

Preparations in place as coronavirus situation closely monitored

A CO-ORDINATED approach is in place within Dumfries and Galloway to address the likelihood of a national outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Since the first reports of the outbreak in Wuhan, China, Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership has been working to prepare a suite of local arrangements in anticipation of the virus reaching the UK.

That work has been informed by constantly updated national data and advice. Local arrangements have been developed through an integrated approach, drawing on the well-established protocols within NHS Dumfries and Galloway to tackle communicable diseases.

A large team of key figures spanning primary care, acute care and social care is meeting regularly to take forward these arrangements. Information is being shared across the workforce, and with the public – who have a key role to play in helping to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Current advice stresses the need to ensure good hygiene, regularly cleaning hands, and using disposable tissues for coughs and sneezes. It also directs people not to enter public areas such as GP practices if they feel there is a risk they may have been exposed to coronavirus – instead asking them to go home and either call their GP or NHS Inform on the free 111 number.

To date, 15 tests for COVID-19 have been undertaken in Dumfries and Galloway – all of them negative. In Scotland as a whole there have been three positive cases out of over 1000 tests, with almost 14,000 tests across the whole of the UK.

It is likely that COVID-19 cases will be detected within Dumfries and Galloway over coming weeks. However, an assurance can be given that planning and preparations place the region in the best possible position to address the impact and ensure people receive the care and support they require.

Medical Director Dr Kenneth Donaldson said: “For the vast majority of people who become infected this will be a mild illness, but if there are large numbers of infections this is likely to place additional pressures on healthcare resources.

“There is a lot that the public can do to help limit the spread of the infection, and following advice and supporting the work of the Partnership with local organisations will help ensure everyone is best able to be helped if there are cases of COVID-19 within the region.”

Everyone can help support the UK’s response by:

- Following public health authorities’ advice, for example on hand washing.
- Checking and following the latest FCO travel advice when travelling and planning to travel.
- Ensuring you and your family’s vaccinations are up to date as this will help reduce the pressure on the NHS/HSCNI through reducing vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Being understanding of the pressures the health and social care systems may be under, and receptive to changes that may be needed to the provision of care to you and your family.
- Accepting that the advice for managing COVID-19 for most people will be self-isolation at home and simple over the counter medicines.
- Checking for new advice as the situation changes.
- The latest numbers of test results are published at 2 pm each day on the Scottish Government website.
- Updates on public health advice for coronavirus can be found on the NHS Inform website, and a free helpline has also been set up for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice: 0800 028 2816.
- For the general public who are planning to travel abroad, guidance can be found on fitfortravel. Where a COVID-19 risk is identified then country pages will be updated.

Note:

Latest information on the national response to COVID-19 can be found at the following addresses...

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2020/03/coronavirus-action-plan/documents/coronavirus-four-nations-action-plan/coronavirus-four-nations-action-plan/govscot%3Adocument/Coronavirus%2B-%2BFour%2Bnations%2BAction%2BPlan.pdf>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-summary-of-response-arrangements-in-scotland/>

Any enquiries should go to Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership Communication and Engagement Manager Rod Edgar, by calling 01387 241061 (internal ext 33061) or emailing rod.edgar@nhs.net