**National toolkit for the managing cases and outbreaks of coronavirus in Schools**

This toolkit, agreed by Public Health Scotland and COSLA, details the measures that should be taken in response to a single test positive case or an outbreak of Coronavirus involving education staff and children. A COVID-19 outbreak is defined in the guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 as two or more linked cases of a disease within a specific setting over a period of 14 days.

This toolkit is intended to ensure a consistent approach is taken to the management of cases or outbreaks across Scotland, whilst acknowledging local practices will vary to meet local needs and situations, and that each case or outbreak will have specific factors which will be considered by the Health Protection Team in conjunction with Local Authorities, when determining the best course of action.

Information is included on how the response to a suspected or actual Coronavirus outbreak should be managed and the support available.

Local Health Protection Teams (HPT) within the NHS with lead the management of the incident or outbreak will be involved in providing advice and support to Local Authority Chief Executives, Directors of Education, Head Teachers and Establishment Managers.

**Relevant publications**

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020   
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020-version-3/>

COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings   
<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): getting tested in Scotland <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/arrange-a-test/>

Sector Advice Card: Schools <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2020/08/scottish-covid-19-workbook-2020/documents/covid-19-sector-advice-card/covid-19-sector-advice-card/govscot%3Adocument/covid-19-sector-advice-card.pdf>

Useful links   
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice>

**Coronavirus information**

**What is coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?**

The disease COVID-19 is caused by a new strain of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that was first identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. Symptoms range from mild to moderate illness to pneumonia or severe acute respiratory infection requiring hospital care. Death is an important outcome most commonly experienced in the elderly. COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 12 March 2020.

**What are the typical signs and symptoms of COVID-19?**

The key COVID symptoms are:

* new continuous cough and/or
* fever/high temperature and/or
* loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

For most people, the symptoms of COVID-19 will be mild. Some people, however, will have more serious symptoms, including pneumonia or difficulty breathing, which might require admission to hospital.

**How is coronavirus spread?**

There are two routes by which COVID-19 can be spread:

• Directly: from close contact with an infected person (within 2 metres) where respiratory secretions can enter the eyes, mouth, nose or airways. This risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

• Indirectly: by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching own mouth, nose or eyes. Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.

**How can spread be prevented?**

A range of public health measures are used in non-health care settings to try and control transmission of SARS-CoV-2. These include physical distancing, improved personal hygiene – regular handwashing, symptom vigilance, face coverings, and increased environmental cleaning. The Test and Protect programme, which includes contact tracing, has being implemented to maintain a sustained reduction in new cases, outbreaks and to reduce transmission.

Staff, parents, visitors or children **should not** enter the school if they:

* have developed COVID-19 symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or
* are from the same household as someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or
* have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19
* returned from a non-exempt country and need to complete 14 days of quarantine.

A close contact is someone who has been physically close enough to the confirmed case for a long enough period of time, that they may have had the virus transmitted to them. Close contacts will be informed of this by the Test and Protect contact tracing team.

It is important to note that physical distancing is a key intervention throughout the course of the school day and relates to staff break and lunch areas as well as car-sharing and transport. Face coverings should be used when 2m cannot be maintained between staff and between staff and pupils. Parents must also be reminded about ensuring physical distancing at the school gates.

The local HPT will be notified of any positive cases in complex settings (e.g. schools, nurseries) and will be in touch to offer support and advice to the establishment. Contact details for local HPTs can be found in annex E of this document.

* **Note** in relation to schools being informed about test results: Schools have a legitimate reason to request information from individuals (parents/carers, pupils or staff) however, the provision of healthcare information to schools is voluntary. Legal advice is being sought, however, indications are that local and/or national public health departments can provide advice to schools to protect individual pupils or the wider school community. The organisations’ sharing the information would be required to ensure they have, or put in place, data sharing agreement/s with the necessary protections and paperwork to ensure that only those with a legitimate interest can see that info and only for the specified purpose.

A “bespoke” set of mitigations applies in schools, in particular with regards to grouping and physical distancing (esp. in secondary schools), the use of face coverings, testing access and good environmental and hand hygiene. The recommendations in the schools guidance should form the basis for initial discussions between local HPTs and schools.

**What to do if someone develops symptoms**

**Section A:** Staff member with symptoms of COVID-19 (checklist Annex B)

Staff member with symptoms of COVID-19

* New continuous cough and/or
* Fever/high temperature and/or
* Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste.

Staff member unwell with **other** respiratory symptoms e.g. runny nose, sneezing. Then:

* Follow usual policy for sickness at school (stay home until recovered)
* No need for COVID testing unless develops symptoms of COVID-19
* Ensure good hand & respiratory hygiene

.

If at work, staff member **goes home** as soon as possible.

* Minimise contact with others (anyone looking after them should stay 2m away. If this is not possible, they should wear appropriate PPE.)
* Avoid public transport if possible and wear a mask or face covering if it can’t be avoided

If at home, staff member must remain at home and follow school’s absence procedures.

Immediate area (e.g. desk) occupied by staff member is **cleaned** using appropriate PPE.

Double bag any cleaning waste and PPE and store securely for 72 hours before disposal.

The staff member can be referred for testing via the Employer portal (tbc)

Alternatively, they can arrange a test online at www.nhsinform.scot or by calling 0800 028 2816.

Staff member and household should remain isolating at home while waiting for the test result.

**Positive result**

**Negative result**

Staff member must **isolate** for 10 days. Household must isolate for 14 days.

The staff member must inform their Headteacher.

School should inform the HPT and local authority as soon as possible

School arranges cleaning of affected areas.

Staff member can return to work provided they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

The negative test result should be shown to the school/Local Authority (see note on page 3).

**The Test and Protect contact tracing team** will be in touch with the staff member to identify any potential contacts.

The HPT will be informed of the result and will contact the school/Local Authority to follow up school contacts and to provide further advice.

Really useful documents.

**Section B:** Child with symptoms of COVID-19 at school (checklist Annex C)

Child with **other** respiratory symptoms e.g. blocked/runny nose, sneezing. Then:

* Follow standard school illness policy.
* If child is too unwell to be at school, then they should stay at home.
* No need for COVID testing unless develops one or more symptoms of COVID-19
* Ensure good hand & respiratory hygiene

.

Child (and siblings) can return to school provided they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours. The negative test result should be shown to the school (see note on page 3).

If the child is not well enough to return to school then the normal procedure for illness should be followed.

Child must **isolate** for 10 days.

Household must isolate for 14 days

School should inform the HPT and local authority as soon as possible.

School arranges cleaning of affected areas.

Parents/carers contacted and asked to collect child as soon as possible.   
Try to avoid the pupil using public transport and if not possible, then ensure face coverings are worn.

Siblings/other members of the household should also be collected and taken home, as all members of the household should now stay at home and isolate until the test result for the child who is unwell is received.

Parents/carers arrange a test for the symptomatic child online at www.nhsinform.scot or call 0800 028 2816 (if online access not possible).

Child and household should remain isolating at home while waiting for the test result.

Parent/carer should notify the school of the result when they receive it.

**The Test and Protect contact tracing team** will be in touch to identify any potential close contacts.

The HPT will be informed of the result and will contact the school to follow up school contacts and to provide further advice. However in the meantime the school should inform HPT of the case.

Child is removed from contact with others and isolated somewhere safe and at least 2 metres away from other people. Staff looking after the child who cannot maintain 2m distancing should wear a mask; or gloves, apron and a fluid resistant surgical mask if close care required.

**Negative**

**Positive**

Immediate area (e.g. desk) occupied by child is **cleaned** using appropriate PPE

Double bag any cleaning waste and PPE and store securely for 72 hours before disposal.

Child with symptoms of COVID-19

* New continuous cough and/or
* Fever/high temperature and/or
* Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste.

**Section C**: Child who does not attend school/reports an absence (checklist Annex D)

If absence due to household member with COVID-19 symptoms, school pupil should self-isolate as per NHS inform advice. They should remain in isolation for at least 14 days if household member’s test is positive, even if they remain without symptoms and even if the pupil is tested and tests negative.

If the household member’s test is negative the pupil can return to school if they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours (and other conditions do not apply).

Results should be shared with the school (see note on page 3).

School pupil registered as absent from school

Call parent/carer to confirm reason for absence

Advise parents/carers to arrange a test for the child online at www.nhsinform.scot or call 0800 028 2816, if online access is not possible.

Child and household should remain isolating at home while waiting for the test result.

Parent/carer should notify the school of the result when they receive it (subject to legal advice)

Child can return to school provided they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours and other conditions do not apply, (see below).

If the child is not well enough to return to school then the normal procedure for illness should be followed.

The negative test result should be shown to the school (see note on page 3).

No need for any action by school until test result available. However, school should record absence on SEEMiS.

If an increase in the background rate of absence due to suspected cases of COVID-19, HPT **should** also be informed (see annex D)

Usual cleaning policies should be followed.

**Negative**

If absence due to COVID-19 symptoms:

* New continuous cough and/or
* Fever/high temperature and/or
* Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste.

Child must **isolate** for 10 days.

Household must isolate for 14 days.

School should inform the HPT and local authority as soon as possible.

School arranges cleaning of affected areas.

**Positive**

**Section D:** Actions following results of test

If a staff member, child or young person **tests negative** they can return to school provided (1) they are well enough (according to the school’s sickness policy), (2) have not had a fever for 48 hours (without the use of antipyrexials, e.g. paracetamol) and (3) they have not been identified as a close contact of a positive case, and (4) are not undergoing quarantine from travel abroad to a non-exempt country.

If a staff member, child or young person **tests positive** they will be required to isolate at home for 10 days. Their household contacts must isolate for 14 days. Other close contacts will be identified via the Test and Protect process and will be contacted by the contact tracing service for this. The HPT will be informed of any positive result in a child or staff member **after** the contact tracing service has identified where the positive cases work or attend school.

As this process can take time the school may be informed of the positive result before the HPT is aware. The school/Local Authority must contact HPT if they are informed about a positive result (contact details are contained at annex E).

Schools/Local Authorities should inform the HPT of:

* all confirmed cases of COVID-19 as they arise
* any suspicion of a cluster of cases of COVID-19 in the school of either suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19
* an increase in the background rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 or other organism, e.g. norovirus (this does not include absence rate due to individuals shielding or self-isolating as contacts of cases).
* if there is a general increase in respiratory illness in the school – whilst this may be due to other infections such as influenza - schools should be alert to the possibility this could be due to COVID-19.

Schools/Local Authorities **do not** need to inform HPT of single suspected cases. However should follow appropriate reporting processes to their local authority.

The HPT will provide support and advice to the school in the event of a test positive case or an outbreak. When the situation requires it, the HPT will form an Incident Management Team to lead and manage the response to the situation.

Health Protection Teams and local authorities will work together on any public communications around cases, contact tracing or outbreaks.

**Annex A: Possible COVID-19 scenarios in schools (or similar) educational settings (FAQs)**

**If a positive case of COVID-19 is identified in the school, do shielded staff members or vulnerable groups need to go back into self-isolation?**

If there is a positive case in the school of COVID-19, there will be a risk assessment by the local Health Protection Team to identify any close contacts of the case (whether shielded or vulnerable or not) , risk to others and to advise if anyone needs to stay off school. The health protection team will also advise the school if any shielded or vulnerable people need to stay off school. Similarly, if there is an outbreak in the school, the health protection team will review the situation and assess if it is still safe for shielded/vulnerable staff or children to stay at school.

**If cross regional lockdowns are put in place, for example a lockdown in Midlothian, would staff who work in schools in Edinburgh but live in Midlothian still be able to attend their school to work?**

Yes, as long as they have no symptoms or have not been identified as close contacts. School staff are keyworkers and so will be able to attend for work even if the region they live in is in lockdown. However, they should take extra precautions when going outside in the region they live in (e.g. to shops) and closely follow the guidance by avoiding contact with other people outside their household, washing their hands regularly and adhering to physical distancing. They should also continue to follow the advice that if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 they should stay at home, self-isolate and get tested.

**One positive case is identified in a high school and one case in a feeder primary school**

A risk assessment will be undertaken by the health protection team to determine if there is any link between the cases in the high school and feeder primary school. The risk assessment will consider movement of staff and pupils between the schools to determine the possible risk of spread of infection. Based on this risk assessment, the appropriate actions required to manage the situation will be determined, including infection control measures (such as cleaning) and whether any staff, pupils or classes should to be advised to stay at home. The health protection team will consider whether an incident management team (IMT) should be formed to co-ordinate the response.

**If a staff member or pupil (or their guardian/parent) refuses testing or declines to share their test result with the head teacher?**

A discussion should be attempted to advise of the benefits of testing when symptoms arise, both for themselves and the wider community to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. If they still refuse, they need to be treated as if they are positive for COVID-19 i.e, they should be advised to stay off school and stay at home for at least 10 days, and the people they live with should also be advised to self-isolate for 14 days. If they refuse to listen to this advice and continue to try to come to school, the school should notify their local authority and get in touch with the Health Protection Team.

**A staff member has COVID-19 symptoms and tests negative**

If a staff member or pupil has COVID-19 symptoms but tests negative, this should not be used as reassurance that the individual concerned does not have COVID-19. The test is evidence of viral presence only at the time it was taken. They may even have another virus or infection causing their illness and so should stay off school until they are well and at least 48 hours fever-free (without the use of antipyrexials, e.g. paracetamol). If they remain concerned about COVID-19, or are more unwell, they should contact NHS 24 (111) for further advice, and a clinical assessment if needed. If there are urgent concerns they should contact 999 in an emergency as usual.

**Increase in pupils/staff reporting symptoms of COVID-19**

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should be advised to self-isolate and get tested. Their household members should also be advised to self-isolate at home until the test result is available. If the school is concerned about a number of staff/pupils going off with symptoms of COVID-19, this should be escalated to the local education authority who will involve the Health Protection Team to further assess this situation and decide on next steps to be taken. The school will be involved in these discussions.

**A school transport operator tests positive**

If a school transport operator tests positive for COVID-19, the Health Protection Team will be involved and a risk assessment carried out to determine the risk to anyone on the bus and what infection control measures were in place between the driver and the pupils/other staff members e.g. a screen. Based on this risk assessment, the Health Protection Team will decide the appropriate actions to manage the situation, which will include asking about symptoms, infection control measures (such as environmental cleaning) and whether anyone on the bus needs to self-isolate as a precautionary measure.

**One of the catering staff tests positive for COVID-19**

The staff member will be advised to self-isolate and anyone who is identified as being a close contact of the person by the Test and Protect team (e.g. face to face contact with the positive person, or within 1 metre for longer than 1 minute or within 1-2 metres for longer than 15 min) will also be advised to self-isolate. A risk assessment will also be carried out to determine if any further actions are required and if a further review of the school premises by an environmental health officer is required.

**Pupil or staff member is contacted by Test and Protect to self-isolate as a contact**

Anyone who is contacted by the Test and Protect team to self-isolate as a contact of a case within or out with the school, should follow their advice and self-isolate for 14 days as advised. The individual should advise the head teacher at the school of the situation so that they are aware of their absence. It is important for the individual to follow the advice of the Test and Protect team to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**A pupil/staff member tests positive for COVID-19 or is advised to self-isolate but still comes to school**

Further discussions initially should be held with the individual or the parent/carer to explain the benefit of self-isolation in helping to stop COVID-19. If they still refuse to adhere to the advice the school should get in touch with the Health Protection Team.

**A positive case for COVID-19 has a sibling in another school**

The pupil who tested positive will be contacted by Test and Protect and advised to self-isolate for at least 10 days. The household members of this individual (including siblings) will also be advised to self-isolate for 14 days, and to get tested if they develop symptoms. The Health Protection Team will also be alerted and a risk assessment undertaken to determine the possible risk of spread of infection. Based on this risk assessment, the appropriate actions will be identified to manage the situation in the school with the positive case and in the school with the sibling. This may include introducing further infection control measures (such as environmental cleaning) and or tightening of COVID secure processes.

**Annex B - Checklist:** Staff member feels unwell with symptoms of COVID-19

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| --- | --- |
| **Actions to be taken** | **Complete Y/N** |
| Staff member should go home as soon as possible.  Try to avoid using public transport, but if necessary, a face covering must be worn in line with Scottish Government guidance. |  |
| Staff members arranges a test through their Local Authority/School employer portal or via NHS Inform (online at www.nhsinform.scot or call 0800 028 2816.)  Staff member will inform their manager of the result once they have received it. |  |
| The immediate area occupied by the staff member should be cleaned  Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.  All waste items (e.g. PPE, cloths) should be double bagged and stored securely for 72 hours before disposal. |  |
| Individuals who have had any contact with the staff member should wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and remain vigilant regarding developing symptoms of COVID-19. They may be identified as a close contact by the Health Protection team or Test and Protect following contact tracing investigations. |  |

**Annex C - Checklist:** Child feels unwell with symptoms of COVID-19

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| --- | --- |
| **Actions to be taken** | **Complete Y/N** |
| The affected child should be isolated somewhere safe and at least 2 metres away from other people.  If possible, the door should be closed with supervision, ventilation and use of a separate bathroom.  Any adult looking after the child should maintain 2m distancing. If this is not possible, they should wear gloves, apron and a fluid resistant surgical mask. |  |
| The child should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze, and then put the tissue in the bin. If the child can tolerate a mask or face covering then this should be worn. |  |
| Contact the Parents/carers of the child and request that they come to collect their child as soon as possible. Try to avoid public transport if possible.  Siblings/other members of the household should also be collected and taken home, as all members of the household should now stay at home and isolate.  The parent/carer should book an online test via NHS Inform immediately for the symptomatic child. Results are usually sent by text within 48 hours.  The parent/carer of the child should notify the school of the result as soon as possible. |  |
| If the affected person has mild symptoms and is **over the age of 16** they should go home as soon as possible minimising contact with others where possible. Their responsible adult should be informed they are being sent home.  If having to use public transport a face covering must be worn in line with Scottish Government advice.  They should book a test online via NHS Inform immediately. |  |
| The isolation room and immediate area (e.g. desk) occupied by the child should be cleaned.  Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.  All waste items (e.g. PPE, cloths) should be double bagged and stored securely for 72 hours before disposal. |  |
| Individuals who have had any contact with the child should wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and remain vigilant regarding developing symptoms of COVID-19.  They may be identified as a close contact by the Health Protection team or Test and Protect following contact tracing investigations. |  |

**Annex D - Checklist:** Child who does not attend school/reports an absence

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| **Actions to be taken** | **Complete Y/N** |
| Call parent/carer to enquire about reason for absence |  |
| If absent due to household member having symptoms of COVID-19, check pupil aware of self-isolation advice as per NHS inform and should not return to school until the test result of the symptomatic household member is returned.  If the test is positive, the pupil should isolate for at least 14 days as advised by the Test and Protect team and NHS inform. Even if the child is tested and is negative they must remain at home.  The pupil can return to school after the 14 days as long as they remain without symptoms. If they develop symptoms, follow actions in the next box. No testing of the pupil is required unless they themselves develop symptoms. |  |
| If absence due to COVID-19 symptoms, advise parent/carer to book an online test via NHS Inform immediately for the child (if not already done so). Results are usually sent by text within 48 hours.  The parent/carer of the child should notify the school of the result as soon as possible. |  |
| If the pupil tests positive, the pupil should isolate for at least 10 days as advised by the Test and Protect team.  School should inform the HPT and local authority as soon as possible.  School arranges environmental cleaning of affected areas on the day the pupil leaves school (don’t wait for the test result). |  |
| If the pupil tests negative, having had or still having symptoms, they can return to school once well and after they have been fever-free for 48 hours (without the use of antipyrexials, e.g. paracetamol)  If symptoms have been diarrhoea or vomiting they can return once well and 48 hours after symptoms have resolved. |  |
| If an increase in the background rate of absence due to suspected cases of COVID-19 (or anything else, e.g. norovirus) is noted, HPT **should** also be informed. If you are worried then get in touch with the HPT. |  |

**Annex E:** Key contacts for local HPTs

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Health Board** | **Telephone Number**  (Out of Hours Number) | **Team Email** |
| Ayrshire & Arran | **01292 885858**  (01563 521 133 – Crosshouse Hosp Switchboard) | [hpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:hpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk) |
| Borders | **01896 825560**  (01896 826 000 – Borders General Switchboard) | [healthprotection@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:healthprotection@borders.scot.nhs.uk) |
| Dumfries & Galloway | **01387 272 724**  (01837 246 246) | [dumf-uhb.hpt@nhs.net](mailto:dumf-uhb.hpt@nhs.net) |
| Fife | **01592 226435**  (01592 643 355 – Victoria Hospital Switchboard) | [hpt.fife@nhs.net](mailto:hpt.fife@nhs.net) |
| Forth Valley | **01786 457283 (ask for CPHM)**  (01324 566 000 – Ask for CPHM on call) | [FV-UHB.healthprotectionteamnhs.net](mailto:UHB.healthprotectionteamnhs.net) |
| Grampian | **01224 558520**  (0345 456 6000) | [grampian.healthprotection@nhs.net](mailto:grampian.healthprotection@nhs.net) |
| Greater Glasgow & Clyde | **0141 201 4917**  (0141 211 3600 – Gartnavel Switchboard) | [phpu@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:phpu@ggc.scot.nhs.uk) |
| Highland | **01463 704886**  (01463 704 000 – Raigmore Switchboard) | [hpt.highland@nhs.net](mailto:hpt.highland@nhs.net) |
| Lanarkshire | **01698 858232 / 858228**  (01236 748 748 – Monklands Switchboard) | [healthprotection@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:healthprotection@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk) |
| Lothian | **0131 4655420/**  **5422**  (0131 242 1000 – Edinburgh Royal Switchboard) | [health.protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:health.protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk) |
| Orkney | **01856 888034**  (01856 888 000 – Balfour Hospital Switchboard) | [ork-HB.publicHealth@nhs.net](mailto:ork-HB.publicHealth@nhs.net) |
| Shetland | **01595 743340**  (01595 743 000 – Gilbert Bain Switchboard) | [shet-hb.PublicHealthShetland@nhs.net](mailto:shet-hb.PublicHealthShetland@nhs.net) |
| Tayside | **01382 596976/987**  (01382 660 111 – Ninewells Switchboard) | [healthprotectionteam.tayside@nhs.net](mailto:healthprotectionteam.tayside@nhs.net) |
| Western Isles | **01851 708033**  (01851 704 704) | [wihealthprotection@nhs.net](mailto:wihealthprotection@nhs.net) |