

Guidelines on the Prevention of the Spreading of Human Swine Influenza in Social Welfare Service Units

"These guidelines apply to day centres providing training and care, i.e. child care centres, special child care centres, day activity centres, sheltered workshops, training and activity centres for ex-mentally ill, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centers, integrated vocational training centres, community rehabilitation day centres, rehabilitation and training centre for the visually-impaired and day care centres for the elderly."

All service units should stay alert, be aware of the latest guidelines given by Social Welfare Department, Department of Health and other relevant departments, and draw up their own contingency measures pertinent to their setting.

1. Civic Education – Prevention of the Spreading of Human Swine Influenza Starts with the Service Units

- 1.1 Service units should explain to all staff and service users the importance of personal and environmental hygiene in preventing infectious diseases, in particular the infection of human swine influenza. State the serious consequences of the spreading of human swine influenza in Hong Kong. Emphasize the fact that preventing its spread is the social responsibility of everyone in the community, and encourage the staff and service users to consult their doctors promptly and notify the service units concerned and Department of Health (DH) in case of any suspected case of human swine influenza.
- 1.2 Include relevant topics on the prevention of infectious disease / human swine influenza in activities. Adopt diverse learning modes to enhance awareness and concern among staff and service users. They should be reminded to put their knowledge into practice and to heed personal and environmental hygiene in order to avoid infection, and furthermore, convey the message to relatives and friends.
- 1.3 Disseminate the message to staff, service users and their family members through seminars or newsletters, and distribute to them leaflets or relevant materials published by the DH and Social Welfare Department (SWD) or other organisations concerned. Service users and their family members should be provided with such information as the hotline numbers and websites of DH and SWD, etc.

2. Precautionary Measures

- 2.1 Service units should draw up precautionary and contingency measures on the basis of the latest guidelines issued by SWD on the prevention of the spreading of human swine influenza as well as the health advices issued by DH (such information can be downloaded from the Homepage of SWD and DH: www.swd.gov.hk and www.chp.gov.hk). All staff and service users should be informed of these measures and in particular be advised of the symptoms of human swine influenza.

- 2.2 Service units should always remind their staff and service users to be aware of their own physical condition as well as other users'. If they are unwell, they should inform the supervisors of the service unit immediately. Staff and service users should also be reminded not to share tableware, food and drinks with others to avoid infection. It should be highlighted that, if fever develops, they should not attend activities and must consult their doctors immediately. If the service users are unwell, especially having fever and / or respiratory symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, while they are attending the service unit, they should wear a mask, avoid participating in indoor or outdoor group activities, be sent to an isolated place for rest, carers for these service users should also wear a mask. These service users should then be sent home preferably accompanied by a family member or to the Accident and Emergency Department of a nearby hospital (if seriously ill) and consult a doctor. For staff, they should be sent home and consult their doctor.
- 2.3 The body temperature of service users who have difficulties in expressing themselves should be measured regularly. In case of an unusual increase in the number of staff / service users having respiratory tract infection symptoms, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of DH and the relevant Service Branches / Child Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate of SWD should be notified immediately (see Paragraph 5.2).
- 2.4 Staff should use appropriate Personal Protective Equipments (PPE) (such as mask and gloves) at work according to the risk of the nursing procedure and the physical condition of the service user so as to safeguard themselves and others. Service units should stock up appropriate PPE.
- 2.5 Maintain good cleanliness and ventilation in the service units. Windows should be kept open. Air filters should be cleaned frequently for air-conditioned environment. Objects and equipment frequently touched by staff and service users should be wiped with 1 part of household bleach solution diluted in 99 part water regularly. Metal objects should be disinfected with 70% alcohol. If a vehicle is used to carry service users, good cleanliness and sanitation of the vehicle compartment should be ensured as well.
- 2.6 Liquid soap and drying facilities should be provided in the toilets. Public towels should not be used. Notices should be posted inside the toilets requiring staff and service users to use liquid soap for hand washing to avoid infection.

- 2.7 In organising group activities, good ventilation of the venue should be taken into account. Crowdedness should be avoided. Staff and service users who are unwell should be advised to avoid participating in the activities. Clean all equipments and game sets thoroughly before putting away or used by other groups.
- 2.8 Keep an up-to-date sick leave records of staff, activity records, staff duty roster and floor plans of service unit. Obtain the prior consent of staff and service users / family members for the release of personal data, such as names and telephone numbers to DH for investigation and follow-up action as and when necessary.

3. If there is a case in the service unit, who may be a service user, a staff member or a visitor

3.1 To contain the spread of disease and protect public health, patients with human swine influenza require isolation and treatment in hospitals. If there is a case in the service unit, who may be a service user, a staff member or a visitor, the service unit should inform the concerned Service Branch / Child Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate of SWD.

3.2 If there is a case in the service unit, who may be a service user, a staff member or a visitor, service unit should cooperate with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of Department of Health (DH) in case investigation and contact tracing.

3.2.1 providing details of service users, staff and visitors who have contact with the index patient, activity records, staff duty roster and their sick leave records, and floor plans of the service unit;

3.2.2 arranging interviews with service users/staff;

3.2.3 facilitating CHP/DH visits to the service unit and any other actions considered appropriate to help understand how the disease has been acquired, how far it has spread and what measures are needed to contain it.

3.3 To prevent the spread of disease, the Department of Health may require the contacts (close or social)* to be put under medical surveillance as well as quarantine or antiviral chemoprophylaxis. Medical surveillance and quarantine usually last for 7 days from last known contact with the case, subject to latest scientific information. The close contacts should wear a mask during the medical surveillance period and ensure good personal and environmental hygiene.

****Types of contact with human swine influenza patients***

1. Close contact

A close contact is defined as a person who has cared for or lived with a case of human swine influenza, or has been in a setting where there was a high likelihood of contact with respiratory droplets and/or body fluids of a case. Close contacts include care workers who had taken care of the case without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

2. Social contact

Social contact is any person who has come into contact with a case but not meeting the definition of close contact.

- 3.4 Depending on the type of service and nature of activities, DH may advise the service unit to suspend its services. (if so needed, individual service unit may discuss with DH and SWD on the possibility of partial opening of the service unit)
- 3.5 The service unit should cleanse the unit premises and commonly used equipment using 1 part of household bleach solution diluted in 49 part water for the first time (Metal objects should be cleansed with 70% alcohol) and thereafter 1 part of household bleach solution diluted in 99 part water daily. All staff and service users should also be reminded to follow the precautionary measures under paragraph 2.
- 3.6 Service units should post a notice at prominent locations to remind their staff and service users to inform the units and DH if they develop symptoms of human swine influenza. They should also wear a mask and seek medical help promptly. Besides, they should inform the units immediately if they, even when they display no symptom, have been identified to be Close Contacts. If confinement is required, service units should facilitate the Close Contacts in staying away from work / activities of the service units during the confinement period. Such absence can be recorded as sick leave by the service unit and, if necessary, sick leave certificate can be obtained from DH through the staff / service user concerned. The unit should then notify the respective Service Branches / Child Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate of SWD.
- 3.7 Service units should post a notice at prominent locations to inform all staff, service users, their family members / carers of the situation. By doing so, their anxieties may be relieved. They should also be reminded to be alert of the physical condition of their family members. The service unit should issue two letters:

	Target	Content	Remarks
1.	The service user who is put under confinement or his / her family member / carer	(1) State the reason and remind him / her to keep close watch of the service user's health condition. (2) State the support the service unit could provide.	Sample letters are provided by SWD (Annexes 1 to 3). Adjustments can be made

	Target	Content	Remarks
2.	Other service users and their family members / carers	(1) Inform them of the situation. (2) Remind them to take precautionary measures to prevent respiratory tract infections.	according to the actual situation at the discretion of the service units.

3.8 The service unit should provide counselling to staff and service users who bear mental or psychological stress.

4. After the medical surveillance period

4.1 If the service has been suspended and DH considers it necessary to extend the period of suspension, the service unit should inform the concerned Service Branch / Child Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate of SWD, as well as services users and their family members / carers as appropriate.

4.2 When the medical surveillance period ends, and no other person in the service unit displays symptoms of the disease, the service unit may stay open as usual.

4.2.1 The service unit may stay open as usual but the health condition of all staff and service users should be closely monitored. If the situation changes, DH and the relevant Service Branches / Child Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate of SWD should be notified immediately.

4.2.2 The service unit should cleanse and disinfect the unit premises and commonly used equipment as instructed by CHP. All staff and service users should be reminded to take precautionary measures.

4.2.3 Inform all service users and their family members / carers of the situation so that their anxieties may be relieved. Family members / carers should also be reminded to be alert of the physical condition of the service users.

4.2.4 In the event of special circumstances where service unit intends to suspend its operation completely or partially, it should discuss with DH and the relevant Service Branches / Child Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate of SWD.

5. Support / Enquiries

5.1 Department of Health

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) : 2477 2772

Website of CHP : www.chp.gov.hk

Central Health Education Unit : 2833 0111
(24-hour pre-recorded health education hotline
of DH)

Website of DH : www.dh.gov.hk

5.2 Social Welfare Department

SWD 24-hour hotline : 2343 2255

Enquiry telephone number of Child Care
Centres Advisory Inspectorate : 2835 2016

Enquiry telephone number of the Family and
Child Welfare Branch : 2892 5187

Enquiry telephone number of the Youth and
Corrections Branch : 2892 5130

Enquiry telephone number of the Rehabilitation
and Medical Social Services Branch : 2891 6379

Enquiry telephone number of the Elderly
Branch : 2892 5400

(Service hours of enquiry telephone services of the Service Branches / Child
Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate:

Monday to Friday: 8:45 am - 1:00 pm
2:00 pm - 6:00 pm)

Website of SWD : www.swd.gov.hk

5.3 24-hour Human Swine Influenza Emotional Support Hotlines

(Commenced operation from 4 May 2009 initially for a period of 6 months)

Family Crisis Support Centre : 3162 8838
Caritas – Hong Kong

CEASE Crisis Centre : 2455 5859
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

**(Sample Letter from the Service Unit to the Service User Who is Put Under
Confinement or his / her Family Member / Carer)**

<Date>

Dear Sir / Madam,

Any person who is identified to be a Close / Social Contact* of a human case of human swine influenza may be required by the Department of Health to be put under confinement for medical surveillance as well as quarantine or antiviral chemoprophylaxis. I urge you to comply with the direction given by the Department of Health to be confined. During the confinement period, you should keep in view of <your / relationship between the service user and the recipient of this letter> physical condition, and inform us (Telephone No.) and the Department of Health (Telephone No.) promptly if any symptom of respiratory tract infections, in particular fever, is noticed.

< if applicable please add here the types of support the service unit can provide>

In case of enquiry, please contact <the responsible staff> at <telephone number of the service unit>.

Yours sincerely,

* **Types of contact with human swine influenza patients**

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2. Social contact

Social contact is any person who has come into contact with a case but not meeting the definition of close contact.

<Signature of Supervisor>

Supervisor, *<Name of Service Unit>*

**(Sample Letter to All Other Service Users and their Family Members / Carers
When a Staff Member / Service User is Identified to be a Close/Social Contact)**

<Date>

Dear Service Users / Family Members / Carers,

One of our staff members / service users is identified to be a Close / Social Contact* of a human case of human swine influenza. To avoid the possible spread of the disease and to ensure the health and safety of others, <he / she> has been required by the Department of Health to be confined for medical surveillance as well as quarantine or antiviral chemoprophylaxis, till <Date>. At the same time, we have taken precautionary measures to strengthen the sanitary work in the unit in accordance with the advice of the Department of Health.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all service users and family members / carers to take the following precautionary measures to prevent human swine influenza infections:

- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly. Alcohol-based handrub is also effective when hands are not visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching mouth, nose or eyes.
- Wash hands with liquid soap promptly if they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, e.g. after sneezing or coughing.
- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Do not spit. Always wrap nasal and mouth discharges with tissue paper, and

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dispose of the tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin.

- Wear a mask when respiratory symptoms or fever develop. See a doctor right away.
- Do not go to work or school if you develop influenza-like symptoms.
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In case you want to know more about human swine influenza, please call 2833 0111 (Hotline of Department of Health) or 2343 2255 (Hotline of the Social Welfare Department).

Yours sincerely,

<Signature of Supervisor>
Supervisor, *<Name of Service Unit>*

**(Sample Letter to All Other Service Users and their Family Members/Carers
When a Staff Member/Service User Becomes a Human Swine Influenza Case)**

<Date>

Dear Service Users and Family Members / Carers,

We were informed by the Department of Health on <Date> that one of our <staff members / service users> became a Human Swine influenza Case. <His / Her> last day of stay at our service unit was on <Date>.

To avoid spread of the disease in our service unit, the Department of Health advises us to suspend operation with immediate effect till <Date> the earliest, given the seven-day incubation period of human swine influenza. We will resume service when the surveillance period is over. At the same time, we have disinfected all areas in the premises according to the instruction of the Department of Health.

I would also like to take this opportunity to advise all service users to consult a doctor and wear a mask promptly if there are any symptoms of respiratory tract infections, in particular fever, during the suspension period. Please inform us (Telephone No.

) and the Department of Health (Telephone No. [to be provided by the responsible officer of CHP]) if any such symptom is detected.

We will, in collaboration with the Department of Health, continue to monitor closely the physical condition of our staff and service users. A talk will be held in <Place> at <Time> on <Date>, to provide staff and service users with health guidance so that they may have a better understanding on the issue and obtain up-to-date information of the incident.

Yours sincerely,

<Signature of Supervisor>

Supervisor, <Name of Service Unit>