

COVID-19 – Planning at a Glance

Business Continuity:

- ☐ Identify key roles and departments (e.g. finance, IT, reception);
- ☐ Can those roles and departments function if:
 - There is a workplace closure;
 - A key employee is infected?
- ☐ Split up key departments/ create distinct shifts to reduce risk of spread of infection?

Working from Home:

- ☐ Acknowledge the latest Government guidance (16 March 2020) recommending working from home wherever possible;
- ☐ Note that, where working from home is not possible, we have discretion as to how we operate and there is no automatic right to remain at home;
- ☐ Is there the equipment/ infrastructure to work from home?
- ☐ Can the role feasibly be delivered from home?
- ☐ How will the employee be supervised?
- ☐ How will contact be maintained?
- ☐ Keep under regular review

Finance and Sick Pay:

- ☐ Identify potential contractual rights;
- ☐ SSP now payable from day one;
- ☐ Employers can now recover SSP for 14 days per employee;
- ☐ Consider hardship fund/loans for employees who need this;
- ☐ Refer to sickness and isolation section for pay details.

Sickness and Isolation:

- ☐ Voluntary self-isolation – no sick pay;
- ☐ Voluntary withdrawal from work – no sick pay;
- ☐ Medically advised self-isolation – consider lenience on certification; SSP payable but arguably Company sick pay is not;
- ☐ In the coming days, Government is likely to recommend those at higher risk e.g. chronic health/kidney disease, significant conditions affecting the immune system, those over the age of 70 and pregnant individuals self-isolate for up to 12 weeks;

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- ☐ Company enforced self-isolation/absence – full pay until medical advice received;
- ☐ School closures/dependant care – basic position is unpaid leave.

People & Communication:

- ☐ Regular communication key to reassuring employees;
- ☐ Appoint points of contact and communicate contingency plans to contact points;
- ☐ Ask employees to report all current/future travel plans and of any other household members;
- ☐ Ask staff to report suspected or confirmed infection of anyone who employee has come into close contact with;
- ☐ Advise staff not to travel to certain areas. Consider requiring self-isolation if they go ahead and warn of SSP only (appreciating the risk of doing so);
- ☐ Ask staff to report any factors which may create higher risks in the case of infection e.g. chronic health/kidney disease, significant conditions affecting the immune system, age, pregnancy, current/previous conditions, caring for/ association with vulnerable people;
- ☐ Advise employees of the following:
 - if they live alone and have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when symptoms started;
 - if they live with others and they or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill;
 - it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community;
 - for anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.
- ☐ Advise employees of what self-isolation means.

Premises:

- ☐ Provision of tissues, hand sanitisers etc;
- ☐ Signage/posters promoting hygiene standards and reporting of symptoms;
- ☐ Consider travel and office footfall – consider prohibition on:
 - Movement between offices;
 - Face-to-face meetings;
 - Seminars;
 - Client attendance;
- ☐ Consider questionnaires/risk assessments of visitors to the office;

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Shortage of Work:

- ☐ Contractual layoff/short-time working clause could be utilised;
- ☐ Impose taking of paid holiday;
- ☐ Offer unpaid leave;
- ☐ Restrict Company sick pay & benefits if contractually possible;
- ☐ Simple headcount savings – recruitment freeze, dismissal of short-serving employees, reduction of zero hours/ casual workers and agency staff;
- ☐ Other savings – postponement of salary review, removal of discretionary pay and benefits;
- ☐ Redundancy exercise.

Other measures:

- ☐ Sign up for Government email alerts: <https://www.gov.uk/email-signup?link=/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>.

Suspected/Confirmed cases in the workplace - Current NHS guidance:

Returning from travel overseas to affected areas

People who have returned from Hubei Province, including Wuhan, Iran, Daegu or Cheongdo in the Republic of Korea, and any area within Italy under containment measures in the last 14 days should avoid attending work. They should call NHS 111 for advice and stay at home.

Advice is in place for what to do if you have returned in the last 14 days from specified countries or areas which is being updated on an ongoing basis.

All other staff should continue to attend work.

What to do if an employee or visitor becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19

If the person has not been to specified areas in the last 14 days, then normal practice should continue.

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace and has travelled to China or other affected countries, the unwell person should be removed to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people. If possible find a room or area where they can be isolated behind a closed door, such as a staff office. If it is possible to open a window, do so for ventilation.

The individual who is unwell should call NHS 111 from their mobile, or 999 if an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk) and explain which country they have returned from in the last 14 days and outline their current symptoms.

Whilst they wait for advice from NHS 111 or an ambulance to arrive, they should remain at least 2 metres from other people. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in a bag or pocket then throw the tissue in the bin. If they don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available.

What to do if a member of staff or the public with **suspected** COVID-19 has recently been in your workplace

For contacts of a suspected case in the workplace, no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for COVID19 are awaited. In particular, there is no need to close the workplace or send

other staff home at this point. Most possible cases turn out to be negative. Therefore, until the outcome of test results is known there is no action that the workplace needs to take.

What to do if a member of staff or the public with **confirmed** COVID-19 has recently been in your workplace

Closure of the workplace is not recommended.

The management team of the office or workplace will be contacted by the PHE local Health Protection Team to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.

A risk assessment of each setting will be undertaken by the Health Protection Team with the lead responsible person. Advice on the management of staff and members of the public will be based on this assessment. The Health Protection Team will also be in contact with the case directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the case to provide them with appropriate advice.

Advice on cleaning of communal areas such as offices or toilets will be given by the Health Protection Team.

When individuals in the workplace have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19

If a confirmed case is identified the workplace, the local Health Protection Team will provide the relevant staff with advice. These staff include:

- ☐ any employee in close face-to-face or touching contact
- ☐ talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the employee was symptomatic
- ☐ anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids
- ☐ close friendship groups or workgroups
- ☐ any employee living in the same household as a confirmed case

These staff are not considered cases and if they are well they are very unlikely to have spread the infection to others. However:

- ☐ those who have had close contact will be asked to self-isolate at home for 7 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the home isolation advice sheet;
- ☐ they will be actively followed up by the Health Protection Team;
- ☐ If they develop new symptoms or their existing symptoms worsen within their 7-day observation period they should call NHS 111 for reassessment;
- ☐ if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be tested for COVID-19;
- ☐ if they are unwell at any time within their 7-day observation period and they test positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated for the infection.

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Staff who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions and can continue to attend work.

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