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## Media Release

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Bath and  
North East Somerset

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### Swine Flu Vaccination Begins for local NHS Staff

A programme to offer the swine flu vaccination to all staff at the Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust begins **today, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October**. Beginning with clinicians and their teams most at risk of becoming infected, the Trust will go on to offer all staff the opportunity of being vaccinated during the next 6 weeks. Between now and Christmas, a vaccination team will visit every department in the hospital, both clinical and administrative, so that all staff have the opportunity of being vaccinated against Swine Flu.

In the first phase, staff in high risk areas such as the Emergency Department, Intensive Therapy Unit and Paediatrics, will be offered the vaccine to ensure they are safe from swine flu and cannot pass it to their families or patients.

The Trust's Operations Director, James Rimmer says, *"Every member of staff who wants to be vaccinated can be. We want to offer protection to our staff, their families and the patients they are caring for. Ensuring we offer **all** our staff protection from Swine Flu is very important but we are beginning the vaccine programme with frontline clinicians because they are at most immediate risk as are patients in these areas. We want to reassure our staff, patients and visitors that we are taking the threat of swine flu very seriously and want to offer the best protection we can."*

Within the community, doctors, nurses, midwives and all other NHS staff who have direct contact with patients will also be offered the swine flu jab, along with frontline social care staff. From this week, GPs will be inviting pregnant women as well as people aged between 6 months and 65 years with underlying health conditions such as diabetes, asthma or damaged immune systems, to come forward for immunisation. Staff and residents in care homes including residential and nursing homes, will also be vaccinated within the coming weeks.

The Director of Public Health for NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Dr Kieran Morgan says, *"It's important that everyone who is offered the swine flu vaccination takes it up. Being vaccinated against swine flu is the best way to protect you, your family, close friends, those in your care and your colleagues. Don't underestimate the virus – get yourself protected."*

For anyone with flu-like symptoms, the advice is as follows:

Stay at home to limit contact with others and contact the Swine Flu information Line on 0800 1 513 513 or your GP or NHS Direct on 0845 4647

Please do not go into your GP surgery, or to hospital, as you may spread the infection to others.

Unless you have flu-like symptoms and/or are being tested for swine flu, there is no need to stop your normal everyday activities, such as going to work or school.

The single most effective action the public can take to protect themselves and others from infection is correct respiratory and hand hygiene practice. These simple steps will have a major role to play in slowing the spread of any strain of influenza. Children should be encouraged to follow this advice.

ENDS

#### Notes to editors

Reduce the risk of catching or spreading flu

**CATCH IT** - Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Always cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.

**BIN IT** - Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.

**KILL IT** - Hands transfer germs to everything you touch. Dispose of dirty tissues promptly and carefully. Wash you hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of germs. Clean hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.

To read the latest official advice and find out about the simple steps you can take to help protect yourself and others [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or call the Swine Flu information Line on 0800 1 513 513. Further information about swine flu can also be found on the HPA website [www.hpa.org.uk/swineflu](http://www.hpa.org.uk/swineflu)

- Being vaccinated against swine flu will protect you, your family, close friends, those in your care and your colleagues
- Being vaccinated against swine flu is the easiest way to reduce your chances of spreading the swine flu virus to others
- Even though swine flu is generally mild for healthy people you could still feelk generally unwell if you caught the virus. For pregnant women and those with underlying health conditions, it can be much more serious
- Unless tests have shown you have already had swine flu, you are advised to have the vaccine
- The vaccine has been licensed by the European Medicines Agency.

**If you would like to attend, please come to the Main Entrance of the Emergency Department of the RUH for 11.30am Tuesday 27 October.**

**For further information and interview opportunities specifically regarding the RUH, please contact Helen Robinson-Gordon, Head of Communications at the RUH on 01225 782597. For media inquiries regarding the PCT, please contact Craig McFarlane, Communications Manager at NHS B&NES on 01225 831414**