

Press release: MERS-CoV case in England

Latest update

Nick Phin, Deputy Director, National Infection Service, Public Health England, said:

We can confirm that the patient who was hospitalised with MERS is no longer considered infectious and has been discharged from Royal Liverpool Hospital. All those who may have had close and sustained contact with the case have been identified and appropriate follow up and testing undertaken.

To date, all contacts that have been tested as part of our follow up have been negative for MERS CoV and no other cases of MERS have been identified. Contacts will continue to be followed up for 14 days following last exposure, to ensure we can take necessary action if needed. We would like to thank all the staff who have worked so hard to treat the patient and trace all known contacts.

A Royal Liverpool spokesperson said:

The patient was cared for on a specialist tropical and infectious disease unit by a highly skilled team who successfully treated the patient, whilst ensuring no further spread of the infection.

The team at the Royal have worked around the clock to support his recovery. We are delighted with how well the patient has responded to treatment. We would like to thank all staff involved, both here and at Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust prior to the patient's transfer.

Previous updates

23 August 2018

The patient was initially admitted to a hospital in Leeds and was transferred to Royal Liverpool Hospital, an expert respiratory infectious disease centre, where they are stable and receiving appropriate treatment.

The patient is a resident of the Middle East, where they are believed to have contracted the infection, before travelling to the UK.

While this is a serious infection for the individual, the risk of

transmission to the general population from this case is very low.

MERS-CoV (the virus that causes MERS) can be spread when someone is in close contact with a patient for a sustained period of time. This means there is a very low risk to the general population of becoming ill.

This is the fifth case of MERS diagnosed in England, with previous cases diagnosed in 2012 to 2013.

As a precautionary measure, PHE experts are working closely with NHS colleagues to advise them on infection control measures. They will be contacting people who might have been in close contact with the individual to monitor their symptoms and provide health advice. This will include contacting a number of passengers who travelled in close proximity to the patient on the same flight to the UK.

People without symptoms are not considered infectious but, as a precaution, those who have been in close proximity will be contacted and monitored to ensure that if they do become unwell they can be treated quickly.

If people show symptoms of MERS after travelling to the Middle East, our advice remains unchanged and they should contact health services through the usual routes – by calling their GP or NHS 111.

Typically MERS symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath.

Healthcare professionals are advised to remain vigilant for severe unexplained respiratory illness occurring in anyone who has recently travelled into the UK from the Middle East, particularly in light of increased travel associated with the Hajj.

Dr Jenny Harries, Deputy Medical Director at PHE, said:

A patient in hospital in Liverpool is being treated for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (Mers-CoV) infection. The patient is thought to have contracted the infection whilst in the Middle East before travelling to the UK.

Public Health England is following up those who have had close and sustained contact with the patient to offer advice and to monitor them as necessary.

It is important to emphasise that although a case has been identified, the overall risk of disease transmission to the public is very low.

As we've seen in previous cases, we have well established and robust infection control procedures for dealing with cases of imported infectious disease and these will be strictly followed to minimise the risk of transmission.

Background

1. No further details about the patient will be provided due to patient confidentiality.
2. The patient was first assessed, diagnosed and treated at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust before being transferred to the specialist unit in Liverpool. The NHS will not issue daily condition checks. An update will only be provided if there is a significant change to the patient's condition.
3. The patient travelled on Saudi Arabian Airlines flight (number SV123) on 16 August 2018. Aircraft recycle and filter the air in the cabin and this is why contact tracing is usually restricted to 3 rows in front and 3 behind the case. If you have not been contacted then you are not considered at risk.
4. The total number of laboratory confirmed cases detected in the UK is now 5: the current case, 2 imported from the Middle East in 2012 to 13 and 2 as a result of onward transmission from one of the cases whilst in the UK. General travel health advice for travellers going to the Middle East is available from NaTHNaC's website [TravelHealthPro](#).
5. MERS guidance issued by PHE for clinicians can be accessed from the: [Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus \(MERS-CoV\): clinical management and guidance](#).
6. Health advice posters are available here on the [PHE website](#).
7. Typically MERS symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Pneumonia is common, but not always present. Gastrointestinal symptoms, including diarrhoea, have also been reported.

Press release: Minister for Middle East's statement on Israeli settlement construction

Yesterday's announcement of plans to construct over 1,000 units on the West Bank, and last week's tendering for 1,100 more, continues policies that are rightly condemned internationally. The UK echoes this condemnation today.

Settlements are illegal under international law and remain one of the obstacles to a viable two state solution.

I call on Israel to halt such counterproductive action, and for all parties to commit to further efforts to de-escalate current tensions and create the right environment for a just and lasting peace.

Press release: Three fined for illegal fishing in the North East

Three people from Teesside have been fined a total of almost £1,500 after Environment Agency officers on Bank Holiday boat patrol with Cleveland Police caught them fishing illegally.

Maria Blyth, 30, and Adam Wakefield, 33, of Newtown Avenue in Stockton, were both fined a total of £270 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47 and a victim surcharge of £30 for fishing without a licence, fishing during the coarse fishing close season, and using bait prohibited during the close season.

In a separate case Thomas Stocker, 25, of Laurel Road in Stockton, was fined £440 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47 and a victim surcharge of £30 for fishing during the coarse fishing close season, and using bait prohibited during the close season.

Their cases were proved in their absence at Hull Magistrates' Court on 9 August.

On Bank Holiday weekend, Saturday 5 May, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were on boat patrol with Cleveland Police on the River Tees, upstream of the Tees Barrage, when they saw Blyth and Wakefield fishing at Bowesfield.

They saw Stocker fishing separately on the same stretch of river.

The fishing close season prevents fishing for coarse fish for 3 months to give the fish a chance to breed. It runs from 15 March to 15 June inclusive.

Regular partnership work

David Shears, from the Environment Agency's Fisheries Enforcement Team in the North East, said:

These boat patrols are part of the regular partnership work we do with the police to combat both rural and urban fisheries and other environmental crime.

Combining forces in this way allows us to target crime effectively and efficiently in locations where land-based patrols don't allow for easy access.

The majority of anglers, who fish legally, rightly demand that we take action to catch offenders. This is another example of how working with our partners results in successful court action.

The Environment Agency urges people to report illegal fishing as quickly as possible by calling the incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs from just £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are [available online](#)

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