

Policy for the Control and Management of Meningitis

1. Introduction

Meningococcal disease is a medical emergency with rapidly evolving characteristics, therefore any staff and students showing signs and symptoms that may be suggestive of meningococcal disease should receive appropriate medical attention as soon as possible. It should be noted that the early signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease may be difficult to diagnose.

Meningococcal disease is notifiable - any clinician suspecting a case of meningitis must report it to Public Health. Meningitis and septicaemia can be caused by other bacteria and viruses and public health action is rarely required in these circumstances.

Public Health will notify the University of **all** cases of probable and confirmed meningococcal disease of students at the University irrespective of whether they relate to students in halls of residence or not.

The Public Health Protection Unit (PHPU) at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will oversee contact tracing and decide who should receive antibiotics as close contacts of the case. PHPU may contact the University Security out of hours number for support with identifying close contacts in accommodation settings. This process may already be underway by the time the University authorities are aware of the case. Public Health will provide the University with the full background and names of the individuals concerned.

Note: Antibiotic prophylaxis cannot be relied upon to prevent illness in all contacts, therefore all close contacts should be alerted to the signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease including the provision of leaflets by Public Health.

In the event of a probable or confirmed case of meningococcal disease in a student, the Public Health Protection Unit at NHS GGC supplies relevant letters for students (e.g. classmates) together with a standard leaflet to inform and raise awareness among students.

2. Purpose

This policy is in response to an outbreak of Meningitis. It should also be read in conjunction with the **Outbreak Management Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Student and Staff Communicable Diseases in appendix A** of this document.

The policy and guidance document outlines the University's protocols to prevent, identify, and manage suspected or confirmed cases of meningitis within the student and staff population. It provides a coordinated response, communication, and collaboration with PHPU

In the event of another type of outbreak Our Guidance Document and organisational responses will be the same as outlined in this policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all our enrolled students, all staff and contractors. It applies in all University premises and teaching spaces, including residential accommodation.

4. Background and Definition

Meningitis is a notifiable infectious disease requiring immediate action due to its rapid onset and potential severity. Students in shared accommodation or active social networks may be at increased risk.

5. Prevention and Health Promotion

Getting vaccinated against Meningitis

You should also check that you have received the [MenACWY vaccination](#), which protects you against several types of meningococcal disease and is recommended for students under the age of 25 (including our international student community). If you are unsure whether you have had the vaccine, we recommend contacting your GP.

Looking out for friends and acting quickly if someone becomes unwell can make a significant difference. If you are concerned about meningitis, please seek medical help immediately.

Vaccination clinics are arranged by GGC Public Health Team on campus in September and January, to offer immunisations to students who have not previously been vaccinated against Measles, Mumps and Rubella, Meningitis (ACWY) and HPV. Communication is shared by the University's Communications Team to allow students to schedule an appointment. These clinics are independent of occupational health within the University.

6. Notification Requirements

Meningococcal meningitis is a notifiable disease under the Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008. Notification to public health authorities is the responsibility of the registered medical practitioner. The University will immediately inform PHPU upon learning of a suspected or confirmed case if not already notified.

7. Disease risk management

The student population in general is the age-group most likely to contract meningitis. The University works closely with PHPU to ensure we adopt suitable protocols for minimising the spread of any infectious disease.

Students have a responsibility to report any issues, seek medical help and make sure their vaccinations are up to date.

8. Immediate Response

A suspected case of Meningitis should be treated as an emergency as it can worsen in a matter of hours.

If you are worried about yourself or a friend, please seek medical advice urgently. Call NHS 111 or [access NHS 111 online](#), or speak to your GP ([General Practitioner](#) - the main doctor you see for general health issues).

In an emergency, call 999. If someone becomes rapidly unwell or difficult to wake, you should call 999 and inform [Campus Security](#) on 0141 330 4444 or via the SafeZone App.

When 2 or more cases occur in students in the university that may be linked or known to be linked, an Incident Control Team will be set up that will include representatives from the PHPU and the University. The Consultant in Public Health (Medicine) would normally chair the group. The immediate priority is to alert all students and staff of the situation, and the PHPU will also inform local GPs, Accident and Emergency departments and laboratories with accurate information and advice. As per the UKHSA Meningococcal Public Health Guidance, two or more cases of probable or confirmed meningococcal disease with symptom onset within 28 days in an educational or residential setting would be considered a cluster. An outbreak of meningococcal disease can be defined as two or more cases that are epidemiologically linked and that are identified as being caused by the same strain.

In the event of a student fatality, special support and advice will be required from the PHPU and a representative from the PHPU will visit the University to discuss action required.

All new University students should be made aware of the signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease at the start of the academic year by whatever communicational and support means available. **Appendix B** lists the summary of key messages about meningitis for students. An abbreviated version is communicated to all staff and students.

All students who have not received Men ACWY vaccine should be advised to do so. The Men B vaccination is not routinely available for adults through the NHS.

9. Response in event of a disease/infection outbreak (including meningococcal disease)

9.1 Organisational Support

In the event of a probable or confirmed case of the disease the key contact is:

- Health protection team:
Public Health Protection Unit (PHPU)
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde:
Telephone: 0141 201 4971
Out of Hours: 0141 211 3600
Email: ggc.phpu@nhs.scot

The Barclay Medical Practice, Gilmorehill Campus, once advised by PHPU group, can organise a prophylaxis antibiotic treatment programme for the identified immediate contacts.

The Health Protection Unit Consultant should contact in the first instance the University of Glasgow Director of Safety and Resilience (07864802698) and Director of Student Wellbeing (07815925517). Contact out-of-hours can be made via Campus Security on 0141 330 4444.

9.2 Staff Reporting

Any staff member who is aware of a suspected or confirmed case must contact University Security. Security will record this in the daily report and escalate to the Director of Safety and Resilience and Director of Student Wellbeing

Campus Security 24-hour number: **0141 330 4444**

9.3 Outbreak Response

In the event of 2 or more confirmed cases or any fatality from the disease:

- University convenes the Emergency Planning Group (EPG) through the University Secretary (Dr David Duncan-07919 293053) within 1 working day.
- Meeting of EPG in conjunction with consultant representation and direction from Public Health.
- Identify representative(s) to take part in the PHPU-led Incident Control Team.
- Prepare important information and advice package for University and Halls of Residence.
- Regular review meetings of EPG as advised by Public Health.
- Once meningitis is confirmed Public Health Protection Team will identify close contacts working with the University.
- The University will work with PHPU to provide contact lists, support risk assessment, and implement recommended control measures.

10. Communication Protocols

Internal communications will be coordinated by Student Wellbeing, People and Organisational Development Wellbeing, and the Internal Communications Team. All external communication will follow the University Crisis Communications Plan.

11. Post-Incident Review

The University will participate in a multi-agency debrief following any incident or outbreak.

12. Wellbeing Support

If you need support, please reach out to our support and wellbeing services:

Academic Adjustments – If you need [support with your studies](#), including [extensions for assessments or adjustments to deadlines](#), we are here to help.

Wellbeing Services – The university offers a variety of [wellbeing support](#), including free and confidential [counselling services](#).

24 Hour Advice Line - You can speak to someone 24 hours a day via our [Counselling and Advice line](#) on [0800 028 3766](#) or via the Wisdom app.



SRC Advice Centre – [The SRC Advice Centre](#) offers free, independent and confidential advice and can assist on a variety of issues including applying for Extensions or Extenuating Circumstances.

13. Document Control

1. Change History

Version number	Change detail	Date
1.0	Policy updated to reflect new responsibilities in UofG and updated information from PH Scotland on notifiable diseases.	March 31 st 2026

2. Document Development

Developed By	Name	Signature	Date
Director of Safety and Resilience	David Harty		March 31 st 2026
Approved by	Name	Signature	Date
University Secretary	Dr David Duncan		April 15 th 2026

Review Cycle: Annual or following any meningitis incident

APPENDIX A

Outbreak Management

Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Student and Staff Communicable Diseases

Document Reference: Guidelines for prevention and management of communicable diseases

Date Reviewed: March 2026

Next Review Date: March 2027

Version No: 1

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Purpose of Guidelines

These guidelines are for university staff who have responsibilities for student or staff health and wellbeing, including raising awareness of threats to health, such as communicable diseases or environmental hazards. Such staff may be required to respond to a suspected or confirmed case of notifiable infection (a single incident) or an outbreak (two or more cases of the same infection) in the student and/or staff community.

The focus of these guidelines is how the University would:

- a) Undertake the health promotion work to raise awareness of and prevent communicable diseases.
- b) Work with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Public Health Protection Unit (PHPU) to manage an incident or outbreak.

Introduction

An incident or outbreak of any communicable disease in a higher education institution can pose challenges in terms of public health management because the close circle of contacts of those affected may be difficult to define and trace. This is because students will often be living in shared accommodation and may also be part of an active social network outside the hall and within their faculty. Certain categories of staff, such as catering and campus services staff, lecturers, lab technicians and administrative staff, interact with large numbers of different people on a daily basis. This may result in misinformation about the incident spreading quickly and raise unnecessary alarm. Students who have recently left home may feel vulnerable, especially if they have not yet established good access to local primary care services.

Each NHS territorial Health Board has a Health Protection Team (HPT) who provide specialist public health advice and operational support to NHS, local authorities and other agencies. The local NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Protection Team (Public Health Protection Unit, PHPU) provide specialist support to prevent and reduce infectious diseases and can help with investigating and managing health protection incidents and outbreaks.

Health protection teams are advised to follow the UKHSA Guidance and information for health professionals.

[Communicable disease outbreak management guidance - GOV.UK](#)

UKHSA define an outbreak as:

- An incident in which 2 or more people experiencing a similar illness are linked in time or place.
- A greater than expected rate of infection compared with the usual background rate for the place and time where the outbreak has occurred
- A single case for certain rare or high-consequence diseases such as diphtheria, botulism, rabies, viral haemorrhagic fever or polio.

- A suspected, anticipated or actual event involving microbial contamination of food or water.

Notifiable Diseases

If the University is informed by Public Health Scotland or NHS Health Protection Team of an outbreak of communicable disease, the university shall seek guidance from the local NHS Health protection Team. A critical incident meeting may be required to co-ordinate overall responses.

According to the Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008 , the following are notifiable diseases:

- *Anthrax*
- *Botulism*
- *Brucellosis*
- *Cholera*
- *Clinical syndrome due to E.coli O157 infection*
- **[F1***Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)***]**
- *Diphtheria*
- *Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome (HUS)*
- *Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)*
- *Measles*
- *Meningococcal disease*
- **[F2***Monkeypox***]**
- *Mumps*
- *Necrotizing fasciitis*
- *Paratyphoid*
- *Pertussis*
- *Plague*
- *Poliomyelitis*
- *Rabies*
- *Rubella*
- *Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)*
- *Smallpox*
- *Tetanus*
- *Tuberculosis (respiratory or non-respiratory)*
- *Tularemia*
- *Typhoid*
- *Viral haemorrhagic fevers*
- *West Nile fever*
- *Yellow Fever*

It is the duty of the registered medical practitioner to notify the Health Protection team of the relevant territorial Health Board concerning a notifiable disease. In the case of the university, which does not employ any medical professionals with responsibility for student healthcare, the responsibility for notifying will be the students own GP. However, the

university can contact NHS Health protection Team for advice, if they have not already been in contact, and shall work closely with them to manage an incident or outbreak.

The Occupational Health department is responsible for identifying and managing work related risks to staff health; however, it will be the responsibility of the member of staff's own GP to notify Health Protection Scotland of a notifiable disease. The Occupational Health Team will be responsible for working with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health protection team to help manage an incident or outbreak and, where an exposure has occurred at work, ensure that the members of staff concerned receive the appropriate follow-up care and support.

Health promotion Work to Prevent Communicable Diseases

In January 2023 UKSHA produced the [Vaccine communications toolkit for universities and other higher education settings](#). Additional UKHSA communications in June 2023, have informed that the University's health promotion/awareness raising work in relation to communicable diseases will focus on measles, as well as meningitis, mumps and rubella at key points in the academic year.

Health promotion information will be available across the university community to raise awareness in relation to communicable diseases that are not vaccine preventable. This will include promoting good hand hygiene, proper food preparation (where required), keeping away from others if ill (Diarrhoea and Vomiting or respiratory illness), awareness of common signs and symptoms and what to do if unwell to support the prevention of transmission, in line with NHS guidance.

International students may not have been in receipt of the same childhood vaccinations as UK born students, and all are eligible to receive any of the usual UK vaccinations and should check with their GP when they register. This will be communicated at various stages of onboarding and included within welcome activities.

Role of the University in the Event of a Communicable Disease Outbreak

Media and Communication

Handling the media during an incident or outbreak of communicable disease requires expertise with clear, consistent and accurate information being provided. Student Support Services and/or Staff Health and Wellbeing will liaise with the University's Communications and Engagement team, NHS GGC Press Office and Public Health Scotland to develop a communication plan for internal and external audiences in line with the University Crisis Communications Plan.

Stakeholders

Depending on the nature of the case(s), the following may require consideration in a communication plan:

Students

- Those in the same residence
- Those in residence on the same site

- Those on the same course (including placements, electives, etc.)
- Those with social contact or have attended the same event.
- The general student population who may not be at increased risk, but who may perceive themselves to be.

University Staff

- Residence staff if applicable, particularly those who have had recent contact with the affected student(s), e.g. cleaners, reception.
- Where a member of staff is affected, colleagues identified as having been in contact with them when on campus.
- Those in the same academic department or building.
- Those who have attended the same event.
- Sports staff if applicable, particularly those who have had recent contact with the affected students.
- Student support staff who may have had recent contact with affected student.
- Others within the university who may not be at increased risk, but who may perceive themselves to be.

Outbreak response

The outbreak response is per section 9.3 of this policy.

Useful Contacts

NHS GGC Public Health Protection Unit:
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde:
Telephone: 0141 201 4971
Out of Hours: 0141 211 3600
Email: ggc.phpu@nhs.scot

Public health Scotland: [Public Health Scotland](#)

University Emergency Security Number: 0141 330 4444

UK Health security Agency: [UK Health Security Agency - GOV.UK](#)

Example of an initial Contact Form

Date and time	
Name of person completing form	
Name of person providing information	
Contact details of person providing information	
Name of student/staff member	
Disclosed disability - if yes, any requirement of reasonable adjustments to communications and support	
Address of student/staff member	
Course	
Year of study	
Home address of student (if different from above)	
Mobile telephone number	
Date of birth	
Emergency Contact	
Has the Emergency Contact been notified? (<i>Note: contact should only be made in accordance with the University's Student Emergency Contact Protocol</i>). If yes: Details of Emergency Contact What information has been provided? any other relevant information e.g. will the Emergency Contact travel to be with the student?	
Details of primary stakeholders (e.g. students in the same accommodation and immediate social circle):	
Details of secondary stakeholders (e.g. students in same classes, wider social circle, living in other halls of residence, SAL, SU):	
Reason for public Health Scotland contacting University or University contacting NHS Health protection team	
Instructions received from NHS health protection team	
Action Taken by University representative	

APPENDIX B

Summary of key messages about meningitis for students:

- Meningococcal disease is rare but serious.

It can cause:

- Meningitis (infection of the brain lining)
- Septicaemia (blood poisoning), which can lead to sepsis
- Symptoms can develop very quickly; early treatment saves lives.

Students are at higher risk than the general population due to:

- Close living conditions
- Social mixing

Students should:

- Learn the symptoms and act fast if these develop
- Register with a GP local to their term-time address.
- Check their vaccination status for the MenACWY vaccination if unknown
- Follow official advice if contacted by public health teams

Further information:

Meningococcal disease (meningitis and septicaemia) is an uncommon but serious disease caused by meningococcal bacteria. Very occasionally, the meningococcal bacteria can cause serious illness, (inflammation of the lining of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning), which can rapidly lead to sepsis. Young people at university or college for the first time are at higher risk of meningitis than the general population because they mix with so many other students, some of whom are unknowingly carrying the bacteria at the back of their nose and throat.

The onset of illness is often sudden and early diagnosis and treatment with antibiotics are vital. It is important to be aware of symptoms of meningitis and seek urgent healthcare in the event of these symptoms developing.

Early symptoms, which may not always be present, include:

- A rash that doesn't fade when pressed with a glass
- Sudden onset of high fever
- Severe and worsening headache
- Stiff neck
- Vomiting and diarrhoea
- Joint and muscle pain
- Dislike of bright lights
- Very cold hands and feet
- Seizures

- Confusion/delirium
- Extreme sleepiness/difficulty waking

More information on meningitis can be found on the [NHS Inform website](#)

There are numerous strains of the meningococcal infection. The MenACWY vaccination gives good protection against MenA, MenC, MenW, and MenY. This vaccination is routinely offered in the UK to school pupils aged 13 or 14, but students who have not previously had the MenACWY vaccine [may be eligible](#) to receive it.

MenB vaccinations have been part of the routine vaccination programme for infants in the UK since 2015; anyone born prior to 2015 will not have received MenB vaccination via the NHS programme.

The NHS does not provide Men B vaccination out with the national routine schedule i.e. children over the age of 2 and adults are not eligible for MenB vaccination on the NHS.

There are a number of private providers available who will be able to administer MenB vaccination. We cannot recommend any one private provider over another.

If anyone is unsure of previous vaccinations they have received and would have received their vaccinations in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area, they can contact their GP to request these.

For anyone who would have received their vaccinations elsewhere, they should contact the relevant health authority directly to request their vaccination history

If anyone eligible has missed their MenACWY vaccination, their GP can make a referral for this.

Additionally, the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Immunisations team run clinics on campus at the start of term offering vaccinations (Men ACWY, MMR and HPV) for eligible students who might have missed these.

We would encourage all students to register with a GP close to their term-time address.

Additional resources:

UKHSA will be sharing communications on meningitis with universities across the UK.

Link to PHS social media toolkit for meningitis (in the process of being updated):

[#Vaccines4Students Social Media Toolkit | Public Health Scotland News](#)