Reviewer’s report

Title: Estimating the costs of school closure for mitigating an influenza pandemic

Version: 4 Date: 20 February 2008

Reviewer: Osman Mansoor

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A few residual issues.

1) abstract when first says dependent children should define these as 'under 16-years-olds'. In text, p4. says 'dependent children under 16 years of age" which does not clarify that ‘dependent’ has been defined as those aged under-16. Be good in this method section to explain the reason for that definition, as being related to the data source.

2) I found the three estimates of cost in Table 2 hard to understand, as was the explanation of the two approaches in p6. Could this be simplified to a single estimate, given the similar estimates?

3) p8. "The educational sector also employs a large proportion of women, and therefore the absenteeism rate is also very high" and next sentence read oddly.

4) p9. "This estimate is not sensitive to adjustments made for grandparents living at home, or for the approach taken (sectoral, or aggregate)" Did I miss earlier mention of grandparents? And is this distinct from informal care?

5) Is there a reason for the order of the categories in Figure 1 - would it not be best to order by degree affected?