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Health Protection Team

MODEL

Communicable Disease Contingency Plan for Universities and Residential Colleges

Including: A Proactive Health Promotion Tool for New Starters

September 2025 (v.8)

University/Residential College Edition

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Revised: Sept 2025

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Revised and updated by Avril O’Gorman
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This document should be read in conjunction with the appropriate Health and Safety Policies, Guidance and Information sheets within the University/Residential College.

Introduction

This Communicable Disease Contingency Plan was first adapted in 2017 with the kind permission of the Safety, Health and Environment Manager for Glyndŵr University, Wrexham, North Wales and Health Protection Team colleagues in North Wales. The document replaced that of previous Health Protection Team Plans for dealing with Meningitis and Meningococcal Disease in Universities and Residential Colleges.

The Plan, revised in Summer 2020, outlines the actions to be taken by Universities and Residential Colleges when a student or member of their staff is suspected or confirmed to have a communicable disease and incorporates multi-agency 'Guidance on the prevention and management of meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia in higher education institutions'¹.

The contingency plan is provided in 2 parts 1) the reactive and 2) the proactive.

The main aim of the plan is to promote actions that would assist in the prevention and/or minimise the potential spread of communicable diseases within the University/Residential College and will assist the University/Residential College, the Health Protection Team, the Local Health Board and Local Authority Public Protection Service to manage individual cases and/or outbreaks.

Since Sept 2023, the plan also includes a proactive plan and resources for health promotion action with particular interest to Fresher Week and new starters. This includes a letter which can be distributed prior to starting or in Fresher Week, the encouragement of GP Registration ongoing vaccination promotion for example Meningitis prevention, as well as raising the awareness of Tuberculosis infection and screening .

1) Contingency Plan Reactive Response

Background

[The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales²](#) provides a framework for managing outbreaks of communicable disease with public health implications in Wales and includes educational settings. Diseases of public health importance must be notified to public health authorities under the Health Protection (Notification) (Wales) Regulations 2010 (as amended)³. A list of these notifiable diseases is given in [The Health Protection \(Notification\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010](#)

This Plan sets out the University/Residential College response to a single case or an outbreak of a communicable disease amongst its members of staff and/or students. It is intended to supplement the overarching processes and actions that the University/Residential College follows to manage any emergency as outlined in their Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Plan.

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This Plan aims to ensure that:

- Adequate channels of communication exist with the University/Residential College community (staff, students and the public).
- There are effective support mechanisms in place for staff members and students.
- Good links are maintained with the University/Residential College, Health Protection Team, Local Health Board and the Local Authority Public Protection Service.
- The University/Residential College has access to the most up to date and appropriate advice on the management of any communicable disease.

In the majority of cases, it is likely that the University/Residential College will be notified by either the family, Health Protection Team or the General Practitioner in relation to a suspected or confirmed case of a communicable disease with public health significance.

However, it is also possible the University/Residential College will become aware of an issue in the first instance through notification from a member of staff, a student or a member of the public.

Roles and Responsibilities

University/Residential College

If a member of staff becomes aware of one or more suspected or confirmed case(s) of communicable disease, [The Health Protection \(Notification\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010](#), then the person identified within the University/Residential College's Emergency Policy should be notified e.g. the head for student welfare/health.

This identified person will then contact the Health Protection Team (HPT) for advice ([page 5](#)). The HPT, after consultation with the Clinical Team(s) managing the case(s), will usually advise the identified person if there is indication for the HPT to convene an Incident/Outbreak Control Team. If so, the identified person in consultation with the person responsible for Operations in the University/Residential College will establish a Tactical Level Team of the following core membership (or equivalent)* in the University/Residential College to manage the situation in accordance with their Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Plan:

NOTE: Members of IMT - there may well be duplication of roles for some of the attendees (i.e., estates and accommodation). Please note it is the ROLES which are required, not a single person for each bullet point, therefore a person may cover many roles within a setting.

- Person responsible for Operations.
- Person responsible for Health and Safety.
- Person responsible for Human Resources.
- Person responsible for Estates or Designated Manager.
- Person responsible for Student Healthcare.
- Person responsible for Communications and PR.
- Director of the Students' Union (or Guild).
- Representative from Student Services.
- Person responsible for International Welfare or Designated Representative (where the student(s) concerned are from abroad).

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- Person responsible for Accommodation.
- Person responsible for Commercial Services or designated representative (where the student(s) concerned are living in a University/Residential College Hall of Residence).
- A representative from the Health Protection Team may also be invited to attend.
- A representative from the Local Health Board may also be invited to attend.
- A representative from the Local Authority Public Protection Service may also be invited to attend.

*Other members may be co-opted, as necessary. If a core member is absent from work, they may send a representative.

The Health Protection Team will (in conjunction with the University/Residential College, Local Health Board and Local Authority teams):

- Receive notifications of suspected or confirmed notifiable diseases³: [The Health Protection \(Notification\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010](#)
- Co-ordinate the multi-agency response to the incident/outbreak if required.
- Provide health protection advice for the case/incident.
- Arrange for laboratory testing of samples as needed.
- Chair the Incident management/Outbreak Control Team (if appropriate).
- Carry out case finding and contact tracing.
- Arrange for immunisation and/or prophylaxis for cases, contacts and others considered to be at risk.
- Lead on multi-agency communications including the media.

Actions

The University/Residential College will, in conjunction with the Health Protection Team and relevant others, agree and designate specific actions to relevant individuals determined by the nature of the incident.

In particular, consideration will be given to the following: -

- Establishing lines of communication between the relevant organisations.
- Practical implementation of advice given by Health Protection Team, the Local Health Board and/or the Local Authority Protection Service.
- Communication on the nature of the Incident/Outbreak to the wider University/Residential College Community (staff, students and members of the public).
- Establishment of a University/Residential College Helpline.
- A "buddy" scheme^a for unwell students both in halls and in the wider community.
- Facilitation of identification of cases and their contacts.
- Liaison with family and friends (if relevant and necessary) – although it is envisaged this will mainly be done through either Health Protection Team and/or the Local Health Board.

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^a A buddy scheme - All new students should be encouraged to look out for each other's welfare; and inform someone (a friend or a warden) if they are feeling ill, or someone else is feeling ill, so that they can be regularly monitored and prompt medical attention sought if their condition deteriorates¹.

Where the severity of the Incident or Outbreak is seen to be increasing, the person identified within the University/Residential College's Emergency Policy should escalate responsibility for

co-ordination to a more senior colleague in line with the University/Residential College's Business Continuity Plan.

Appendix 1 comprises an algorithm of actions required of the University/Residential College.

Emergency Contact Numbers

AWAre/ Health Protection Team - Public Health Wales (nhs.wales)	
Health Protection Team (HPT) All Wales Acute Response Available During Office Hours 9am to 5pm	The HPT All Wales Acute Response covers all Universities and Residential Colleges in Wales: 0300 003 0032 All Wales Acute Response email (only monitored during office hours): aware@wales.nhs.uk
Health Protection Team – outside office hours (via 'We Are Frontline' Specialist Call Answering and Handling Service)	0300 003 0032

2) The Proactive Approach

The role of Health Promotion within the College/University setting is to aim key messages to students regarding measures they can undertake to reduce the risk and occurrence of illness and disease spread amongst the College/University students so to protect themselves and others.

Some of these measures can be undertaken prior to the student starting their educational studies and should be encouraged from first contact with the student by the educational setting in promoting the welfare of the students attending their University/College.

Areas for consideration should be:

- Students' vaccination status should be reviewed prior to commencement at setting to ensure immunisation for Meningitis is up to date.
- Students should be made aware of the signs and symptoms of Meningitis.
- Students who come from countries with high-risk incidences of Tuberculosis (TB) e.g. countries in Africa, Asia, South America, Russia and Eastern Europe should be screened as part of their pre-migrant application. Applicants who apply for a UK visa for more than 6 months and are resident to a country where TB is common (incidence is over 40/100,000), should be screened for pulmonary TB. Visa applications should only be processed once the applicant has been issued with a certificate of clearance to show they're free from active pulmonary TB. This [TB Screening for the UK Leaflet](#) describes the processes and requirements for pre-entry screening.
- All students should be encouraged to register with a local GP on starting at the setting, in particular international students who may have ongoing health requirements.

a) It is advised that Universities and Colleges should on acceptance of a student to their setting share either on email or other media form, the letter of request that the student register with a GP near to their University/College for the length of their studies. Please see Appendix 2 for an example. This is particularly important to international students who may have ongoing health needs.

b) Secondly students should ensure they are up to date with the necessary vaccinations including Meningitis, further information is available here [Students - Is vaccination on your to do list? - Public Health Wales](#). A tool kit is also available on: [University vaccine communications toolkit](#), as well as the PHW tools: [Public Health Wales Asset Library \(brandkitapp.com\)](#) which you can register to use.

c) Students who require a visa application to study should be encouraged to ensure they have undertaken the TB screening process (if necessary) and should be prepared to provide their TB clearance certificate for their new GP registration and student records. Please see for further advice: [Tuberculosis tests for visa applicants: Check if you need a TB test for your visa application - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Please note students and staff need to have a tuberculosis (TB) test if all of the following are true:

- you're coming to the UK for 6 months or more
- you've lived in any of these [listed countries](#) for 6 months or more
- you were living there (or another listed country) within the last 6 months.

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d) Educational settings may also wish to provide information links to vaccination, TB and Meningitis Awareness prior to Freshers Week as seen in [Students - Is vaccination on your to do list? - Public Health Wales](#) , [Tuberculosis screening - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Public Awareness and Health Promotion - The Truth About TB](#) , and [Guidance on the prevention and management of Meningococcal Meningitis and Septicaemia in higher education institutions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

e) Many Universities and Colleges already communicate to the students through various media platforms on various health matters, sharing short messages that highlight and draw attention to specific wellbeing requirements. Public Health Wales have included a variety of messages that have already been used during various campaigns that could be used by the settings. These are available in Appendix 3 including an example letter that can be used for new starters.

Public Health Wales also provide various documents for reference and support for educational settings . This includes Exclusion periods guidance (A-Z of infections) , Health protection in children, and young persons settings, as well as tools for outbreak management. These can be found: [Guidance for childcare, preschool and educational settings - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#) at [AWARe/ Health Protection Team - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

References:

¹ Guidance on the prevention and management of meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia in higher education institutions:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningitis-and-septicaemia-prevention-and-management-in-higher-education-institutions> AND
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582511/MenACWY_HEI_Guidelines.pdf

²The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales (“The Wales Outbreak Plan”) available:
<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/the-communicable-disease-outbreak-plan-for-wales1/>

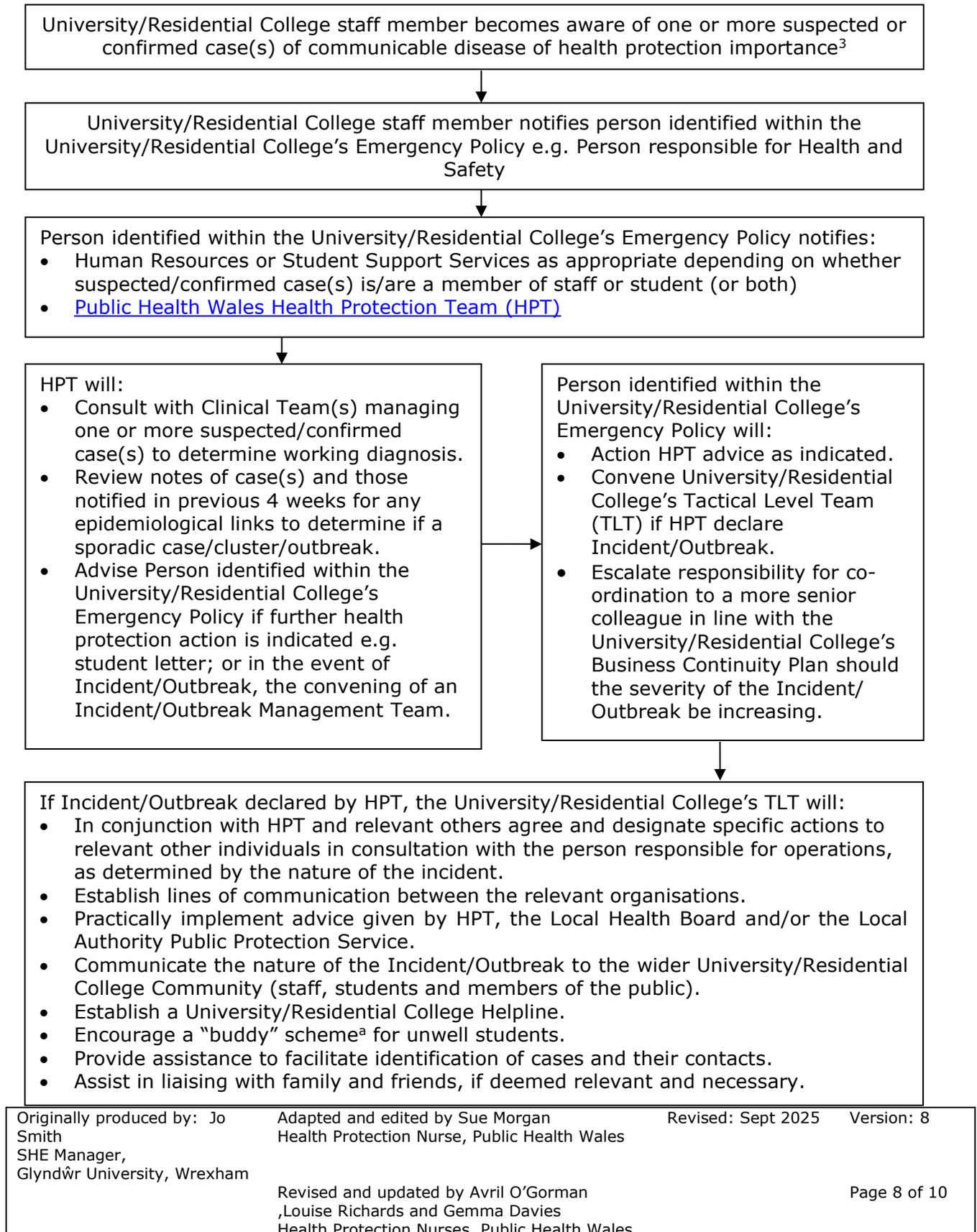
³ The Health Protection (Notification) (Wales) Regulations 2010

[The Health Protection \(Notification\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010](#) AND
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/health-protection-guidance-2010.pdf>

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Appendix 1

Algorithm of actions for University/Residential College to follow for one or more suspected/confirmed case(s) of communicable disease³:



Appendix 2

Please open the letter, amend the 'header' with the appropriate information. Either print the letter for posting or create a 'pdf' copy to attach to an email.



Uni and College new
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Appendix 3

[Measles, Mumps and Rubella \(MMR\) - Public Health Wales](#)

[Meningitis and meningococcal disease - Public Health Wales](#)

[Public Health Wales Asset Library \(brandkitapp.com\)](#)

[Students - Is vaccination on your to do list? - Public Health Wales](#)

[University vaccine communications toolkit](#)

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