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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Coronavirus and Avian Flu Outbreaks in China – Public Health England (PHE) Advice:

Public Health England (PHE) has issued advice to travellers and is monitoring the situation in China with international partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO) following the reported outbreak of **Coronavirus** in Wuhan City, China, and has offered advice to travellers to the area regarding this as well as the ongoing **Avian flu risk**.

PHE state that the risk to the UK population is very low presently and the risk to travellers to Wuhan is low, but they are advised to take simple precautions such as practicing good hand and personal hygiene and to minimise contact with birds and animals in markets in Wuhan as a further precaution.

PHE add that the UK has robust arrangements to manage emerging diseases and can draw on the experience of developing pioneering diagnostic tests in humans for the Coronavirus - SARS and MERS.

Besides the evolving **Coronavirus** situation in Wuhan, all travellers are advised to also be aware of the risk of **Avian Flu** when visiting China during the Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival, beginning on 25 January 2020.

Human cases of Avian Influenza have recently been reported in China, and historically there have been more cases at this time of year. Cases have originated from several provinces and municipalities across mainland China, and there have been a small number of Avian Influenza cases among Hong Kong, and Taiwan residents who have travelled to mainland China.

The majority of reported human cases in China have had close contact with wild birds or poultry. Although the risk is very low, Public Health England and the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) are reminding UK travellers to protect themselves from Avian Flu by minimising exposure to wild birds and poultry.

Although the risk of Avian Flu to UK residents travelling to China remains very low, anyone planning to visit China, Hong Kong or Taiwan should minimise their exposure to any birds such as wild birds or live birds in 'wet markets' as a precaution.

Avian Influenza remains a risk in a number of parts of China and if travellers experience coughing or difficulty breathing within 14 days of returning from China, they should call their GP or NHS 111 and report their recent travel.

As of today, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission has reported 291 cases of Coronavirus. Four cases have been diagnosed outside of China – 2 in Thailand, one in Japan and one in South Korea, following travel to Wuhan, China. There have also now been cases in other cities in China. There have been 9 fatalities. The situation is changing rapidly and the virus is likely to spread in the coming days. All the victims were in Wuhan, the capital of China's central Hubei province where the virus originated at its seafood market. The virus has been dubbed "Wuhan Virus" after the city.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has called an emergency meeting for Wednesday to consider the position. Based on the latest information and analysis, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said that there is evidence of human to human transmission of the virus. 15 medical staff in Wuhan have now been reported to have been infected, prompting fears of a pandemic.

PHE state that based on the available evidence, the current risk to the UK population is very low and the risk to travellers to Wuhan is low, but the situation is under constant review. However, in line with our robust preparedness activities for emerging infections, PHE has issued clinical guidance for the detection and diagnosis of Wuhan Novel Coronavirus. There are no confirmed cases of this new infection in the UK at this time.

PHE is working with the WHO and other international partners. Advice has been issued to the NHS and PHE is keeping the situation under constant review.

In order to minimise the risk of transmission, people travelling to the Wuhan area should maintain good hand, respiratory and personal hygiene. Travellers should avoid visiting animal and bird markets or people who are ill with respiratory symptoms. Travellers should seek medical attention if they develop respiratory symptoms within 14 days of visiting Wuhan, either in China or on their return to the UK, informing their health service prior to their attendance about their recent travel to the city. People are strongly advised to avoid contact with dead birds and maintain good hand and personal hygiene.

Over 595,000 British nationals visited mainland China in 2017 and according to 'Visit-Britain', more than 260,000 Chinese tourists visited the UK and their total expenditure was more than £500 million.

Update:

The UK is to begin monitoring flights arriving from China, as part of a series of precautionary measures after the spread of a new Coronavirus.

The measures, will apply to flights from Wuhan to London Heathrow.

Public Health England has upgraded the risk to the UK population from very low to low, the transport secretary said.

So far, there have been 440 confirmed cases and nine people have died.

Health team at airport

In its [most recent update on Monday](#), the UK government said the risk to the population was "very low" while the risk to travellers to Wuhan was "low".

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps confirmed Public Health England had now increased the risk level to the population to "low".

"The flights that come in from the affected region will now be given extra attention," Mr Shapps said.

According to a government source, the "port measures" will include:

- A health team to meet each direct flight from Wuhan to London Heathrow
- Passengers on flights will hear an announcement and be given a leaflet to encourage them to report if they are ill
- Aircraft will land in an isolated area of Heathrow Terminal 4 that "better lends itself to any health contingencies"

It comes as the World Health Organization (WHO) will also consider on Wednesday whether to declare an international public health emergency over the virus - as it did with swine flu and Ebola.

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer