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Business Advisory Network for Flu

As you will be aware, there is a likelihood that the current outbreak of swine influenza A (H1N1) could develop to become a pandemic. It is too early to forecast its severity. Indeed, if we do experience a pandemic, we are unlikely to know much in advance whether the UK will experience more than one pandemic wave and, if so, how severe a second wave will be. History offers a guide, but no more.

We are, however, putting in place the necessary arrangements that will allow the UK to cope if the current disease was to spread and to become more severe, drawing on the preparedness work carried out over the past four years and captured in the pandemic flu [National Framework](#) and supporting plans. With that in mind, I thought it would be helpful to establish a formalised network that:

- Ensures that we and departments provide the advice and guidance needed by business groups and individual firms to allow them to undertake their own planning.
- Passes back feedback from firms and business groups on the questions they have and the issues they would wish to see addressed.

In short, we want to make sure that we provide co-ordinated advice to employers and a speedy conduit for two-way communication as the situation develops.

That network will be based on the existing Business Advisory Group on Civil protection (BAGCP) and on those forums and networks maintained by sector sponsor departments and within the UK's devolved administrations, adapted to fit the present circumstances.

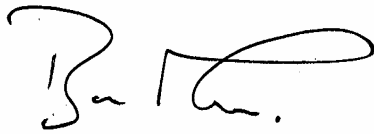
I would draw your attention to our intention to use the [Directgov](#) website throughout the outbreak to provide general cross-government swine flu messages, and to use [Business Link](#) for business-related information.



As an initial step, those organisations that do not have a business continuity plan might wish to consider acting now to prepare themselves for possible disruption. For these organisations, the following resources may be of assistance:

- [Cabinet Office Pandemic Influenza Checklist for Businesses](#) provides a checklist of important and specific activities organisations can do to prepare for a pandemic as well as more general guidance.
- [Cabinet Office Business Continuity Tool kit](#) is designed to assist organisations to put in place business continuity arrangements. The toolkit is a step-by-step guide to the six elements that make up the business continuity lifecycle as set out in the Business Continuity Management standard BS 25999

I will continue using the Network to send out information and advice as the situation develops. In the meantime, we would be pleased to use the Network to receive comments on its operation and on any issues that businesses want to raise now. Comments can be passed through your sponsor department, devolved administration or to banf@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Mann', with a stylized flourish at the end.

BRUCE MANN