

Swine Flu Update

As an employer AMH have a key role to play in protecting the health of our staff and clients as well as limiting the impact of a possible outbreak of Swine Flu on Action Mental Health.

As part of our preventative strategy AMH have already provided hand sanitizers to all units and would encourage staff and clients to use these regularly. Alcohol wipes are being distributed to all units shortly and these are to be used to clean door handles, telephones and any hard surfaces used frequently by multiple users. Wipes for computers will also be provided and instructors should clean computers after each client's use.

A number of members of staff have attended Infection Control presentations co-ordinated by a number of Health and Social Care Trusts. All staff have access to H&SCT websites & other health sites e.g. WHO and The Health Protection Agency. Once the Beeches Management Centre has completed the Infection Control e-learning CD ROM, details of this will be circulated to all AMH staff.

AMH have submitted individual action plans to each of the Trusts and the AMH Action Plan will be distributed to Central/Service Managers. The key points which the Action Plan covers include the following:

Contingency Plan - Operations

Given the nature of the service we provide to people with mental health problems and learning disabilities we will be able to maintain services with up to **50% of staff in each New Horizons service location** i.e. approximately 6 staff in the case of each of our New Horizons Units. The nature and type of service delivered to clients with a reduced number of staff will however vary with more emphasis on social skills training as opposed to accredited vocational training.

Our emphasis will be to maintain operations **with up to 50% of staff** at each location but change the nature of the service delivered to clients so that we are effectively able to engage all staff to support clients.

We will monitor and review arrangements for staff redeployment to other localities as and when essential and with due regard to how far we can reasonable ask staff to travel.

In the event of unforeseen pressures e.g. large numbers of staff are not available for work – the following actions could be taken:

- Allocate resources to perform predefined critical activities in line with the skills-base of staff
- Restrict external activities
- Monitor new starts
- Change and modify the nature and type of training activities for clients to enable supervision with reduced numbers of staff
- Provide clients, who cannot attend services with a contact/network record in the event of them requiring help or advice
- Encourage essential travel only and monitor the and review the risk of cross infection in the context of meetings and attendance at external events/activities
- Maintain close liaison with agencies supporting the needs of our most vulnerable clients, including those living in group residential accommodation
- Carefully review requests from staff for annual leave. New requests for leave will only be approved if operational circumstances can accommodate such requests.
- Worse case scenario: close service.

Contingency Plan – Corporate Services

I.T.

- Systems are in place to allow central management to work from home and remote access vital programs such as Cascade HR, Sage 200 and Sage payroll. All staff have the ability to collect their emails from any Internet connection worldwide.

Finance

- A member of Finance will be shadowing Alan during the August payroll processing. This will give us cover for this critical area.

Human Resources

- If Staff should present at work with Swine Flu symptoms, they will be sent home and advised not to work until fully recovered.
- Staff are to inform their line manager in any case of absence: to advise of the nature and expected duration of absence and keep in touch.
- Infected staff will be paid under normal sick pay arrangements in line with the Company Sick Pay Policy.

- If the proposed Government extension of self cert to 2 weeks in event of pressure on NHS services comes into effect, AMH will pay CSP for staff on probation or staff who have lost their right to access CSP with a self cert, from day 8 of the self cert.

Communications

- Distribute information, using various channels including AMH Intranet site & e-mail
- Communicate updates to the AMH swine flu contingency plan to staff
- Provide clients with key contact/network details and advice on boundaries
- Communicate website links offering additional advice and guidelines
- Representatives of CMT to meet with AMH's Swine Flu Contingency Co-ordinator to review the plan every two weeks beyond the CMT August 2009 meeting and weekly as and when incident rates increase and move towards a peak.

Corporate Event

An AMH Corporate Event had been planned for the end of September 2009 in response to feedback from the staff satisfaction survey. However in light of the expected increase in Swine Flu during the autumn period and in line with the Department of Health guidance and AMH Swine Flu Contingency Plan action point:

“Encourage essential travel only and review the risk of cross infection in the context of meetings and attendance at events/activities”

The Event Working Group have advised that the corporate gathering be postponed until March 2010. This is a precautionary measure in response to extraordinary circumstances and AMH are fully committed to the event taking place.

We will continue to update you with all the relevant information via e-mail & the company intranet.