

## INFORMATION

**Covid-19: the UK's preparedness**

Date: 28 February 2020

From:

Katharine Hammond, <sup>Tuesday + which</sup> ~~COBR~~ will review Monday.  
Director, Civil Contingencies Secretariat

Deadline: 2 March 2020

**SUMMARY**

1. Covid-19 looks increasingly likely to become a global pandemic, although this is not yet certain. The UK's approach, underpinned by science, is currently to contain the small number of cases here and reassure the public. However, a global pandemic will require a step up in our response, as we use additional legal powers, public messaging and difficult policy decisions to delay the onset of any peak and mitigate the worst impacts on everyday life. Throughout these phases we are researching clinical solutions such as diagnostics and a vaccine.
2. Based on existing assumptions for a severe pandemic flu outbreak, in a reasonable worst case scenario about half of the UK's population would become ill (many with mild symptoms), and up to 520,000 people could die as a direct result of Covid-19. The scientific advice is to use these numbers for planning – they are not a prediction and will be refined as more data becomes available over the coming days and weeks.
3. Preparations are well underway, COBR is meeting regularly and our best scientists are advising on when this step up will be needed. Before then we may need to share more of our planning with more people, to put us in the best possible place for what could become a once-in-a-generation event.

**COVID-19**

4. Covid-19 is a new type of virus that seems to have originated from an animal population in China and is now being transmitted between humans, in China and elsewhere. Transmission can occur by touching an infected person or object and sprays of droplets and aerosols such as those caused by normal breathing, coughing and sneezing.
5. We are still learning about the effect of the virus on humans. About two to six days after infection people experience symptoms such as a cough, temperature and shortness of breath. Most experience mild symptoms. People who experience severe symptoms may be ill for two to three weeks. The risk of severe disease and death is substantially increased in the elderly (60 years and above) and adults with

PM, this is a short  
update paper on disease  
plans on coronavirus. Attached  
is the full action plan  
Matt wants to publish on

which animals