

## SWINE FLU QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY CONTROLLED ACCOMMODATION

Although there have been a significant number of Swine Flu infections in the UK it is important to note that students are more likely to be exposed to the virus whilst attending lectures or travelling on public transport than any risk of infection within the Halls of Residence.

This information has been collated to give some guidance and reassurance to students who may be concerned.

### **How do I protect myself from or the spread of Swine Flu?**

The best thing to do is to follow good hygiene practices. This involves:

- Washing your hands with soap and water or a sanitiser gel often.
- Always carrying tissues.
- Using clean tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Binning the tissues after one use

### **What else can I do to prepare for the spread of Swine Flu?**

- Ensure that you are registered with a doctor locally.
- It would be useful for residents to set up a network of “flu buddies”. These are friends or neighbours who can help each other if they become ill. For example, they could collect medicines, food and other supplies for you so that you don’t have to leave home if you are ill.

### **What should I do if I am feeling unwell and exhibiting flu-like symptoms?**

- Stay in your room.
- You or your “flu buddy” should contact either your GP or University Health Centre for advice.
- Notify the Accommodation Office who will seek appropriate advice.

### **What do I tell other students sharing the communal facilities?**

- Advise them to speak to the Accommodation Officer for guidance. Each case will be different, and the advice from the NHS and the Health Protection Agency continues to change and evolve.
- Your Accommodation Officer will be able to obtain the latest information and give specific guidance.

### **Will the University be issuing face masks to staff or students in Halls of Residence?**

- No. The advice from the Health Protection Agency is that face masks worn by individuals who are not displaying symptoms will do little to help prevent the spread of the virus. Good hygiene, e.g. hand washing, is more effective. Masks are only recommended for healthcare workers or staff providing personal care to infected individuals that brings them into close contact, i.e. within a metre of the person for more than an hour.

### **If someone in my flat or hall contracts Swine Flu, will I be issued with anti-viral drugs?**

- At the current level of infection this is unlikely, unless you and your flat mates are suffering from flu-like symptoms. The decision to issue these drugs will be made by the Health Protection Agency and/or the NHS.
- The current advice from the Health Protection Agency and NHS is that a system of “flu buddies” should exist to provide support to those who may have contracted the virus and are advised to remain in their room.
- This support may involve preparing food, collecting and distributing medication or liaising with the University and medical services.

### **If a case is confirmed, will the University close the Hall of Residence?**

- Student accommodation has not been closed following other outbreaks of swine flu.
- We will only do this if instructed to do so by the Health Protection Agency.

### **If the Hall is closed, how will this affect me?**

- This will very much depend on the advice given to us by the Health Protection Agency.

### **Can I still attend studies?**

- This will depend on the University stance taken to any infection. The latest guidance provided would suggest that unless you are suffering from any symptoms, or have been instructed otherwise, you should carry on as normal.

### **If I am feeling unwell, should I go home?**

- There are no hard and fast rules here, but if you are contagious you may infect a greater number of people than if you remained in your room. The best advice is to seek medical guidance from your GP or the Health Centre on campus.

### **What if I am pregnant, or suffer from a medical condition that could make me more vulnerable to the virus?**

- Seek advice from your medical practitioner.
- Inform your Accommodation Officer so that this can be taken into consideration.

**Further Information, details and links are available on the dedicated University of Ulster Swine Flu information website:**

[www.ulster.ac.uk/swinefluinfo/](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/swinefluinfo/)