



Ebola Virus Disease: Current Risk Assessment at Immigration Removal Centres

There is currently an outbreak of Ebola virus disease occurring in West Africa, with widespread transmission continuing in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is the largest ever known outbreak of this disease, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in August 2014. Cases have also occurred in Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Spain, the UK and the US.

There remains an expectation that a handful of further cases may occur in the UK in the coming months. Thus, although the risk of imported cases remains low, it is possible that further persons infected in Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone could arrive in the UK while incubating the disease (the incubation period is 2-21 days) and develop symptoms after their return.

While a fever in persons coming from Ebola transmission areas is more likely to be caused by a common infection, such as malaria or typhoid fever, healthcare staff in immigration removal centres should remain vigilant for those who have recently (within the past 21 days) come from areas affected by this outbreak and subsequently become unwell.

Screening for symptoms of the disease has been introduced at airports in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia for exiting passengers. For incoming passengers from affected areas screening has been introduced at the main airports in England, the Eurostar terminal at St Pancras and at some seaports in response to shipping movements. Remote (over the phone) screening arrangements are in place for people arriving from Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone at other ports of entry in England.

The above measures are designed to further reduce the already limited risk of importation of cases to this country.

Only a small number of new detainees at immigration removal centres (IRCs) will have arrived from Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone within the preceding 21 days, however those that have may need to undergo a brief risk assessment to determine if they might be at risk of Ebola infection. The following algorithm has been developed to assist IRC healthcare staff carrying out the initial health assessment of detainees.

For further information about the Ebola outbreak, please see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/ebola-virus-government-response>

Further information about the Ebola virus outbreak is available:

- all clinical management guidance is published on www.gov.uk and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ebola-virus-disease-clinical-management-and-guidance>
- national primary care assessment guidance algorithms are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ebola-virus-disease-managing-patients-who-require-assessment-in-primary-care>

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Algorithm to inform the initial assessment of detainees arriving at an IRC from West Africa

