

From the Chief Medical Officer  
**Dr Michael McBride**



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

<p><b>Seamus McAleavey,</b> <b>Chief Executive of NICVA</b></p> <p><b>Wendy Osborne OBE,</b> <b>Chief Executive of VDA</b></p> <p><b>Majella McCloskey,</b> <b>Director of CO3</b></p> <p>cc Gordon Bell, DSD Judith Brown, OFMDFM</p>	<p>Castle Buildings Stormont Estate Belfast BT4 3SQ Tel: 028 90 520658 Fax: 028 90 520574 Email: michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk</p> <p>Your Ref: Our Ref: Date: 8 October, 2009</p>
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## **PANDEMIC INFLUENZA: GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS**

The above guidance was published for England and Wales jointly by the Cabinet Office, Department of Health and the Welsh Assembly. Pending consideration of the need for specific Northern Ireland guidance by OFMDFM, it has been decided that the GB guidance should be endorsed for use in Northern Ireland as interim guidance for voluntary and community sector organisations dealing with the response to pandemic influenza.

This guidance offers voluntary and community organisations, including those in Northern Ireland, useful information for planning their response to a pandemic influenza.

A copy of the guidance "Pandemic Flu – Supplementary Information for third sector Organisations" has been placed on the DHSSPS website at

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/php/infectious\\_diseases/pandemicflu.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/php/infectious_diseases/pandemicflu.htm)

Users of the guidance in Northern Ireland will note that there are some references within the document to health and social care structures as they exist in England. Any reference to the roles and responsibilities of Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and the Health Protection Agency should be taken as meaning the roles and responsibilities of the Public Health Agency, working with the Health and Social Care Board, within Northern Ireland.

This guidance should be considered in the context of the Northern Ireland Interim Contingency Plan for Health Response for an Influenza Pandemic and updated information on the present situation available on the Department's website and on the NI Direct websites below:

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/php/infectious\\_diseases/pandemicflu.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/php/infectious_diseases/pandemicflu.htm)

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk>

### **Aim of the guidance**

This guidance aims to enable those at various levels in voluntary and community sector organisations to consider the direct impacts that a pandemic will have on their organisations and ways in which they can protect themselves and others, whilst helping to facilitate the wider response to minimise its impacts on the most vulnerable groups of society.

Throughout a pandemic, especially at times when illness peaks in the population, voluntary and community sector organisations may receive additional requests for help, particularly from health and social care partners, who need to be freed up to provide critical care. Voluntary and community sector organisations may wish to consider how their services or activities may be utilised, enhanced or expanded to help and what support volunteers and staff may need to take on new, enhanced or expanded roles.

The ability of a voluntary and community sector organisation to provide this help will depend on its current capabilities, knowledge of the likely needs of its current service user groups and the effect a pandemic may have in reducing its own capacity and resources. Considering this now will help organisations consider the potential impact of their decisions and choices on partner organisations and the statutory services.

I commend this interim guidance to you as a useful tool in helping to consider issues around your planning and preparedness and I would ask you to cascade this to partner organisations in the sector to assist them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael McBride', written in a cursive style.

**DR MICHAEL McBRIDE**  
**Chief Medical Officer**