

Communicable Diseases Plan

Prepared and issued by:	Emergency Resilience Team	Version:	Version 1.0
Date:	February 2020	Review Date:	February 2023

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Distribution	3
SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Aim	4
1.2 Objectives	4
1.3 Scope	4
1.4 Planning Assumptions	4
1.5 Risk	5
1.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	5
1.7 Responsibility	5
SECTION 2 – GENERAL INFORMATION	
2.1 Background	6
2.2 Challenges of a Communicable Disease	6
2.3 The UK Approach	7
2.4 Issues for Local Authorities	7
2.5 Associated Plans	8
SECTION 3 – INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS	
3.1 Activation	9
3.2 Council Incident Management Team	9

DISTRIBUTION

POST	ORGANISATION
Council Leadership Team	Fife Council
Communications and Customer Insight Manager	Fife Council
Incident Managers	Fife Council
Emergency Resilience Team	Fife Council
Emergency Planning Officer	NHS Fife

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim

This plan details the specific arrangements on how Fife Council will effectively respond to, recover from and mitigate the impact of a large-scale communicable disease¹ impacting on the communities in Fife.

1.2 Objectives

In addition to the objectives detailed in the Incident Management Plan, Fife Council will ensure that it will effectively:

- co-ordinate its response to a large-scale communicable disease;
- minimise the risk of transmission and maximise the efforts to contain and delay spread of the disease;
- manage additional deaths and ensure the respectful treatment of the diseased.

1.3 Scope

This document should be read in conjunction with the Incident Management Plan and details the specific arrangements to respond to and recover from a communicable disease outbreak.

Communicable diseases vary in scale and impact, many can be dealt with as part of the business as usual links with the health authorities. However, where a large-scale impact on Fife's communities is expected or occurring, this plan will be activated to support the response.

1.4 Planning Assumptions

The following assumptions and limitations are acknowledged:

- The occurrence, spread and severity of a communicable disease is difficult to predict. Any planning arrangements need to be flexible and adaptable to any developing scenario.
- Those with key roles and responsibilities within this plan may be absent from work due to the effects of a communicable disease.

¹ For this plan, we use the definition of communicable disease as an illness that can be easily transferred from human to human and / or from animal to human. Some examples include pandemic influenza, ebola and SARS.

1.5 Risk

The following risks related to a communicable disease outbreak have been considered by the Fife Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) as part of the local Risk and Preparedness Assessment process:

- Influenza type disease - assessed as 'very high'
- Emerging infectious disease – assessed as "medium"
- Biological substance release e.g. legionella – assessed as "high"

The Council's Resilience Policy and Framework details the key areas that are carried out to mitigate the impact and consequences of these risks to Fife's communities.

1.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

As per the Incident Management Plan, this plan will be reviewed by the Emergency Resilience Team as part of a formal three-year review schedule.

Amendments may also be made as required to incorporate lessons identified from incidents and training and exercising.

1.7 Responsibility

Fife Council's Chief Executive is responsible for this Communicable Diseases Plan.

SECTION 2

GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Background

During the last century there has been several communicable diseases throughout the world, including illnesses like different types of influenzas, ebola, SARS to name a few. All of these varied in scale and impact. For illustrative purposes, Appendix A details the impact on an influenza pandemic on Fife at three levels of clinical attack rate.

The World Health Organisation is responsible for monitoring and providing updates on the global situation. Depending on scale and impact they may declare a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

2.2 Challenges of a Communicable disease

Pandemic influenza creates many challenges for organisations:

- Whilst the health sector will be under particular pressure, the response will span different sectors and organisations, requiring close working and mutual support.
- There is uncertainty about when a pandemic influenza could occur.
- The severity of a future pandemic influenza cannot be predicted and even pandemics with only mild or moderate impact are likely to put considerable pressure on services.
- The number of cases and demand for services can be expected to develop with great pace.
- The demands of a pandemic are unlikely to be uniform and local areas will be under pressure at different times requiring flexibility of approach.
- A pandemic wave can be expected to continue for many weeks.
- The appetite for information from the media, public and government is likely to be intense at times, requiring frequent, consistent and coordinated communications.

2.3 The UK Approach

In response to any communicable diseases, the arrangements need to be:

Precautionary	The response to any new disease should take into account the risk that it could be severe in nature.
Proportionate	The response should be no more and no less than that necessary in relation to the known risks
Flexible	There should be a consistent, UK-wide approach to the response but with local flexibility in the timing of transition from one phase of response to another to take account of local patterns of spread of infection.

Once a PHEIC is declared by the WHO, action will depend on whether cases are identified in the UK and the extent of spread. This takes the form of a series of stages explained at Appendix B² and incorporates indicators for moving from one stage to another. These stages are not numbered as they are not linear, may not follow in strict order and it is possible to move back and forth or jump stages. It should also be recognised that there may not be a clear delineation between stages, particularly when considering regional variation and comparisons.

2.4 Issues for Local Authorities

- It is likely that the Council workforce will be depleted and this level of employee absence will depend on the nature of the communicable disease. However, critical activities need to be maintained at reasonable levels.
- There are some critical activities where demand for the service will increase, likely social care, registration and burials and cremations. Any planning will need to take into account this increase in demand whilst working with reduced staff.
- The Council's activities can include working with vulnerable people who may be at more risk to the communicable disease. The Council needs to ensure that national advice is followed, protecting both the public and its staff.
- Non-essential Council activities may need to be suspended throughout the period of the disease.
- The number of additional deaths is impossible to predict. Plans need to be in place to cope with an increase in burials and cremations, including the organisation of temporary mortuaries.
- Loss of supplies is a risk that needs managed as procurement of materials could be curtailed due to supplier staff shortages disrupting both manufacturing and logistics.

² This Appendix defines the UK approach to a pandemic response but the principles can be applied to any communicable disease

- Communicable diseases can spread rapidly wherever people are in close contact and is likely to spread particularly rapidly in schools. Scottish Government will advise whether or not schools will be closed. Some schools may also close because of high levels of employee absence or because parents are not willing to send their children.
- The Council has a duty to provide a safe place of work for their workers in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974. Key employees need to be identified for issue of PPE, anti-viral and vaccine if available.
- Employees may need to be re-deployed or required to carry out unfamiliar tasks in which they have no appropriate training. This may be limited because of the specialist and health and safety related aspects of the training required to carry out the task.
- Potential for increased frequency of office cleaning and/or availability of cleaning materials to limit the spread of disease.
- The demand for information from employees, Elected Members, public, media Government and other key stakeholders will be great. All information needs to be timely, clear and consistent ensuring that all are aware of the necessary precautionary and response measures to encourage the following of government advice and adopt basic hygiene measures to manage or reduce the risk of catching or spreading the disease.

2.5 Associated Plans

Directorate Business Continuity Plans

These plans detail the way Directorates/Services respond to a business continuity incident that affects the delivery of critical activities.

Fife Council Mass Fatalities Arrangements (under development)

These arrangements detail how the council responds to an increase in fatalities where the number is greater than normal local arrangements can manage.

Fife LRP Pandemic Influenza Plan

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework to ensure co-ordinated planning and multi-agency response to and mitigate the impact of pandemic influenza in the Fife Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) area.

East of Scotland RRP Pandemic Influenza Framework

This document sets out the framework required to co-ordinate the regional response to a Pandemic Influenza outbreak within the East of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership (EoSRRP).

SECTION 3

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Activation

This plan will be activated by the Incident Manager when a communicable disease has been either predicted or already impacting Fife, Scotland and/or the UK.

3.2 Council Incident Management Team (IMT)

On notification of a potential outbreak, consideration should be given to establishing an Incident Management Team (IMT) to enhance the Council's co-ordinated response.

The key membership and generic roles and responsibilities of the IMT are detailed in the Incident Management Plan.

In addition to these, the specific roles and responsibilities of the IMT to effectively manage communicable disease outbreak are as follows:

- ensure that national health advice is followed and implemented all times;
- support Fife's communities (i.e. residents, businesses and visitors) by ensuring appropriate action taken and/or advice provided to limit the impact of the disease;
- ensure that HR advice on redeployment and alternative working arrangements is issued and made available to all managers and staff;
- ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are put in place and followed;
- ensure that council buildings cleaning regimes are adequate and the necessary cleaning materials are available;
- ensure that the IT infrastructure can meet the change in demand of IT systems due to increased home-working.

In response to a communicable disease outbreak, the IMT will also include the following specific roles and responsibilities:

TITLE	IMT Role
Head of Protective Services	Public Health, Environmental Health, Port Health Advisor and link with NHS Fife
Service Manager (Bereavement Services)	Burials and Cremations advisor
Customer Service Delivery Manager	Registration and Customer queries / issues advisor
Head of Human Resources	HR and Health & Safety advisor
Health and Social Care General Manager	Social Care advisor
Head of Education & Children's Services	Education advisor
Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods	Communities advisor
Senior Manager Property Services	Accommodation advisor
Senior Manager Facilities Management	Cleaning advisor
Procurement Service Manager	Procurement advisor
Head of Business & Employability	Liaison with businesses and visitors
Head of Business Technology Solutions	IT infrastructure advisor