

## POLICY FOR MANAGING MENINGITIS

### Introduction

1. The policy for managing meningitis has been developed and reviewed to take into account new national guidelines. The guidance illustrates action that should be taken before a case, during a case or outbreak and action following a case or outbreak. This policy is produced in line with the guidance contained in the document 'Meningitis: A guide for education institutions' published in July 2004 by Universities UK. The policy for managing meningitis was previously revised in November 1998.

2. The policy defines the University's response to a case of meningitis in the student population. The policy ensures that there are strong links with local health authorities and health protection agencies, who provide the University with direct access to advice on the management of meningococcal disease. The policy also ensures that there are established support arrangements in place for students and staff in advance of an incident or outbreak.

### Policy Statement

#### 3. Background

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial infection that can be rapidly fatal or cause major permanent disability. The bacteria can cause two types of illness: meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning). The bacteria live in the nose and throat and are only passed on by prolonged, close contact. It has been estimated that between 10% and 20% of the population are carrying the bacteria at any given time, only rarely does infection give rise to disease.

Statistics show that University undergraduate students are at increased risk from meningococcal disease compared with non-students of the same age group. Public health action and advice is required to identify and provide preventative measures, increase student awareness in addition to reducing the risk of further cases in the event of an outbreak.

#### 4. Raising awareness among students

At the start of the academic year, all new students will be encouraged to:

- (i) Familiarise themselves with the symptoms and signs of meningococcal disease. The Student Centre will have a range of leaflets and symptom cards for all students, posters will be displayed throughout the University and at the Halls of Residence. Information on meningococcal disease will be incorporated in the student diary for all new students.
- (ii) There will be an annual poster and leaflet awareness campaign at the start of every academic year. Student Services will publicise information on their webpages. It is recognised that students in Halls of Residence may be at greater risk and so information is particularly directed to those students.
- (iii) The services of the Greater Manchester Health Protection Agency (GMHPA) can be used to deliver talks and hold stalls at the Fresher Fair.
- (iv) Students will be encouraged to register with a local general practice.



residence, the extent of the information cascade will be suggested by GMHPU. The Student Services Manager will be asked to liaise with the Head of School and consideration will be given at this stage to issuing information to students on the same course. The identification of close friends (where possible) will also be carried out. Consideration and arrangements will be made to provide pastoral support for students, family and close friends and information will be given to those who wish to speak with the Meningitis charity helpline.

The Student Services Manager, in liaison with the Communications and Publications Manager, will draw up a reserve press statement and one point of communication will be agreed. The situation will then be monitored by the GMHPU.

#### 9. Multiple probable/confirmed cases of Meningococcal meningitis

The University will be alerted by the GMHPU if there are multiple cases of meningococcal disease. In the event of the cases being unrelated the GMHPU will recommend a single case action plan.

If the cases are related, this will be determined by results from the HPA Meningococcal Referencing Laboratory the GMHPU will convene an Outbreak Control Meeting (OCT). The roles and responsibilities of the members will be clearly defined.

#### Key personnel

The following University staff will form part of the Outbreak Control Team (OCT), with the Student Services Manager acting as a convenor of the group and be responsible for the receipt and dissemination of information as appropriate:

- A member of the Executive team
  - Student Services Manager
  - Communications and Publications Manager
  - Halls of Residence Team Leader
  - The Head of the appropriate School(s)
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The Outbreak Control Meeting will decide on what actions 2\_0 12 Tf 10ting

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## Monitoring and Review

13. This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Student Services Manager.

14. The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Student Services Manager in collaboration with the Greater Manchester Health Protection Agency.

## Dissemination of and Access to the Policy

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Appendix 1

Policy for Managing Probable/Confirmed Meningococcal  
Meningitis/Septicaemia & Action Plan Flowchart

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