

Permanent Secretary  
DG Health and Social Care

Departmental response to Coronavirus

1. You will be aware from the various media reports and advice provided to Ministers about an evolving situation following the outbreak of a novel coronavirus emanating from Wuhan City in Hubei province in China. I thought it would be helpful to provide you with an outline of the response to this by way of assurance.
2. As of yesterday evening, the World Health Organisation (WHO) were reporting that there were 581 cases including 17 deaths with patients identified in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Republic of Korea and the USA. Although there are a number of patients being tested within the UK (including Scotland) there are no cases at this stage.
3. As a new virus, it is not yet clear how virulent it is and therefore it is difficult to project the likely impact this will have on the UK. The WHO are leading on this modelling work and the Chief Medical Officer and colleagues in Health Protection Scotland are plugged into this and this will help to inform our collective response.
4. At a practical level, the Health Protection Division within my Directorate are leading and coordinating activity for the Scottish Government and will do so until (or if) it becomes necessary to activate either Health Resilience or SGoRR. As part of this work we are full engaged with CMO, DCMO and relevant clinical expertise, and also across all interests in DG Health and Social Care including CNOD. We are also ensuring engagement with other DG areas.
5. Given the very small number of patients presenting as potentially having coronavirus I believe this is proportionate. However, I wanted to confirm that they are working closely with colleagues across the UK Government and devolved administrations as well as linking with colleagues within Health and in other Directorates including international.
6. There are light touch resilience measures that have been established including daily calls with health protection and a 4 nations call in order to provide daily updates to Ministers. Work is also in hand to ensure the NHS is sufficiently prepared which has included issuing guidance to clinicians and healthcare workers, increasing laboratory testing capacity (including having this within Scotland) and ensuring the public messaging is informative and proportionate.
7. You will of course be copied into all of the briefings provided to Ministers but I thought it would be helpful to provide you with this short note.

**Richard Foggo**  
Director of Population Health  
Friday 24 January 2020