

Health Protection Scotland- Briefing Note – new and updated HPS COVID-19 guidance (24/02/2020)

Event	COVID-19 - Update 9
Alert reference number	2020/09
Recipients of this alert	<p>CsPHM HPTs SMVN SG NHS24 SAS IPC team SAS operational managers ICM ID Physicians HPS Consultants HPS on Call NSS Media Relations team DsPH NHS Chief Executives Occupational Health Leads HAI Executive Leads Nurse Directors NHS Boards Medical Directors NHS Boards Dental Directors NHS Boards</p>
Alert status	4. for action - monitoring, wider dissemination and specific measures to be taken by recipient
Action required of initial recipients	Cascade to others for action: HPT to communicate the information in this briefing note within their NHS Board, including with Emergency Departments, acute medical services and primary care.
Date of issue	24/02/2020
Source of event information	Public Health England, Scottish Government, ECDC, WHO and HPS

Contact	Office hours: HPS Incident room 0141 300 1414 HPS coronavirus mailbox (nss.hpscovid@nhs.net) GPs seeking further advice or information should contact their local HPT in the first instance
Authorised by	Colin Ramsay
HPZone context	Wuhan novel coronavirus

Situation

This briefing note provides information on important developments:

- **Symptomatic travellers returning from Lombardy and Veneto regions of Northern Italy**

Information on current epidemiology will be updated on the [PHE WN-CoV background information page](#).

Situation in Scotland

HPS is aware of a number of individuals who have been under investigation and tested negative for possible infection with COVID-19. For information on case numbers in Scotland please see the Scottish Government COVID-19 test numbers [page](#)

NHS 24 has set up a dedicated helpline 0800 028 2816. Information for the general public has also been added to NHSinform.

Situation in the rest of the UK

On **February 23rd**, 2020, the Chief Medical Officer for England announced that **thirteen** people within the UK have now been diagnosed with COVID-19. **The CMO advised that the most recent four cases were acquired on the Diamond Princess cruise ship.**

Advice for the General Public

For general information on COVID-19, the public should be directed to NHSinform or asked to call the NHS24 dedicated Novel Coronavirus Helpline on 0800 028 2816. Please note that updated information has been provided to NHSinform and will be uploaded to the website as soon as possible.

Symptomatic travellers returning from Lombardy and Veneto regions of Northern Italy

As previously advised, no formal UK recommendations have been issued as yet regarding public health follow up of symptomatic travellers returning from northern Italy. HPS has therefore issued interim advice until the position is clarified regarding a possible change to the list of affected countries included in the official UK case definition. A change is, however, highly likely in view of the rapidly changing position in Italy.

HPS therefore advises that anyone returning from travel that included the Lombardy or Veneto regions of Italy and who currently has relevant symptoms, should be requested to self-isolate until further advice can be provided. HPS does not currently advise that such individuals need to be sampled immediately; testing for COVID-19 infection should be considered, however, if the symptoms worsen or if their symptoms are of sufficient clinical concern such that a diagnosis by exclusion is considered necessary.

In terms of a relevant time window HPS advises that anyone who has travelled in the Lombardy and

Veneto regions from the 10th February onwards (i.e. 14 days before today) should be considered as potentially at risk of virus exposure based on the recent change in case numbers. However, only those who have been in the regions from the 10th Feb and who are currently symptomatic need to be advised of the recommendation to self-isolate meantime as a precautionary measure.

Also, any returning traveller from the Lombardy or Veneto regions of Italy who is currently well should be advised that if they develop relevant symptoms within 14 days of returning home, they should self-isolate.

Reporting of results

We ask that as a minimum, the local laboratory should communicate results received from WOSSVC / Edinburgh SVC to the requesting clinician, the local Health Protection team and the Health Protection Scotland Coronavirus mailbox: NSS.HPSCoronavirus@nhs.net

Advice for travellers

The [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) travel advisories are subject to change, with travellers advised to check the [FCO foreign travel advice page](#) for the latest advice, prior to travel.

Travellers to countries reporting cases of COVID-19 should follow local public health advice during travel and UK public health on their return.

Information on COVID-19 is available on the [TRAVAX](#) (for travel healthcare practitioners) and [fitfortravel](#) (for the travelling public) websites.

Context

HPS page on Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/wuhan-novel-coronavirus/>

PHE page on Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>

ECDC page on Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV):

<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china>

WHO page on Coronavirus (including the 2019-nCoV outbreak):

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>