



Ebola Virus Disease: Current Risk Assessment in Prisons

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 prisons should remain vigilant for those who have come from areas affected by this outbreak and subsequently become unwell.

Screening for symptoms of the disease has been introduced at airports in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone 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 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 risk of people being incarcerated in prisons in England and Wales having arrived from Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone in the preceding 21 days is very low. However, those who 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 prison healthcare staff carrying out the initial health assessment of detainees.

* For further information about the Ebola outbreak please visit the PHE website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/ebola-virus-government-response>

More specific information about the Ebola virus outbreak is also 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 a prison from West Africa

