

Public Health Link

From the Chief Medical Officer for Wales

Distribution:	As Appendix 1
From:	Dr Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer
Date:	3 February 2020
Reference:	CEM/CMO/2020/3
Category:	Immediate (cascade within 6 hours)
Title: Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV): Advice for healthcare professionals in community settings	
What is this about:	This alert highlights the advice for healthcare professionals in community settings regarding novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).
Why has it been sent:	To remind healthcare professionals of the current advice for travellers returning from China and to provide guidance on what to do should a possible case present in a community setting.

You will be aware of the evolving situation regarding the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The severity of the infections ranges from mild flu-like symptoms (these symptoms could be a fever, a cough, or difficulty breathing) to fulminant pneumonia requiring hospitalisation and advanced respiratory support. The annual Chinese New Year celebrations have just occurred; this typically involves the mass movement of people both within and outside China and has likely amplified transmission.

We have developed public health messages and have asked that:

1. All travellers who develop relevant symptoms (fever or cough or shortness of breath), however mild, within 14 days of returning from mainland China, should self-isolate at home immediately and call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or phone 111 if available in their area.
2. All 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.

Healthcare professionals in primary care and community settings are reminded that, should possible cases present in their setting, they should be isolated immediately according to Public Health England (PHE) guidance and healthcare professionals should contact Public Health Wales (PHW) Health Protection Team: AWARe (030 00 0300 32).

PHW will provide the necessary risk assessment and advice on further action. Healthcare professionals in primary care and community

settings are not expected to undertake any clinical assessment or sampling.

Possible cases should NOT be referred to hospital Emergency Departments unless they are seriously ill.

PHE has produced guidance to help you with messages to the public:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-guidance-to-assist-professionals-in-advising-the-general-public>

Guidance for primary care can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wn-cov-guidance-for-primary-care/wn-cov-interim-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 (**030 00 0300 32**).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Atherton', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Dr Frank Atherton
Chief Medical Officer**

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

Deputising services

HB Chief Pharmacists

HB Prescribing Advisers

Dentists

Optometrists

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