



UK Health
Security
Agency

Monkeypox

Briefing for workplaces

UKHSA London
Version 2: 16 June 2022

Note: This situation is evolving and further guidance or briefings may follow. The information in this briefing is correct as of 16 June 2022. For the latest guidance, visit the Monkeypox guidance page on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Background

What is monkeypox?

- Monkeypox is a rare infectious disease. It is usually a mild illness, spread by very close contact with someone with monkeypox. Most people recover within a few weeks.
- Since May 2022, cases of monkeypox have been reported in multiple countries including the UK. The majority of reported cases in the UK are in London.
- The risk to the general public from monkeypox is low. The UK Health Security Agency and the NHS are working to reduce transmission of monkeypox infection and enable the continued safe functioning of the NHS.

How does monkeypox spread?

- Person-to-person spread of monkeypox is uncommon, but can occur through close contact with an infected person. This can be through:
 - Skin to skin contact with monkeypox skin lesions or scabs, particularly if your own skin has sores or cuts (even if not visible)
 - Contact with clothing, bedding or towels used by someone with the monkeypox rash
 - Coughing or sneezing of a person with the monkeypox rash
- Monkeypox is not described as a sexually transmitted infection, but it can be passed on by direct contact during sex.
- Once infected with Monkeypox it usually takes between 5 and 21 days for the first symptoms to appear.

Spotting symptoms of monkeypox

Symptoms of monkeypox:

- The first symptoms of monkeypox include:

- a high temperature
- a headache
- muscle aches
- backache
- swollen glands
- shivering (chills)
- exhaustion



- A rash usually appears 1 to 5 days after the first symptoms. The rash often begins on the face, then spreads to other parts of the body. The rash is sometimes confused with chickenpox. It starts as raised spots, which turn into small blisters filled with fluid. These blisters eventually form scabs which later fall off.
- The symptoms usually clear up in 2 to 4 weeks.

At risk groups and accessing support

Who is most at risk from monkeypox?

- Monkeypox is spread through close contact with someone who is infectious.
- Previous monkeypox cases have usually been associated with travel to an area where monkeypox is endemic, such as Central or West Africa.
- Recent cases in England have been reported with no previous travel links, predominantly in gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM). UKHSA are highlighting this so that individuals can be alert to any unusual rashes or lesions on any part of their body, especially genitalia, and contact a sexual health service if they have concerns.

Where you can access support:

- If you think you have monkeypox symptoms – however mild:
 - **Contact NHS 111 or call a sexual health clinic immediately.** Your call will be treated sensitively and confidentially.
 - **Avoid close personal or sexual contact with others until you know that this is not monkeypox.**
 - Please contact clinics ahead of your visit and avoid close contact with others until you have been seen by a clinician. Your call or discussion will be treated sensitively and confidentially.
- If you are diagnosed with monkeypox, you may be advised to self-isolate to stop the spread of infection. Guidance on self-isolation is available on gov.uk: [Monkeypox: infected people who are isolating at home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/monkeypox-infected-people-who-are-isolating-at-home).
- The risk of monkeypox is very low to the UK public. If you don't have monkeypox symptoms but are still concerned, please speak to your local healthcare provider, or NHS 111 if you need urgent advice.

Measures you can take in the workplace to reduce the spread of monkeypox

- There are only a small number of reported cases of monkeypox at present, and the risk for the general public remains low.
- You can help to protect yourself and others by following the four actions below, particularly if your workplace includes direct contact with people in your day to day work activity:
 1. **Review current procedures:** If your workplace includes direct person to person contact activities, you may want to revisit existing cleaning procedures, and consider reviewing the protocol and increasing the frequency.
 2. **Maintain good cleaning procedures:** Monkeypox can spread from touching bedding, towels or linens that have been previously used by someone who is infectious. Ensuring you have good cleaning procedures, particularly with shared or re-used bedding or towels, can help to reduce the spread of infection. The following document provides general advice on cleaning: [Principles for monkeypox control in the UK: 4 nations consensus statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Specific cleaning guidance is available for sex-on-premises venues: [Monkeypox: cleaning sex-on-premises venues - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 3. **Inform people you are in regular contact with:** Make sure you, your colleagues and any visitors are aware of the symptoms of monkeypox, how it spreads, and where to go to access support if needed.
 4. **Promote public health messages:** Sharing key messages with staff and members of the public can help to raise awareness of infection risks and how to stay safe. Information is available via:
 - The UK Health Security Agency will share monkeypox updates on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).
 - The latest monkeypox guidance is available on [gov.uk](#).

Risk of fomites

- Q. Given that monkeypox can be spread on fomites (bedding, towels etc) what is the risk of:**
- a. Spread by touching surface e.g., handrails on public transport?**
 - b. How long does monkeypox survive on fomites?**

A. There is limited data on the persistence of monkeypox virus in the environment. Although theoretically poxviruses can survive for months, we do not see sporadic cases occurring after the initial chain of transmission has been broken so the risk of spread by transient contact with surfaces such as handrails is very low, especially if these are regularly cleaned. While contaminated bedding does pose a risk, once washed it is no longer considered hazardous.

Managing suspected cases of monkeypox in the workplace

What do I do if there is a case of suspected monkeypox in my workplace?

- Any suspected case of monkeypox should avoid close contact with others and **contact NHS 111 or call a sexual health clinic immediately.**
- If you are concerned that you or others have been exposed to monkeypox infection in the workplace, contact UKHSA's London Coordination and Response Cell (LCRC) for advice by email: LCRC@phe.gov.uk (*Include details regarding the nature of workplace, level of contact with a case and if you are aware of other cases at the workplace*).
- The following document provides general advice on cleaning: [Principles for monkeypox control in the UK: 4 nations consensus statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100222/Principles_for_monkeypox_control_in_the_UK_4_nations_consensus_statement_-_GOV.UK.pdf).
- Specific cleaning guidance is available for sex-on-premises venues: [Monkeypox: cleaning sex-on-premises venues - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100222/Monkeypox_cleaning_sex-on-premises_venues_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

What happens if I am identified as a close contact of someone with monkeypox?

- Suspected close contacts of monkeypox cases will be informed by UKHSA Health Protection Teams and hospital infection prevention and control teams. If you are identified as a close contact, you will be provided advice based on level of contact you have had. You may be asked to self-isolate to reduce the spread of infection.

Further sources of information

- Details on all confirmed cases: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/monkeypox-cases-confirmed-in-england-latest-updates>
- Monkeypox guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/monkeypox>
- NHS monkeypox page: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/monkeypox/>
- Terrence Higgins Trust monkeypox information: <https://www.tht.org.uk/news/monkeypox-uk>
- Queer Health from the Love Tank monkeypox page: <https://www.queerhealth.info/monkeypox>
- WHO global perspective and information: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/monkeypox>
- Monkeypox Q&A blog: <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/05/24/information-on-monkeypox-and-our-investigation-into-recent-cases/>
- Follow [@UKHSA](#) and [@UKHSA_London](#) on Twitter for the latest Monkeypox updates
- Campaign Resource Centre communications assets: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/145-monkeypox/resources>