

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) update Wednesday 26th February 2020

Key messages from NHSE (new messages highlighted in yellow)

- The UK is extremely well prepared for these types of outbreaks – we are one of the first countries in the world to develop a test for the new virus. Public safety is the top priority.
- On 23/02/20 the Chief Medical Officer announced that four further patients in England have tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the total number of cases in the UK to thirteen.
- We are continuing to work closely with the World Health Organization and the international community as the outbreak develops to ensure we are ready for all eventualities.
- Coronavirus presents with flu-like symptoms including a fever, a cough, or difficulty breathing. The current evidence is that most cases appear to be mild.
- On 6 February, we updated our advice so travellers arriving from elsewhere in China, or Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau to the UK in the last 14 days, who develop symptoms of cough, fever or shortness of breath, should:
- immediately self-isolate, even if symptoms are minor and call NHS111.
- Yesterday we updated this advice to include people returning from Northern Italy (defined anywhere north of, but not including, Pisa, Florence and Rimini), plus Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar since February 19.
- Additionally, people returning from Iran, specific lockdown areas in Northern Italy, and special care zones in South Korea since February 19, or Hubei province in the past 14 days, should:
- Self isolate immediately and call 111 even if you have no symptoms.

Key activity and next steps

- Yesterday, the CMO updated advice for travelers returning to the UK from specific areas, including Northern Italy, affected by Covid 19.
- In his morning media round, PHE Medical Director Paul Cosford confirmed that 'we are heightening our vigilance because of the apparent spread of the virus in countries outside mainland China'. Paul also confirmed that our efforts to trace and isolate people are working well and that the general guidance for schools is for them not to close.
- The latest 2pm SITREP confirmed that a total of 6,795 people have been tested, of which 6,782 were confirmed negative and 13 positive. These figures now include the 4 cases from the Diamond Princess cruise ship. This will be updated again at 2pm today.

Key media and online activity:

- Coverage this morning focusses on the closure of schools and Britons in Tenerife who have been put on 'lockdown'.

- Several papers pick up on the CMO/PHE confirmation yesterday that there will be random Covid 19 testing for people with flu-like symptoms.
- DHSC's change in advice to passengers returning from Northern Italy, Iran and South Korea also features prominently.

NHS111 Pods

A number of Trusts are receiving media enquiries relating to NHS111 pods. We advise that the lines circulated a few days ago are used to answer any questions.

Attached below for ease.

An NHS spokesperson said:

"Following national guidance all hospitals are putting in place NHS 111 pods at their emergency departments, so that anyone attending hospital with symptoms of the virus can be kept isolated from other patients and avoid causing unnecessary pressure in A&E.

"Over the coming weeks many more of us may need to self-isolate at home for a period to reduce this virus's spread. Everyone can continue to play their part by taking simple steps such as washing hands to prevent the spread of infection and calling NHS 111 first before going to the doctors or A&E if they have any concerns about or show symptoms of coronavirus."

-ends-

Background

- *NHS 111 pods will only need to be decontaminated if a patient shows symptoms of the virus.*
- *The NHS is trialling swabbing in the community with the view to roll out nationally to make this process quicker and easier.*
- *The most up to date information on coronavirus, including travel information on countries affected, can be found [here](#).*
- *Patients are safe to be discharged from isolation once they have had two negative respiratory tests for the coronavirus, twenty-four hours apart – this means they are no longer infectious and pose no risk to the public.*

Materials

- We are working with PHE to change our posters to reflect the new case definition.

Webinars

- An invite has been sent out to Chief Execs of Trusts, Chief Execs of Foundation trusts, Trust Directors of Nursing, Trust Medical Directors, CCG clinical leads, Ambulance Trusts for two webinars hosted by Prof Keith Willett to discuss the Coronavirus on Thursday 27th February at 1100-1200 and 1600-1700.
- An invitation and agenda for a webinar led by Simon Enright at 1330-1430 on Thursday 27th February is attached. This is for heads of communication and follows up the webinar on Friday 14th February.



If you have any queries, please contact your line manager or speak with the Medical Director, Sandra Oelbaum at Sandra.Oelbaum@pc24.nhs.uk or the Director of Nursing Paul Kavanagh-Fields at Paul.Kavanagh-Fields@pc24.nhs.uk.

Thank you.

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