford	01237 472002
Ilfracombe	Lloyds Pharmacy, St Brannock's Road, Ilfracombe	01271 867524
Lynton	Lynton Pharmacy, Lynton	01598 753377
Barnstaple	Boots Pharmacy, High Street, Barnstaple	01271 326772

Help for people with no flu friend

The PCT has signed an agreement with the British Red Cross to provide a flu friend service for vulnerable people who would not otherwise be able to access antiviral medicines without it.

It is extremely important that the service is not misused as this could result in those in real need failing to receive their medication.

Please note that the telephone number has changed. To arrange delivery patients in need should call 0844 412 2840 (7-days a week). There is no charge but patients using the service should expect to wait up to 24-hours before the medicine is delivered.

Antivirals for staff

Antivirals are not routinely issued as a prophylaxis to staff.

Press and media updated

Media activity continues. The main focus is on the launch of the national pandemic flu service. There was local coverage today in the Western Morning News of a GP in Devon who is quoted as saying that the Government has let parents down because, as the paper says "doctors are running low on stocks of infant antivirals".

National guidance says that the liquid form of the drug is for children under the age of one. There is no shortage of the drug in Devon and this will continue to be the case if GPs prescribe as recommended, with older children prescribed capsules.

If you are approached by the press to comment, please note that public messages are being coordinated by Devon PCT's communications department: 01392 267648 (day) and 07969 152217 (out of hours). GPs may also wish to call if they are approached to comment.

Media approach

We continue to push the key public health messages (see main messages to public below). We will not confirm individual cases or the location of antiviral collection points.

Posters and public information updated

We have produced a new form to encourage people to develop their own network of flu friends (attached). This has been placed on our website and we are planning to distribute this throughout the county through a range of networks. Clearer swine flu antiviral collection point signs for all sites are on order. We will bring you more on this when we take delivery of the signs expected early next week. As we enter the busy holiday period we are also working on information for visitors to the area. And a major public health information campaign to reassure and inform is being arranged in the South West. The campaign is expected to feature on radio, TV and in print media. More on this when we have more detail.

Human resources

All staff in the PCT are being sent a letter and “Pandemic Flu Planning Workforce Data Questionnaire”. There have been problems with the website address. If you have problems accessing it, the correct address is (don’t forget that you’ll need your password):

https://nww.devonpctinfo.nhs.uk/KSF/WFQ_Login.asp

Devon PCT human resources (HR) department will use the information to assess the potential impact of the pandemic on the workforce.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the questionnaire, please contact Tim Robinson, assistant director of HR or Helen Belcher, HR advisor on 01392 449781.

Human resources FAQs

The trust has produced a useful frequently asked question sheet for use by staff. Please note that partner organisations, even those outside the NHS, may also find this useful as a core script. We have produced this as a PDF and a word document. The word document can be adapted for use by partners. Both are attached.

Main messages to public

The following messages are designed to be used by all NHS bodies (and partner agencies). They may change if the pandemic becomes more severe.

They are split into three key themes:

✓ *Catch it, Bin it, Kill it*

CATCH IT: germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.

BIN IT: Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of them as soon as possible.

KILL IT: Hands can transfer germs to any surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.”

Anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms is advised to contact the national pandemic flu service on 0800 1 513 100 or visit www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

✓ *Main sources of information*

Most people in this country have been affected only mildly by the flu and this remains the position in Devon.

People are advised to call the new national pandemic flu service on 0800 1 513 100 or visit www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

General information is available still available on www.nhs.uk

People in high-risk groups should call their GP.

No one with symptoms should attend walk-in centres, NHS hospitals or GP practices in person, unless instructed to do so.

✓ *Flu friends*

People should now consider setting up a network of flu friends (neighbours, friends or relatives who can help you if you get ill).

They could collect medicines, food and other supplies, so that the patient doesn't have to leave home.

Please see the attached flu friend form. This should be used by partners to inform their communications.

General advice and back issues

We have transferred a great deal of general swine flu information to InfoPoint – the trust's internal website. You must have an InfoPoint username and password to view this. If you have mislaid these or wish to re-register, please contact howard.chapman@nhs.net

To view all current advice click here:

http://www.infopoint.devonpct.nhs.uk/your-sites/Directorates/Public_Health/Swine_Flu_response.asp

Next update

The next update will be published when there is anything significant to report.