

## Standard operating procedure for Coronavirus Priority Assessment Pods (version 1)

### 1 Introduction

Given the recent Coronavirus outbreak in China the NHS is putting measures in place for a reasonable and proportional response. Part of this is planning to mitigate any extra burden placed on our Emergency Departments and ensure the safety of all our staff.

This Standard Operating Procedure is designed to explain what actions to take should a patient who suspects they may have Coronavirus present to your Emergency Department or Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC).

### 2 General Principles

The aim is to manage as many people outside the hospital/Emergency Department/UTC setting as possible. NHS 111 is running an enhanced service to manage this

Assessment and sampling should occur as part of a “Coronavirus Priority Assessment Pod” which is to be set up in each trust. This will involve a dedicated isolation area to be provided 24/7, some trusts will decide to also use this area for testing, others will have a separate testing facility.

Any patients that are treated in the Emergency Department should be treated in line with local protocols for High Consequence Infectious Diseases (HCID).

### 3 NHS 111

NHS 111 may direct patients to Emergency Departments in the following ways:

- By ambulance services who will contact the receiving unit, via the red phone, with patient details and an Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA)
- By personal transport (eg car)– in which case NHS 111 will contact the receiving unit, via the red phone, with patient details, and an ETA.
  - Ideally NHS 111 will provide the Red Phone operator with patient contact details. The A&E should ring the patient to allocate a designated meeting time and place to avoid the patient presenting to the Emergency Department as normal.
  - As a failsafe, patients will be advised to present to the Coronavirus Priority Assessment Pod and dial NHS 111 to trigger the above process and NOT present to the Emergency Department.

- Via the red phone to alert the Emergency Department that there is a patient in the isolation area of their “Coronavirus Priority Assessment Pod” who requires testing or admission.

**No patients should be travelling to or from Emergency Departments on public transport (including taxis).**

### 3.1 Patient categories

Please be aware that people may fall into any of the categories below:

#### 3.1.1 General enquiries

Any general queries from members of the public regarding coronavirus should be directed to <https://www.nhs.uk>.

They should NOT be directed towards NHS 111 for general enquiries.

#### 3.1.2 Asymptomatic or mild symptoms in the community

A person that is asymptomatic (or with mild symptoms) with a Coronavirus travel history or contact with a confirmed coronavirus case.

- Patients to be advised to stay indoors, avoid contact with other people and call NHS 111 for advice.

#### 3.1.3 Symptoms consistent with Coronavirus attending hospital site

Member of the public arrives on the hospital site concerned that they have symptoms consistent with Coronavirus

- Patients should NOT enter the Emergency Department or hospital buildings if at all possible.
- Posters, and other measures, outside the hospital will direct the patient to the site’s designated “Coronavirus Priority Assessment Pod”.
- If a patient does enter the Emergency Department, or main hospital, then they should be directed back to this dedicated service immediately.
- On arrival to the Coronavirus Priority Assessment Pod the patient will be directed to call NHS 111 on an allocated phone. NHS 111 will advise the patient as to next steps which include either:
  1. Advising the patient there is no concern and they can return home
  2. That they require testing or admission to hospital. In this instance the patient is advised to stay where they are, and the NHS 111 operator will phone the receiving Emergency Department, on their red phone, to advise the unit that this patient is awaiting local staff for guidance.

- Any patient admitted to the Emergency Department or other hospital department is to be managed as a High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) patient as per local protocols.
- The Coronavirus Priority Assessment Pod will need full decontamination, in accordance with PHE guidance, with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) after each patient has made their call.
- If NHS 111 has determined that no testing is required, then decontamination of the facility is not required.

### 3.1.4 Patient has not followed the pathway outlined above (Symptomatic attending hospital site)

A member of the public, concerned that they have symptoms consistent with Coronavirus, presents directly to the Emergency Department or is within hospital buildings seeking assistance

- Patient should be calmly led to the “Coronavirus Priority Assessment Pod” with as little contact with other staff or members of the public as possible.
- Any staff who have been in contact with a possible Coronavirus case should follow local infection control advice as to any next steps.
- If in doubt discuss this with your senior Emergency Department clinical lead on duty – it is very unlikely that coronavirus will have been transmitted by such minimal exposure.

### 3.1.5 Patient is significantly unwell

A significantly unwell patient, with possible Coronavirus, has presented to the Emergency Department

- Any patient requiring assessment in the Emergency Department, or other hospital department, is to be managed as a High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) patient as per local protocols.

## 4 Personal Protective Equipment Guidance:

The following PPE is to be worn by all persons entering the room where a patient is being isolated:

- long sleeved, fluid-repellent disposable gown – wearing scrubs underneath obviates problems with laundering of uniforms and other clothing
- gloves with long tight-fitting cuffs

- FFP3 respirator conforming to EN149 must be worn by all personnel in the room. Fit testing must be undertaken before using this equipment and a respirator should be fit-checked every time it is used
- eye protection, such as single use goggles or full-face visors, must be worn (note prescription glasses do not provide adequate protection)

For further details visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-wn-cov-infection-prevention-and-control-guidance>, or request local protocols from your infection prevention and control team.

## 5 Testing

All staff should follow local protocols for the taking, handling and processing of Coronavirus samples in accordance with PHE guidance:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-guidance-for-clinical-diagnostic-laboratories>.

Please do not call PHE to chase results of tests sent, as this will overwhelm their system. For any urgent concerns contact your local microbiology/virology service for advice.