

The UK Government has set out in a document entitled: Pandemic Flu: A National Framework for responding to an Influenza Pandemic, (www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu) what actions Her Majesty's Government would take to reduce the health impact of a pandemic, and the disruption it may cause to essential services and people's daily lives.

Whilst Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations in London would continue to have prime responsibility for their foreign nationals during a human influenza pandemic, as part of its national preparation, the UK Government has been looking at how it could assist those foreign nationals who became ill or stranded in the UK. We therefore encourage you to think and plan how you would support your nationals in such a crisis. In doing so the following points may be useful as you develop your plans:

Under the national framework and during a human influenza pandemic:

- The NHS would provide emergency healthcare for foreign nationals in the UK (as is current policy) including emergency treatment with antiviral medicines if necessary for visitors who develop influenza symptoms whilst in the UK;
- The Home Office would implement standard arrangements to review the immigration status of stranded foreign nationals in the UK, and to extend the validity of visas and/or work permits as necessary and appropriate;
- The UK Government would be unable to offer financial or other assistance to foreign nationals who are well but who become stranded in the UK during a human influenza pandemic;
- Repatriation of the remains of foreign nationals who die in the UK during a pandemic (from influenza or other causes) may not be possible, making local handling of the remains the only option, as circumstances at the time allow.

Diplomatic personnel and their dependants are entitled to receive appropriate healthcare by the National Health Service, provided they have made the appropriate application.

The lead Government Department for the National Framework is the Department of Health. However, if Missions in London need additional information about these arrangements, they should in the first instance get in touch with their usual bilateral colleagues in the Foreign Office. Additionally, the FCO's Business Continuity Unit (0207 008 3668) Consular Crisis Group (0207 008 5314) or Global Economy Group (0207 008 2791) may be able to provide guidance.