

Public Health England and Kent County Council statement on confirmed COVID-19 case in Kent

Specialists from Public Health England (PHE) are working with Kent County Council and NHS colleagues following a confirmed case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the county.

The case is now in a treatment centre in London. Dr James Mapstone, Acting Regional Director, Public Health England South of England, said: "Public Health England is contacting people who had close contact with one of the latest confirmed cases of COVID-19. The case is a resident of Kent and had recently travelled to Italy. Close contacts will be given health advice about symptoms and emergency contact details to use if they become unwell in the 14 days after contact with the confirmed case. This tried and tested method will ensure we are able to minimise any risk to them and the wider public."

Kent County Council's Director of Public Health, Andrew Scott-Clark said: "I'd like to reassure people that the risk to the general public remains low and we are working with health colleagues to do everything we can to stop the virus spreading and ensure the people of Kent are protected.

"If you have not been contacted by Public Health England as a close contact of the confirmed case you do not need to take any action at this time."

Health and local authorities are appealing for people to follow national Government guidance to prevent further spread of the illness and limit the numbers affected.

This guidance includes taking basic hygiene precautions as the best way of significantly reducing the chances of spreading any virus: sneeze or cough into a tissue, bin it, wash your hands frequently and don't touch your face unless you've just washed your hands.

Current evidence indicates that most cases appear to be mild, with patients experiencing flu-like symptoms. Older residents or those with weakened immune systems or long-term conditions may experience more severe symptoms.

Andrew Scott-Clark added: "These are the same simple steps we all should be taking to avoid other illnesses such as flu which is also prevalent during the winter and it is important that residents help protect themselves and others.

"If you have recently travelled to an affected area or been in contact with someone who has, and you think you have symptoms associated with the coronavirus, you should not go to A&E or your doctor but self-isolate yourself at home and ring NHS

111 which has an online coronavirus service that can tell if you need medical help and advise you what to do.”

The symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath

Self-isolation means you should:

- stay at home
- not go to work, school or public places
- not use public transport or taxis
- ask friends, family members or delivery services to do errands for you
- try to avoid visitors to your home – it's OK for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food

You may need to do this for up to 14 days to help reduce the possible spread of infection. For more information on the symptoms and steps to take, go to

www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

For the latest advice on travellers returning from affected areas, plus guidance to schools and care homes, visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Details on testing are published daily at 2pm and includes a breakdown of negative and positive tests <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>