

Monkeypox case confirmed in England

Monkeypox is a rare viral infection that does not spread easily between people and the risk to the general public in England is very low. It is usually a self-limiting illness and most people recover within a few weeks. However, severe illness can occur in some individuals.

The patient is believed to have contracted the infection while visiting Nigeria.

The patient was staying in the south west England prior to transfer to the specialist high consequence infectious disease centre at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, where they are receiving appropriate care.

As a precautionary measure, PHE experts are working closely with NHS colleagues to implement rapid infection control procedures, including contacting people who might have been in close contact with the individual to provide information and health advice.

This includes contacting passengers who travelled in close proximity to the patient on the same flight to the UK. If passengers are not contacted, then there is no action they should take.

Dr Meera Chand, Consultant Microbiologist at Public Health England, said:

Monkeypox does not spread easily between people and the overall risk to the general public is very low. We are following up with those who have had close contact with the patient to offer advice and to monitor them as necessary.

PHE and the NHS have well established and robust infection control procedures for dealing with cases of imported infectious disease and these will be strictly followed to minimise the risk of transmission.

This is not the first time that the virus has been detected in the UK. PHE reported the first UK cases of monkeypox in September 2018.

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by monkeypox virus and has been reported mainly in central and west African countries. Monkeypox, in most cases, is a mild condition which will resolve on its own and have no long-term effects on a person's health. Most people recover within a few weeks.

Initial symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills and exhaustion. A rash can develop, often beginning on the face, then spreading to other parts of the body. The rash changes and goes through different stages before finally forming a scab, which later falls off.