

Atos Healthcare issues updated swine 'flu advice and encourages businesses to communicate better with staff

London, 29 July 2009

With swine 'flu spreading rapidly through the UK, employers are facing growing pressure to protect their staff and keep them informed. But many companies have still done nothing to prepare for the problem. Atos Healthcare has issued updated advice for businesses on how best to deal with the threat and how to ensure that communication keeps the situation in perspective.

- > Businesses should already have developed an effective contingency plan covering a range of disruptive risks. However, it is vital that it is kept updated and relevant as the virus spreads and new information and advice is released
- > Change your business practices to reduce face to face contact and increase telephone communication wherever possible. Also, increase cleaning of surfaces, especially areas such as door handles, that are in frequent use. Consider providing a plentiful supply of soap by sinks or sanitiser hand gel, and tissues for staff to use
- > Encourage staff to take basic precautions, such as washing hands before meals, to protect themselves from infection and lessen the risk of spreading influenza to others. Regularly remind them of the symptoms and send round the NHS leaflet on swine flu
- > Monitor staff regularly and if anyone is displaying symptoms, advise them to go home and contact their GP / NHS Direct / the National Flu Service. Don't allow them back until the symptoms go
- > Review your company's attendance policy to ensure it is such that people come to work when they can and don't when they are ill.

"With one in eight of the working population likely to lose working days, it is essential that companies take responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their staff, and this involves not only being prepared themselves but also ensuring that staff are communicated with regularly, effectively and clearly without causing panic," says Dr Lucy Wright, Atos Healthcare. "Communication from employers mustn't add to the panic and must continue to be effective even when swine flu drops from the headlines. It is imperative that internal communication within organisations is improved. Internal and external occupational health practitioners can help management to communicate effectively and must therefore be fully integrated in the process."





Notes

About Atos Origin

Atos Origin is an international information technology services company. Its business is turning client vision into results through the application of consulting, systems integration and managed operations. The company's annual revenues are EUR 5,8 billion and it employs over 50,000 people in 40 countries. Atos Origin is the Worldwide Information Technology Partner for the Olympic Games and has a client base of international blue-chip companies across all sectors. Atos Origin is quoted on the Paris Eurolist Market and trades as Atos Origin, Atos Worldline and Atos Consulting.

About Atos Healthcare

Atos Healthcare, a division of Atos Origin, combines the Company's expertise in consulting, technology and healthcare to improve the way care is delivered. Services range from lean service transformation, commissioning, hosting and software development, through to disability assessments, occupational health and front line primary care. Atos Healthcare has over 3,000 staff, of whom around two-thirds are medical professionals. For more information, visit: www.atoshealthcare.com

For more information, please contact:

Kate Forrester / Audrey Blackburn
MS&L for Atos Healthcare

kate.forrester@msslworldwide.com / audrey.blackburn@msslworldwide.com

+44 (0)20 7878 3135 / 3255

