



Infectious Diseases Policy

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Infectious Diseases Policy

Index

Infectious Diseases Policy	3
Introduction	3
1. Scope of Policy.....	4
2. Responsibilities	5
2.1 Student Responsibilities	5
2.2 Head of Student Wellbeing or Deputy Head of Wellbeing or Delegate Responsibilities	5
2.3 Associate Director of Health and Safety or delegate Responsibilities.....	6
2.4 Chief People Officer / Human Resources Responsibilities	7
2.5 Director of Brand and External Engagement, Marketing and Communications Responsibilities	7
2.6 Director of Estates & Campus Services Responsibilities	8
2.7 Executive Director of Student and Academic Services / Student and Academic Services	8
The Executive Director of Student and Academic Services / Student and Academic Services team will:	8
3. Definitions.....	8
3.1 Infectious Disease	8
3.2 Outbreak.....	9
3.3 Single Probable or Confirmed Cased	9
4. Actions in the event of an outbreak	10
4.1 Staff Working Overseas	11
5. Appendices.....	11
APPENDIX 1	11
APPENDIX 2	11

Infectious Diseases Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance in the event of a single confirmed case or a suspected outbreak of an infectious (notifiable) disease within the University community.

Although major outbreaks are rare the University must consider known disease risks and plan to manage and contain the spread of an infectious disease to reduce the risk posed to staff, students, and visitors.

The policy outlines what action is taken, by whom, and the key lines of communication needed to ensure a timely, sensitive and professional response. The details within this policy should not be restrictive, as each event will differ. Given the number of ways the University may be informed of an infectious disease case and the range of potential exposure, the scope of the University's response and key staff involved may vary.

In order for the University to comply with its wider health and safety obligations, the University has a duty to incorporate general awareness raising of infectious and notifiable diseases as part of health promotion activities for staff and students at relevant times in the academic year. The University shall utilise the various resources available to ensure information provided is reflective of any national, regional trends in relevant diseases. The University will continue to proactively target students to help reduce the incidence of some infectious diseases. This happens via student communications at enrollment, student resident guidance and Student Information on NEST.

Where an infectious disease case is confirmed, the University's main role will involve working closely with external health agencies, most notably the local Health Protection Team (HPT) or Public Health England (PHE) to support them with their strategic objective of containing of an infectious disease. Through working under the direction of PHE or similar, the University strives to fulfil its own duty of care towards staff, students and visitors.

Separate to this, the University has distinct responsibilities under the Health and Safety and Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to minimise the spread of infectious disease. Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) the University shall report any work-related infectious diseases when they occur amongst employees.

1. Scope of Policy

Local Health Protection Team (HPT):

South London HPT (Health Protection Teams) are essentially the successor to what used to be the Public Health England (PHE) local health protection function.

UK Health Security Agency
5th Floor, 10 South Colonnade
London
E14 4PU

Email london.region@ukhsa.gov.uk

Telephone 0300 303 0450

Urgent out-of-hours advice for health professionals: 0300 303 0450

Email phe.london.region@nhs.net for notification and enquiries of infectious diseases that contain Patient Identifiable Information.

The detail within this policy outlines the likely roles and responsibilities in relation to infectious diseases, including managing an outbreak and supporting and communicating with staff and students so that the University can effectively manage such an incident.

In practice the University will work to fulfil the following responsibilities:

- Work in conjunction with and on the advice of HPT/ PHE to inform staff and students as soon as possible following notification of a confirmed case or suspected outbreak of an infectious disease.
- Ensure sufficient information is made available to everyone who is deemed 'at risk' i.e. any members of staff/ students or visitors that have been in close contact or proximity to the infected person within the period prior to diagnosis. (Note the guidance shall vary by disease, and the University shall work under the advice provided by HPT/PHE).
- Assist HPT/PHE by providing as detailed information as possible in relation to a suspected case/ outbreak by:
 - Completing contact tracing for staff, students, or visitors.
 - Providing a central location as a base for external health agencies, this may include for the administration of prophylactic treatment.
 - Disseminating information to relevant individuals at the University.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Student Responsibilities

- If you are eligible to do so, it is strongly recommended that you register with a GP within the first few weeks of arriving in the UK. This will enable your GP to process your registration and provide you with an NHS number in good time. You are required to have an NHS number to obtain hospital treatment (non-emergency) and if you need to be referred to a specialist clinician.
- All students are required to report any infectious notifiable diseases that are listed in Appendix A to URStudenthealth@roehampton.ac.uk. This applies to Resident and Non-resident students. This should be reported within 24 hours of a confirmed case. Supporting information for Students will be kept updated on NEST following any revisions of this policy.
- Students must cooperate with University staff supporting their case and adhere to direction from external agencies e.g. HSE, PHE, HPT.
- Students must adhere fully to all actions that are advised by the University and external agencies.

2.2 Head of Student Wellbeing or Deputy Head of Wellbeing or Delegate Responsibilities

The Head of Student Wellbeing, or Deputy Head of Wellbeing or Delegate will:

- Liaise with the University Health and Safety office and the Student Medical Centre as part of a working group to deal with confirmed cases. Escalate to Silver and Gold Emergency Response Teams where appropriate.
- In collaboration with Associate Director of Health and Safety, routinely monitor the list of incoming students that have been identified as having not fully meeting UKVI requirements or requiring follow up. e.g. A student with Abnormal TB Test result, including e.g. Xray result / referral letter as part of UKVI requirements.

Subsequently,

- Send a follow-up email to relevant students advising the importance of registering with the Student Medical Centre or GP practice.
- Keep records of all correspondence with students when advising on Infectious Diseases.
- Contact the relevant students and, when instructed by PHE/ HPT their close contacts, who are also members of the University community.
- To liaise regularly with Public Health England / Local Health Protection Team for guidance on the steps required. These are specific to each case and the actions required will be led by PHE/ Local HPT.

- Establishing nature, location and numbers of students involved shall be captured as soon as practicable. This means gathering information such as dates the student attended campus, hours in total, room number references, numbers of student in class/ cohort. These criteria will be set (per case) by PHE/ Local HPT.
- Provide Student support for individual cases and for any other students affected.
- Assist with contact tracing, as required by PHE/ Local HPT.
- To ensure any concerned students are advised and supported appropriately.

2.3 Associate Director of Health and Safety or delegate Responsibilities

The Associate Director of Health and Safety or delegate will:

- Liaise with the Student Support Services Team and the Student Medical Centre as part of a working group to deal with confirmed cases. Escalate to Silver and Gold Emergency Response Teams where appropriate.
- Where necessary, after ensuring the case has been medically confirmed, report relevant infectious diseases to the relevant authorities. e.g. TB or Typhoid to UKSA or e.g. Salmonella to Wandsworth/ Merton (Local Health Protection Team). This is summarized in Appendix 2.
- Notify the Chief People Officer (Also a member of UEB) of all reports e.g. TB case to PHE/South London Health Protection team.
- Work with the Gold/Silver Team to contact UKSA if the University receives confirmation of a confirmed case (via a student) before the UKSA makes contact.
- In collaboration with Wellbeing, monitor the list of incoming students that have been identified as having any abnormal test result, including e.g. Xray result / referral letter as part of UKVI requirements.
- Work with the HR partner to support a staff member (if affected) and their relevant Dean
- Work with Internal and external Communications to consider the wider impact and prepare appropriate communications for staff and students within 24 hours of the initial notification.
- Health and Safety Team files RIDDOR report with the Enforcing Authority HSE.
- Complete a post incident review and prepare a procedural report for the University's Health, Safety & Welfare Committee.
- Advise the Chief Operating Officer to include infectious disease response scenario when planning Emergency management and Business Continuity exercises.

2.4 Chief People Officer / Human Resources Responsibilities

The Chief People Officer / Human Resources office will:

- Arrange for support to be provided to affected staff, if required.
- Monitor and review engagement with support and assistance, and assess on an ongoing basis, if additional support and assistance could be provided.
- Stay informed in the event that a mass communication to staff is required.
- Update the Chief Operating Officer/Vice-Chancellor as required.
- Notify the University's occupational health partner.
- Notify and work with the University's recognized trade unions, the UCU and the GMB.

2.5 Director of Brand and External Engagement, Marketing and Communications Responsibilities

The Director of Brand and External Engagement, Marketing and Communications will:

- Lead on internal and external communications for the Gold Team if required and to delegate a Communications lead on the Silver team, if required.
- Liaise with the Associate Director of Health and Safety and Public Health England to agree and issue any media statements or press releases, where required.
- Provide staff with guidance on handling enquiries from students and families. Internal communications may include, but are not limited to, the following information:
 - Direct communication/advice issued by PHE
 - Ensure that the Internal Communications team provide support tailoring factual and reassuring communications to be sent to specific groups/all staff and students, in consultation with PHE.

2.6 Director of Estates & Campus Services Responsibilities

The Director of Estates & Campus Services will:

- Ensure that Campus Safety & Security know how and when to escalate any first aid call outs to staff or students that are presenting with symptoms relating to infectious diseases listed in Appendix A.
- Prioritise actions from the HPT/PHE relating to the Estate e.g.:
 - To make building plans available or any aspect of the building infrastructure e.g. ventilation risk assessments and schematics, to assist with identifying the likely spread of disease and close contacts where necessary.
 - To ensure Campus Safety & Security provide Salto Reports for tracing access and egress of relevant staff / students that may be linked to the identified case.
 - If necessary, initial infection control measures will be implemented by Accommodation / Estates, including removing any identified rooms from use and instructing an appropriate cleaning protocol.

2.7 Executive Director of Student and Academic Services / Student and Academic Services

The Executive Director of Student and Academic Services / Student and Academic Services team will:

- Ensure the Student Immigration Team keep a record of all cases/suspected cases of incoming students that have been identified as having any Abnormal TB Test result, including Xray result / referral letter as part of UKVI requirements.
- Ensure that the Mitigating Circumstances Team are trained on the importance of reporting cases of infectious (notifiable) diseases in Appendix A to UR Student Health URStudentHealth@roehampton.ac.uk.
- Report to URStudentHealth@roehampton.ac.uk if there is an individual case and escalate to Associate Director or Health & Safety or the Head of Student Wellbeing if several cases are being reported.

3. Definitions

3.1 Infectious Disease

Also known as a communicable disease. Any disease, transmissible by infection or contagion which can spread from one person to another via direct or indirect contact. This policy covers those listed in Appendix 1: Current List of Notifiable Infectious Diseases Link: [Notifiable diseases and how to report them - GOV.UK](#)

The spread can be by varying routes and varying degrees of infectivity. Vaccinations programmes exist for some but not all infectious diseases.

The most serious infectious diseases are notifiable under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Act 1988.

Medical practitioners are responsible for notifying the diagnosis (confirmed) or suspected (probable) diagnosis of a notifiable infectious disease. Examples include TB, E-Coli, Meningococcal Disease. See Appendix 1 for a full list.

Workplace Notifiable Disease must be linked to a work process or activity that leads to exposure to listed physical agents, substances, biological agents and conditions caused by the physical demands of work e.g. Laboratory Research work.

After diagnosis of a notifiable disease, the medical practitioner is obliged to notify the UKSA.

3.2 Outbreak

An outbreak will be determined by PHE / Local HPT. E.g. Two or more confirmed cases of the same infectious disease within a 1–2-week timeframe, dependent on the illness and where common links can be identified.

The classification of an outbreak can be broader for non-notifiable diseases and can be defined as:

- i. An incident in which several people experiencing a similar illness are linked by location and time of incidence.
- ii. The occurrence of a contagious illness/disease in excess of what would normally be expected in a defined community or geographical area.
- iii. A suspected or actual event involving microbial or chemical contamination of food / water.

3.3 Single Probable or Confirmed Case

In all cases of an infectious disease, as per Appendix 1, the University will liaise closely with HPT/ PHE. Where individuals have specific responsibilities, these are set out below. All other departments or individuals notified at this stage are done so for information, further input or assistance may be required depending on each case.

HPT/PHE will inform the VC/Chief Operating Officer of a probable or confirmed case and advise on the likelihood of contagion. HPT/PHE will take the lead on contact tracing and instructing those identified to take appropriate action, including contacting their GP and additional preventative measures.

PHE shall also provide advice on tailoring staff and student communications to the infectious disease that has occurred.

4. Actions in the event of an outbreak

In the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease being declared, PHE shall inform the University through a formal line or contact. This may be the Vice Chancellor, or the Chief Operating Officer or even general enquiries such as NEST.

It is understood that the UKHSA keeps an internal directory of Institutional Points of Contact (IPoCs) for organisations such as Universities. From previous correspondence this may also be the Head of Student Wellbeing Services or the Associate Director of Health and Safety. These contact details are shared with UKSA every periodic review of this policy.

Any communications will be escalated immediately to the Chief Operations Officer (COO).

PHE will identify priority clinical actions which will inform the University's specific outbreak management plan. This will necessitate the Gold and Silver Emergency Response Teams being initiated, as per the University's Emergency Response Plan.

The Chief People Officer (Also a member of UEB) will be made aware of all reports, including one off TB cases to PHE/ South London Health Protection team (For Information only).

Once the PHE/South London Health Protection team escalate or require the University to act, the Gold team will be informed (via the Chief People Officer) by the Associate Director of Health and Safety or the Head of Student Wellbeing.

PHE is responsible for setting out the strategy for containment, outlining expectations to the University and any required actions. PHE will alert A&E Departments and acute treatment services as appropriate.

Ensure all other key contacts within the University are notified to convene the Gold and Silver Emergency Response Teams as required, considering the inclusion of and/or their nominees.

- To agree appropriate actions to be carried out by the University, track any actions issued and request updates accordingly. This will form the Outbreak Management Plan.
- To ensure all actions to be carried out by PHE are known to the University and to request updates accordingly.
- Consider the appropriateness and content of any mass communication to be sent to staff and students, including press statements.
- To ensure the University's Executive Board is updated.
- To liaise with the Student Medical Centre to oversee efforts to set up prophylaxis distribution, if appropriate.
- To consider if it's appropriate to inform other Universities or institutions of the outbreak.

4.1 Staff Working Overseas

Staff working overseas who have been diagnosed with an infectious disease shall contact the Human Resources Office as soon as possible in line with the usual Sickness Absence policy. The HR Partner will then inform Health and Safety who will escalate to the local HPT/PHE for advice as required.

5. Appendices

APPENDIX 1

- a. Current List of Notifiable Infectious Diseases Link: [Notifiable diseases and how to report them - GOV.UK](#)
- b. Please refer to Infectious Diseases website for live information. [Infectious diseases: detailed information - GOV.UK](#)

APPENDIX 2

In the UK, the legal duty to notify the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) of a notifiable disease generally sits with the registered medical practitioner (doctor) who suspects or diagnoses the disease, not with the university.

However, there is an established relationship between the University and the UKSA and it is in the best interest of the University, especially when a resident student is affected, that we initiate the process as soon as we are made aware of a positive case or an infectious disease.

Examples of Infectious Diseases

Infectious Disease	Health Authority
Notifiable diseases and how to report them - GOV.UK	
TB	UKSA
Typhoid	UKSA
Salmonella	Wandsworth/ Merton (Local Health Protection Team).