Email to students – 29 January 2020

Further information about the Wuhan coronavirus infection

Dear students,

This email is to provide you with an update on the Wuhan coronavirus infection and to reassure you that we will continue to monitor the situation and maintain contact with Public Health England (PHE).

The Department of Health and Social Care and PHE are carefully monitoring the situation and advise that there are currently no confirmed cases of the Wuhan coronavirus infection in the UK or of UK citizens abroad.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against all travel to Hubei Province, and against all but essential travel to the rest of mainland China (not including Hong Kong and Macao).

We have taken made the decision to suspend all staff and student travel to China. If you are currently in China or have travel planned, and have not been contacted by the International Office, please email exchanges.studyabroad@durham.ac.uk

If you have returned from Wuhan within the last 14 days

Please contact your College so we can provide you with guidance and pastoral support.

PHE is also asking people to take simple, common-sense steps to avoid close contact with other people as much as possible, like they would with other flu viruses. This advice is highly precautionary and is intended to limit the potential spread of infection.

If you have returned from Wuhan in the last 14 days:
- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as you would with other flu viruses
- Call NHS 111 to inform them of your recent travel to the city

If you have recently travelled to China

If you have developed a fever, cough or breathlessness within 14 days of returning from travel to China:
- You should seek medical attention in the usual way via NHS 111 or your GP
- Before you visit any doctor or hospital you must telephone before you visit and let them know that you have had recent travel to China as they may need to make special arrangements to assess you
- If you attend A&E or any other hospital department, you must tell the staff as soon as you arrive that you have recently travelled to China

If you are well and have recently returned from China you do not need to take any action.

Precautionary measures
PHE advises: “Everyone with coughs or colds should always cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing, throw used tissues away and then wash your hands with soap and water to help prevent the spread of infection.”

More information on good hand hygiene is available via duo.

If you have concerns

If you are concerned about yourself or a fellow student, please contact your College. They can provide guidance and additional pastoral support.

Find out more

We will continue to keep you informed by email and update the information on our website, PHE and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are also providing regular updates via their own websites:

- PHE information for the public
- Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England statement on coronavirus
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice: China

Best wishes,

Claire O’Malley
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global)