

# Queen Elizabeth Hospital announces three healthcare workers tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) made the following announcement today (January 25) on three healthcare workers tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19.

The first nurse tested preliminarily positive had worked in a medical ward. She had running nose, sore throat and headache on January 22 and attended Accident & Emergency Department of QEH yesterday (January 24). She underwent COVID-19 test and was preliminarily tested positive. She is now being treated under isolation and in stable condition. Her last date of duty was January 24. Her daily clinical duty was to provide general nursing care to patients. She had been wearing appropriate personal protective equipment at work in accordance with infection control guidelines. She did not perform any high-risk clinical procedures and had not been in contact with any confirmed COVID-19 infection patients. She lived in an affected building with a confirmed case, and hence the hospital would not rule out the possibility of getting infected in the community.

The second nurse tested preliminarily positive had worked in the isolation ward. She had headache and sore throat on January 23 and hence attended Accident & Emergency Department of QEH yesterday. She underwent COVID-19 test and was preliminarily tested positive. She is now being treated under isolation and in stable condition. Her last date of duty was January 23. Her daily clinical duties included taking care of COVID-19 confirmed patients and she had been wearing appropriate personal protective equipment at work in accordance with infection control guidelines. She did not perform any high-risk clinical procedures.

The third nurse tested preliminarily positive had worked in a medical ward. He had symptoms of cough and sore throat on January 22 and attended Accident & Emergency Department of Ruttonjee Hospital yesterday. He underwent COVID-19 test and was preliminarily tested positive. He is now being treated under isolation and in stable condition. The nurse concerned had worked in the isolation ward from December 7 last year to January 17 this year. His daily clinical duties included taking care of COVID-19 confirmed patients and he had been wearing appropriate personal protective equipment at work in accordance with infection control guidelines. He did not perform any high-risk clinical procedures. He contacted with the second nurse at work for a short period of time on January 13 and both of them wore appropriate personal protective equipment. He was then transferred back to a medical ward on January 18. His last date of duty was January 22. His daily clinical duty was to provide general nursing care to patients. He did not perform any high-risk

clinical procedures and had not been in contact with any confirmed COVID-19 infection patients.

After reviewing the case information, the hospital infection control team and the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) did not have sufficient evidence to confirm that there's epidemiological linkage between the three nurses who were tested preliminary positive. The infection control team conducted contact tracing. 10 healthcare workers are classified as close contact and quarantine will be arranged. They have all undergone COVID-19 tests while seven of them are tested negative and the remaining results are pending. As the three nurses had been wearing appropriate personal protective equipment during work, no patient is classified as close contact. As a precautionary measure, the hospital has arranged viral tests for the staff and patients of wards concerned. 157 staff members and 107 patients have been tested with negative results.

The hospital has arranged thorough cleaning and disinfection for the workplace concerned, staff pantry and changing rooms. As a precautionary measure, the hospital has closed three medical wards temporarily including the one which was with staff positive case earlier. The measure would further worsen the shortage of bed provision. Access block waiting time will be lengthened. Hence, the hospital appeals the public to avoid attending QEH Accident and Emergency Department in order to alleviate the heavy service load. Public understanding is highly appreciated.

As there are three staff members confirmed positive of COVID-19 and QEH is located near the "restricted area" near Yau Ma Tei and Jordan district where the staff would be around for work and reside, after assessing the risk, the hospital will offer tests to all staff starting from tomorrow (January 26). QEH will continue to closely monitor the health of related staff and patients and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.