### MERS Risk Assessment – Round Square

**Current as of 15th May 2014 and prepared by Liz Gray (Projects Manager)**

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<th>Level of risk before preventative actions</th>
<th>Preventative Actions</th>
<th>Level of risk after preventative actions</th>
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| Very Low                                 | Cases of MERS have been identified in multiple countries in the Arabian Peninsula since it was first identified in Saudi Arabia in 2012. There have also been cases in several other countries in travellers who have been to the Arabian Peninsula and, in some instances, their close contacts. Most instances of person-to-person spread have occurred in health workers and other close contacts (such as family members and caregivers) of people already sick with MERS. Although there is the suggestion that the virus can spread from person to person, there has been no sustained person-to-person transmission and the risk of contracting this infection is still considered to be low. There is also growing evidence that direct or indirect contact with camels plays a significant role in virus transmission. Participants who have pre-existing major medical conditions (for example chronic diseases such as diabetes, chronic lung disease and immunodeficiency) will be at increased likelihood of illness during travel and may wish to re-consider their plans. If travelling to countries in the Arabian Peninsula it is recommended that participants pay particular attention to their health during and after the trip. There have been two identified cases of MERS in Jordan in April 2014, both of them in health workers. World Health Organisation (WHO) is not recommending any travel restrictions or screening and points of entry related to the outbreak of the virus. Limiting travel and imposing travel restrictions would have very little effect on stopping the virus from spreading, but would be highly disruptive to the global community. The global response now focuses on minimizing the impact of the virus through the rapid identification of cases, and providing patients with appropriate medical care, rather than on stopping its spread internationally. Participants will be briefed on the prevention of spreading infection and high personal hygiene measures during the conference as follows:  
  - Wash hands often with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer  
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth  
  - Avoid close contact with obviously sick people  
  - Be up to date with travel immunisations | Very low | Advise all participants on departure from the conference, to seek medical help if they become ill up to 14 days after the conference. A doctor must be called right away if participants develop fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness (such as cough or shortness of breath) within 14 days after travel. Participants must take measures to prevent infection of others, including covering mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze, avoiding contact with others and seeking immediate medical attention. Close contacts must be contacted to monitor their own health for the following 14 days. Round Square and Kings Academy must also be contacted in the event that a participant falls ill with a confirmed case of MERS after the conference. |
- If in contact with animals at farms or in barn areas, WHO recommends normal hygiene measures before and after touching animals.

All participants will be briefed on the importance of going to family doctor on return home if any symptoms appear. Government advice and health websites will be monitored in the lead-up to the conference. Participants must delay or cancel their travel if they are sick with flu-like symptoms.

**Symptoms of MERS:**
The most common symptoms of MERS are very similar to many other types of flu, cold or cough:
- Sudden onset of fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Other very rare symptoms include renal failure, diarrhoea and non-specific severe febrile illness.

**Resources for further information:**

**UK Foreign and Commonwealth Advice:**
http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1317140453299

**Government of Canada Travel Advice:**

**Government of Australia Travel Advice:**

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention (USA)**

**NATHNAC (UK site – National Travel Health Network and Centre)**
http://www.nathnac.org/pro/clinical_updates/coronavirus_120514.htm

**WHO advice:**
http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/MERS_CoV_RA_20140424.pdf?ua=1
http://www.who.int/csr/don/2014_05_07_mers_jordan/en/ (specific notice concerning Jordan)
http://www.who.int/ith/updates/20130725/en/ (specific advice for pilgrimages)