



Port public health approach in the delay phase of the COVID-19 response

Changes to requirements

The Prime Minister announced on 12 March 2020 that the UK is moving to the delay phase of the COVID-19 response. The public health approach at ports is moving to align with this and the commensurate changes in policy. The changes to port health processes are outlined below with immediate effect:

1. All previous PHE port health COVID-19 protocols are now revoked, including the requirement for aircraft commanders to submit a GAD in the event of a symptomatic passenger. In the event of a seriously ill passenger aircraft and airports should follow their extant local health SOPs. There is no change to the guidance for the use of PPE for staff at airports. Aircrew who should follow the same advice given to passengers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>
2. All aircraft arriving into the UK should provide the announcement (text at Annex A) prior to disembarkation. A NOTAM will follow confirming this.
3. All ports to display COVID-19 posters prominently and make leaflets easily accessible for travellers, replacing these as updated materials become available. PHE will work with airports to adapt materials to specific formats, displays or sizes.
4. All airports should identify an isolation area for use in the case of a seriously ill passenger requiring isolation whilst waiting for the local health response. The area will be dependent on local circumstances. For guidance, an outline of the expected and desirable requirements is attached at Annex B, however the availability and configuration will be ultimately dictated by local circumstances.

PHE's Health Control Unit (HCU) enhanced support during the delay phase

Public Health England's Heathrow based Health Control Unit (HCU) will provide an enhanced support during this delay phase and with immediate effect should be the first port of call for airports in England with public health queries that will not be dealt with by your local NHS.

The HCU will provide consistent 24/7 public health support and advice to all airports and they will arrange to meet with each airport individually to understand the local arrangements to allow for bespoke advice to be given and lines of communication established. Local PHE health protection teams will continue to be kept apprised of all issues by the HCU.

It is important to understand this service is not for staff generally otherwise it will be quickly overwhelmed but the HCU can help airports answer staff questions if collated to build on the Q&A for airport workers previously circulated. Contact details for the HCU are:

Tel: 020 8745 7209

Email: Heathrow.HCU@phe.gov.uk

Annex A Message prior to disembarkation at all UIK airports

MESSAGE STARTS

We would like to provide the following COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health message from Public Health England and other health protection agencies in the UK.

The symptoms of coronavirus are a new continuous cough with or without a high temperature; if you experience either of those, however mild, you should go straight home and self-isolate and check the NHS coronavirus website

Simple measures you can take to help protect yourself and your family are:

1. wash your hands often and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds
2. avoid touching your face with dirty hands, and
3. catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue and dispose of it immediately.

If you follow these simple rules, together we will help combat the spread of Coronavirus.

If you experience any of the symptoms, do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital, you should self-isolate and check the NHS coronavirus website.

Further information is available on the posters and leaflets available in the airport when you land.

MESSAGE ENDS

Annex B Minimum Criteria for a BASIC Isolation Room/Holding area at ports

A) AIRSIDE

- **For one symptomatic individual**

There should be a minimum of one room per terminal/major area

Essential features:

- private space, ideally located away from major thoroughfare
- accessible toilet (ideally ensuite) and with handwashing facilities
- sparsely furnished room, ideally not carpeted (for decontamination).
- Seating is the minimum, but it would be desirable to have a bed/examination couch (or reclining chair)
- observation port or window, if possible
- access to water and other life essentials
- ability to maintain the indoor air temperature and humidity at comfortable levels
- electric socket/phone for communication with supervising staff
- the space should be easily supervised (for care of unwell person)
- linked to a reasonable 'cordon' exit route, to move suspect case to an ambulance easily
- have hand gels and waste bin space
- Self-closing door

Desirable features:

- negative pressure
- ante-room

Essential services (will vary depending on length of time isolation room will be used in a typical period)

- cleaning services, will need to follow cleaning guidance and wear appropriate PPE, as per PHE guidance
- supervisory service (could have basic PPE) to ensure the wellbeing of the passenger
- transport service (if PAX are to be moved large distances); for e.g. at LHR
- first responders - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders/interim-guidance-for-first-responders-and-others-in-close-contact-with-symptomatic-people-with-potential-2019-ncov>

For multiple individuals need isolation – relatively uncommon scenario

- ideally multiple rooms as specified above, would need to be available

B) LANDSIDE

- Ideally rooms with the above specification or, quieter areas with less footfall, should be pre-identified which can quickly be isolated (for e.g. by screens) landside, if a passenger or airport staff falls sick