

Interim Guidance relating to suspected cases of Avian Influenza presenting in Northern Ireland

13 April 2006

1. National guidance on action in relation to suspected cases of avian influenza has been developed by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and is available on their website at:

http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/avian/guidelines.htm

2. This guidance is updated regularly and is based upon best available evidence and information emerging from investigations in countries experiencing outbreaks of avian influenza. The guidance is endorsed by DHSSPS for implementation in Northern Ireland with the following points of clarification:

- The arrangements for diagnosis in Northern Ireland are outlined in a separate diagnostic algorithm - http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niai_diagnostic_algorithm.pdf
- The HPA guidance refers to action required by a Health Protection Unit (HPU) - in Northern Ireland this action is required by the local Health and Social Services Board.
- Where the HPA guidance recommends hospitalisation in an Infectious Disease Unit – in Northern Ireland this means the Regional Infectious Disease Unit at the Royal Group Hospitals Trust.

3. Guidance on investigation and management is also available on the website of the World Health Organisation at -

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/guidelines/en/index.html

4. The global situation in relation to avian influenza changes almost daily. This is monitored by the Pandemic Influenza Team at DHSSPS and guidance is updated accordingly.