

Situation report

Scotland has 311 confirmed cases across seven health boards in Scotland and 522 possible cases of the H1N1 flu virus. Cases have been confirmed in most areas of Scotland, although there are three main clusters: Dunoon, Paisley and West Glasgow.

Across the world there are around 28,000 cases in 74 countries - there have been no deaths from the disease in the UK.

The United Nations World Health Organisation alert on A(H1N1) has now been set at **Level Six**.

A move to level 6 is not a verdict on the severity of the virus; it does not mean that the WHO thinks the virus has become more serious. It simply means that the extent of global spread now fulfils the definition of a pandemic.

A move to level 6 means that countries need to be ready to implement pandemic plans immediately.

Where there are individual confirmed cases of Influenza A(H1N1), all contacts are being traced and treated. All members of the public have been advised to remain vigilant and follow good basic hygiene procedures.

There are no restrictions on any gatherings. The Chief Medical Officer has advised where people have concerns around a mass gathering, they should contact their local public health authority for appropriate advice.

VisitScotland staff based in Dunoon VIC have been doing a sterling job fielding calls from all over the world where a cluster of cases are being highlighted in the press and are impacting on the tourism industry in the area.

Philip Riddle, Chief Executive, VisitScotland: "We share the concerns of the tourism industry and the community of Dunoon about any potential impact on the economy. We are currently monitoring the situation and giving out a very strong message that Scotland and Dunoon are open for business and welcoming visitors as normal with the full support of the Scottish Government. We are continuing to get feedback from our own staff in the area and are working more widely with the tourism industry in Scotland to establish a sensible response both throughout the outbreak and beyond.

Key Messages

- This is a global issue - Scotland is currently one of 74 countries to have cases.
- There are no restrictions on travelling to or around Scotland.
- Scotland remains open for business and is welcoming visitors.
- There are no restrictions on any events or social gatherings.

Advice for VisitScotland staff

Staff should always follow general infection control practices and good respiratory and hand hygiene to help reduce transmission of all viruses, including swine flu.

This includes:

- Maintaining good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of virus from your hands to face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.
- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.

If you have flu-like symptoms, or if you are concerned because you think you have been in contact with someone who may have swine flu:

- Stay at home.
- [Check your symptoms](#) if possible (links to external site)
- Call the Swine Flu Information Line on **0800 1 513 513** to hear the latest advice
- Contact your **line manager** as soon as possible
- Do not go into your office/ VIC, GP surgery, or to a hospital, as you may spread the disease to others

Note for line managers - if you have a member of staff who is concerned about being in contact with someone who may have swine flu symptoms please contact your [HR Manager](#) immediately.

Our dedicated VisitScotland's Crisis Management Group (CMG) continues to monitor the situation with the next meeting planned for June 15. Their role is to focus on our plans to keep the organisation running should a pandemic affect VisitScotland employees.

Advice and guidance for customer-facing staff

Should visitors postpone their plans to travel to Scotland?

No. There are no restrictions on travelling to or around Scotland.

Scotland remains open for business and is welcoming visitors.

Foreign visitors should refer to travel guidance issued by their country's own Government. Likewise, visitors from other parts of the UK should follow official advice issued by the UK Government – which currently does not include any travel.

A move to level 6 is not a verdict on the severity of the virus; it does not mean that the WHO thinks the virus has become more serious. It simply means that the extent of global spread now fulfils the definition of a pandemic. Level six means **the virus is continually spread amongst people globally.**

Is it safe for visitors to visit areas with confirmed cases like Dunoon and Greater Glasgow and Clyde area?

Yes. Scotland remains open for business and is welcoming visitors.

Where there are individual confirmed cases of Influenza A(H1N1), all contacts are being traced and treated. However, all members of the public have been advised to remain vigilant and follow good basic hygiene procedures.

Has the flu outbreak had any impact on the number of people visiting Scotland?

There is no evidence to suggest there has been any significant impact on visitor numbers to Scotland and VisitScotland will continue to liaise with the Scottish Government and its agencies to monitor the situation.

Is it safe to attend events and gatherings?

Yes. There are no restrictions on any events or social gatherings.

Final decisions as to whether any given event goes ahead obviously lie with the organisers. However, if events or gatherings have been cancelled or postponed, this has not been in accordance with the advice of Health Protection Scotland (HPS).

The Chief Medical Officer has advised where people have concerns around a social gathering or event, contact should be made with their local public health authority who will give appropriate advice.

General

If you receive any queries from visitors on travelling to Scotland please refer them to Health Protection Scotland website <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/> which has up to date advice and information. An Influenza A (H1N1) information line is also available on **0800 1 513 513** and a dedicated team is available on **NHS 24** on **08454 242424**.

Government advice for businesses

If you receive any queries from businesses please refer them to the following information <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/AvianInfluenza/mexicanswiuneflu/mexicansw-influQandA/advice-for-businesses/Q/editmode/on/forceupdate/on>

Press enquiries

If you receive **any press enquiries** in relation to A(H1N1) please contact Alison Robb, Corporate Press Manager on 0131 472 2219. For **out of hours** press enquiries at weekends please direct any press enquiries to the press pager number on 07699 766 986.

For any further issues relating to Influenza A, or any feedback from the industry please contact emergency group member Barbara Clark on barbara.clark@visitscotland.com or call 0131 472 2212

Further useful information

NHS Q&A - <http://www.documents.hps.scot.nhs.uk/respiratory/swine-influenza/swine-influenza-case-q&as-2009-05-07.pdf>

Government information leaflet containing advice on safety and precautions etc <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/924/0080955.pdf> It has numbers to call for further advice.

VisitScotland will continue to liaise with government and its agencies to monitor the situation. We will keep you updated as and when the situation changes.