



5 January 2007

Update on public health issues related to Polonium-210 incident

The Health Protection Agency is continuing to provide expert advice on the public health issues surrounding the death of Mr. Alexander Litvinenko. Throughout, our primary concern has been to protect the public.

We have monitored many locations identified by the police to assess whether there is any public health risk. Our investigations have confirmed there is no public health concern in the open public areas.

As a precautionary measure we have also followed up a number of people – staff and guests - at some of the locations where radioactive contamination was detected.

As a result of a recent request from the Metropolitan Police, the Health Protection Agency has carried out monitoring of Pescatori Restaurant in Dover Street, Mayfair, which has been linked to the Litvinenko police investigation. Some evidence of contamination with Polonium -210 has been detected. Remediation measures have been carried out successfully at the restaurant which is now open for business. On the basis of the monitoring results received there is no public health concern.

On the basis of experience of other sites which were contaminated and investigated, we do not anticipate any significant health risk to staff or customers of the restaurant. However, as a precautionary measure we have offered staff who work in the Pescatori restaurant the opportunity to have their urine tested for Polonium-210. Based on our findings so far we consider there is no significant risk to public health and we are therefore not advising people to seek further advice from NHS Direct or other organisations.

The police investigation into the Litvinenko case continues. We will provide further public information as appropriate.

Notes to Editors:

1. There have been **12** samples from people associated with different sites which have shown exposure to low levels of Polonium-210 which are not significant enough to result in any illness in the short term and any increased risk in the long term is likely to be very small
2. A further **571** urine samples tested so far by the Agency have found nothing of concern – i.e. no health concerns
3. We advised that any member of the public in The Pine Bar on Oct 31 and Nov 2 (in addition to Nov 1) contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 who will pass on their details to the HPA for further assessment.
4. Our advice has also been that anyone who was in The Pine Bar on Nov 1, who has not yet contacted NHS Direct, is invited to do so.
5. The Agency is writing to offer further advice to those people who were in The Pine Bar on Nov 1 and who have already contacted NHS Direct. A special helpline, staffed by experienced HPA staff, has been set up. If requested by people in this group, a urine sample will be tested. Arrangements will be made for information to be provided to international guests.
6. Overseas visitors who were in the Pine Bar of the Millennium Hotel on Oct 31, Nov 1 and Nov 2 should email the Health Protection Agency for advice: overseasadvice@hpa.org.uk . If you do not have access to email you can contact NHS Direct on 00 (44) 845 4647 but only via a mobile telephone if you are calling from abroad. (If this does not connect you please try 0845 46 47 instead – again only from a mobile).
7. Further information is available on www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk and www.hpa.org.uk
8. For the latest information on locations go to the London Resilience Team website at www.londonprepared.gov.uk
9. Media enquiries to HPA London press office on 020 7759 2824 or 2834 or to HPA CRCE press office on 01235 822 744 or 01235 822 745. If you are calling out of hours please call 020 8200 4400.