

**Public Health Link**

**From the Chief Medical Officer for Wales**

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| **Distribution:** As Appendix 1 |
| **From:**  Dr Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer |
| **Date:**  10 February 2020 |
| **Reference:** CEM/CMO/2020/004 |
| **Category:** Immediate (cascade within 6 hours) |
| **Title**: Coronavirus (2019n-CoV) – Key changes to case definition |
| **What is this about:** This alert and updated pathway outline the initial assessment questions to identify a patient who may require isolation and testing. |
| **Why has it been sent:** This letter updates the advice sent on 31 January 2020. Changes from the previous version are highlighted in blue font. Key changes are to the case definition. These include the expansion of geography for clinical case definition from mainland China to mainland China, Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Macau; and the modification of the clinical case definition so that fever without any other symptoms is sufficient criteria for testing (if the patient has also travelled from or transited through the previously names countries in the previous 14 days). |

**Message for all clinical staff encountering patients with respiratory infections arrived from overseas**

**Novel Coronavirus: Advice for the NHS in Wales**

You will be aware of the evolving situation regarding the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). As of 9th February 2020 it has been reported that around 37,557 people worldwide have been identified with respiratory infections caused by 2019-nCoV. As of 9am on 10th February 2020, the UK had 8 confirmed test results.

The severity of the infections ranges from mild symptoms of upper respiratory tract infection (with or without fever) to fulminant pneumonia requiring hospitalisation and advanced respiratory support, and the disease has sadly proved fatal in 813 cases in China.

**Advice for NHS organisations is as follows:**

* **It is essential that an accurate travel history is obtained from all patients with acute respiratory infections to help identify potential cases.**
* **We are now recommending that all travellers who develop relevant symptoms, however mild, within 14 days of returning from mainland China, Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau should self-isolate at home immediately and call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or phone 111 if available in their area. We are already recommending that travellers from Wuhan and Hubei province should self-isolate for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, due to the increased risk from that area.**
* **Primary care practices are asked to identify possible cases, isolate them immediately, (either at home if they phone or in the surgery if they have presented there) according to PHE guidance and contact Public Health Wales (PHW) Health Protection Team: AWARe (0300 00 300 32). PHW will provide the necessary risk assessment and advice on further action. They are not expected to undertake any clinical assessment or sampling**. [**Guidance for primary care can be found here.**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wn-cov-guidance-for-primary-care)

* **All health boards are expected to assess possible cases of novel coronavirus using appropriate isolation facilities.** [**They should review the Public Health England (PHE) guidance**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus) **and ensure that they have considered how to operationalise this. Clinical criteria for assessment was updated on 7th February 2020 in the light of emerging evidence from China and the South-East Asia region**.
* **All health boards should be prepared to undertake sampling and transport samples to Microbiology Department, Cardiff &Vale UHB for testing** as well as making arrangements for such patients to be identified immediately and isolated according to the PHE guidance **or in discussion with PHW, in home isolation if appropriate.**

* **If the novel coronavirus is detected, the patient will be transferred to an Airborne High Consequences Infectious Diseases centre. PHW will undertake contact tracing and advise on management as more is known about this infection. Guidance will be updated.**

The attached pathway outlines the initial assessment questions to identify a patient who may require isolation and sampling. All primary and secondary healthcare providers should make arrangements for such patients to be identified immediately and isolated according to the PHE guidance. The current patient pathway is for assessment of possible cases either at home or in hospital as determined by the initial assessment. Should it be required this will be followed by sampling and a period of isolation (at home or in hospital) whilst awaiting the results.

PHE in collaboration with PHW and the wider NHS has published guidance covering the following:

* [Initial assessment and investigation of cases](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-initial-investigation-of-possible-cases)
* [Infection prevention and control and guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control)
* [Guidance on diagnostics](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-guidance-for-clinical-diagnostic-laboratories)
* [Guidance for primary care](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wn-cov-guidance-for-primary-care)

The four key principles to bear in mind in community settings are to:

* **Identify** possible cases as soon as possible.
* **Isolate** to prevent transmission to other patients and staff.
* Avoid direct physical contact unless wearing **appropriate personal protective equipment.**
* Get **specialist advice** from PHW **(0300 00 300 32).**

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Frank Atherton**

**Chief Medical Officer**

**Appendix 1**

To: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership to forward to:

All General Practitioners - please ensure this message is seen by all

practice nurses and non-principals working in your practice and

retain a copy in your ‘locum information pack’.

All Community Pharmacists

Dentists

Optometrists

Deputising services

HB Chief Pharmacists

HB Prescribing Advisers

### Independent/Private clinics and Hospitals and Hospices throughout

Wales

To: Health Boards and NHS Trusts:

Chief Executives

Medical Directors

Nurse Directors

Directors of Public Health

Hospital Principals and Chief Pharmacists

Onward distribution to:

Immunisation Leads,

Infectious Disease Departments

Acute medical units

Microbiologists

To: Public Health Wales:

Chief Executive

Director of Public Health Services

Consultants in Communicable Disease Control

Microbiologists

Consultant Epidemiologists

Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme

Cc: NHS Direct Wales

British Medical Association

Royal College of GPs

Royal College of Nursing

Royal College of Midwives

Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Community Pharmacy Wales

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Wales