Shetland NHS Board



**Press Statement**

**March 9, 2020**

NHS Shetland is working nationally and locally with partner organisations to actively monitor two positive coronavirus (COVID-19) cases.

Details of any patients in Scotland who have tested positive for coronavirus are not being released for patient confidentiality reasons.

Clinicians have already begun contact tracing, the process of gathering details of the places they have visited and the people they have been in contact with since returning to the UK.  Health protection teams will contact those who are at risk from the current cases – those who are not contacted are not at risk.

It is important to note that this does not involve people the patients may have passed on the street or in a shop as the risk in these situations is very low. Close contact involves either face to face contact or spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person.

NHS Shetland Interim Medical Director Brian Chittick said: “While we recognise people may feel anxious about coronavirus, we would like to offer reassurance that we are taking all the necessary steps to try and contain the virus.

If you are feeling under the weather with a fever, cough and shortness of breath AND you have either been in direct contact with a confirmed case OR you have travelled back from a category 1 or 2 risk area, you are asked to phone your GP for advice, or NHS24 (111) if your practice is closed.

If you do not have symptoms but are keen to know more, please check NHS Inform’s self-help guidance online or call the free helpline on 0800 028 2816. Please help us direct our resources to those that truly need them by using the self-help guidance in the first instance.

The public can help us and reduce the risk of getting and spreading respiratory infections by staying up to date with the latest health and travel advice on NHS Inform, as well as following basic hygiene precautions.

Simple steps you can take to try to avoid contracting the virus:

* avoiding direct hand contact with your eyes, nose and mouth
* maintaining good hand hygiene - washing hands with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser before eating and drinking, and after coughing, sneezing and going to the toilet
* avoiding direct contact with people that have a respiratory illness and avoiding using their personal items such as their mobile phone
* covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with disposable tissues and disposing of them in the nearest waste bin after use”

**Background**

For the latest health and travel advice, see [NHS Inform’s coronavirus page](https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus). A free helpline has been set up for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice: 0800 028 2816.

A coronavirus is a type of virus. Typical symptoms include fever, a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune symptoms, older people, and those with long term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

The [latest numbers of test results](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-scottish-test-numbers/) are published at 2pm each day on the [Scottish Government website](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-scottish-test-numbers/).

For anyone who is planning to travel abroad, guidance can be found on [fitfortravel](https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/). Where a COVID-19 risk is identified, country pages will be updated.