

Queen Elizabeth Hospital update on cluster of COVID-19 suspected of nosocomial infection

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding a cluster of COVID-19 suspected of nosocomial infection announced earlier (July 14 and 15), Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) spokesperson provided the following updates today (July 16):

QEH has continued to follow up a cluster of COVID-19 suspected of nosocomial infection reported earlier. The COVID-19 test results were negative for all the 62 healthcare workers who had contacted with the three confirmed patients.

On the other hand, the hospital was informed on July 15 evening that a supporting staff who works at the Non-Emergency Ambulance Transfer Service (NEATS) coordination centre was preliminarily confirmed with COVID-19 infection.

The staff concerned was off duty on July 11 and 12, and resumed duty on July 13. His duties on that day included clerical work and business transport services for colleagues. The staff worn a surgical mask during his whole duty. His work does not require any contact with patients, and he did not have any contact with patients. The staff attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Prince of Wales Hospital due to fever, headache and cough after his duty on July 13. Today he was confirmed positive of COVID-19 (case number 1635). The staff has not returned to work after July 13 and is now under treatment.

Regarding the case, the hospital will maintain close communication with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). The hospital investigation shows that the staff concerned did not have any close contact or other contact at his workplace. He had not been to the ward where the cluster of COVID-19 cases were reported. The mode of transmission is to be confirmed by CHP. The hospital will provide all necessary assistance to the department staff, and has already cleansed and disinfected the workplace and the vehicle used by the staff concerned. To further allay staff's concern, the hospital will arrange tests for the duty staff who worked on the same day. The hospital will maintain close communication with the frontline staff, and as usual practice, provides all appropriate personal protective equipment based on the working needs of staff.

The hospital NEATS mainly provides point-to-point patients transfer service for admissions, inter-hospital transfers, discharges from hospitals and attending Specialist-outpatient follow-up appointments. The service does not cover suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19. All patients must have

temperature check before boarding the vehicles. The hospital reiterates that the routine cleansing of vehicles is performed in accordance with prevailing infection control guidelines.