



8 December 2006

### **Update on public health issues related to Polonium-210 investigation**

As outlined yesterday preliminary results received from seven members of staff working in The Pine Bar of the Millennium Hotel on Nov 1 show that they appear to have had some exposure to Polonium-210.

Following this new information we felt it prudent to assess any other staff who also were working in The Pine Bar of the Millennium Hotel, on Oct 31 and Nov 2. We are working with the hotel management to try and identify any other relevant staff. We have also advised that any member of the public who were in The Pine Bar on the 31 Oct 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.

Our advice has also been that anyone who was in The Pine Bar on Nov 1 and who has not yet contacted NHS Direct to do so.

The Agency has written to provide further advice to the 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 for these NHS Direct callers to provide further advice over the next few days. If these people wish, a urine sample will be tested. Arrangements will be made for information to be provided to international guests.

The Pine Bar remains closed and is part of the police investigation. The HPA has monitored all remaining public areas and no risk to the public health risk has been found.

On the basis of the monitoring results received so far from several other sites we still believe that the risk to the general public of having been exposed to polonium-210 is likely to be very low.

It can only represent a radiation hazard if it is taken into the body – by breathing it in, by taking it into the mouth, or if it gets into a wound. It is not a radiological hazard as long as it remains outside the body. Most traces of it can be eliminated

through hand-washing, or washing machine and dishwasher cycles for clothes, plates etc

### Location update

- **1 Cavendish Place , W1G, London** – monitoring has been completed in the key public areas and there is no public health concern. Traces of radioactive contamination were restricted to a floor in the building
- **Parkes Hotel, in Beaufort Gardens** – monitoring has been completed and only traces of localised reactive contamination found in a couple of rooms. These were remediated and there is no public health concern.

### Test results update

The Agency's public health follow-up has included testing urine samples from those in close contact with Mr. Litvinenko, those who worked or were present in the affected areas and, where appropriate, those who called for advice via NHS Direct.

- **180** urine samples so far tested by the Agency have found nothing of concern. The Agency will be contacting these people to inform them of their results
- There are **8** samples which have shown exposure to some Polonium-210 (Po-210). The levels are not significant enough to result in any illness in the short term and the results are reassuring in that any increased risk in the long term is likely to be very small
- As of midnight Thurs, Dec 7 NHS Direct had received **3367** calls since HPA advice was issued on Sat Nov 25;
- Of those, as of 5pm Thurs, Dec 7 the HPA had followed up **244** people who it was assessed should be investigated further;
- The total number of people – as of 5pm, Thurs Dec 7 - referred as a precaution to a specialist outpatient assessment clinic for possible radiological exposure assessment is **29** (27 from NHS Direct, and 2 via other routes);
- As a precaution **76** healthcare staff have been asked to provide urine samples for testing as of 10pm Thurs, Dec 7

The police investigation continues. We will provide further public information as appropriate.

**Notes to Editors:**

1. If you are an overseas visitor and were in the The Pine Bar of the Millennium Hotel on Oct 31, Nov 1 and Nov 2 you should email the Health Protection Agency for advice: [overseasadvice@hpa.org.uk](mailto: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)
2. Further information is available on [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) and [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)
3. Media enquiries to HPA London press office on 020 7759 2824 or 2834 or HPA CRCE press office on 01235 822 678 or 01235 822 744.

If you are calling out of hours please use 020 8200 4400.