**Message from Director of Public Health – Sunday 08 March 2020**

Further to my previous email, we have now seen 3 further confirmed cases of Coronavirus taking the total number of positive cases in Oxfordshire to 5.  Can I again emphasis that this is expected and the NHS and local organisations are well equipped to deal with this.  All cases have travel history to affected areas and Public Health England are working with the individuals concerned to identify close contacts and take necessary actions.  **If you have not been contacted by Public Health England as a close contact of the confirmed cases you do not need to take any action at this time.**

We understand this can be concerning to the public but still stress there is no need for alarm. The situation is constantly evolving and it is important that people continue to go about their daily business and keep our services to the public running as normal.

**What happens next:**

I’d like to reassure people that the risk to the general public remains low and we are working with health colleagues to do everything we can to stop the virus spreading and ensure the people of Oxfordshire are protected.  There are large number of Coronavirus tests carried out across the country and the vast majority of these tests are confirmed negative.

Current evidence indicates that most cases appear to be mild, with patients experiencing flu-like symptoms. Older residents or those with weakened immune systems or long-term conditions may experience more severe symptoms.

Anyone who is concerned, looking for up to date advice or returning from foreign travel, should go to the Public Health website [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) which is updated daily.  The website will provide you with reliable information about when you need to self-isolate and take necessary precautions if you have travelled from an affected area.

Other than this there is no need to make any changes to your normal day to day activity and living unless specifically contacted by Public Health England (PHE).

**Precautionary Measures:**

The Government and the NHS are fully prepared to deal with this virus.  You can also help yourself by taking the usual precautionary measures that would help slow the spread of almost any germs, including Coronavirus:

* Always carry tissues to catch your cough or sneeze
* Bin used tissues as quickly as possible
* Wash your hands often with warm water and soap

Kind regards

Ansaf

**Ansaf Azhar**

**Corporate Director of Public Health and Wellbeing**

Oxfordshire County Council & Cherwell District Council

Mobile: 07967228813| PA: Christine Jones | 07393001235 | christine.jones@oxfordshire.gov.uk