

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Contingency Plan

*The following information is derived from GOV.UK website*

This guidance will assist and advise staff on:

- the novel coronavirus, COVID-19
- how to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19
- what to do if you think you have COVID-19
- what to do if someone who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a workplace setting
- advice for the certification of absence from work resulting from COVID-19

### What is Coronavirus?

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020.

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- fever

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person. Respiratory secretions containing the virus, produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, are most likely to be the main means of transmission.

There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs.
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face)

There is currently little evidence that people who are without symptoms are infectious to others. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

### Preventing COVID-19 at Work

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly within 72 hours. How long any respiratory virus survives will depend on a number of factors, for example:

- what surface the virus is on
- whether it is exposed to sunlight
- differences in temperature and humidity
- exposure to cleaning products

We know that similar viruses are transferred to and from people's hands. Therefore, regular hand hygiene and cleaning of frequently touched surfaces will help to reduce the risk of infection.

Public Health England (PHE) recommends that the best way to reduce any risk of infection is good hygiene and avoiding direct or close contact (closer than 2 metres) with any potentially infected person. The following general cold and flu precautions should be taken to help prevent people from catching and spreading COVID-19:

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. **See 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'**
- put used tissues in the bin straight away
- wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available. **See NHS hand washing guidance**
- employees should wash their hands:
  - before leaving home
  - on arrival at work
  - after using the toilet
  - after breaks and sporting activities
  - before food preparation
  - before eating any food, including snacks
  - before leaving work
  - on arrival at home
- encourage service users to frequently wash their hands, taking into consideration the NHS hand washing guidance
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces; especially offices toilets, bathrooms and changing areas
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Staff are not recommended to wear facemasks (also known as surgical masks or respirators) to protect against the virus. During normal day-to-day activities facemasks do not provide protection from respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19. Facemasks are only recommended to be worn by symptomatic individuals (advised by a healthcare worker) to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people.

### **What to do if you think you have COVID-19**

You only need to self-isolate if you develop symptoms of COVID-19. If you have not been to any of the specified areas in the last 14 days, then you should continue to attend work. If you have symptoms of coronavirus infection (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started. (See the GOV.UK stay at home guidance for more information) **Regardless of whether you are due to work, please contact us to let us know that you think you have coronavirus and when you first started experiencing symptoms.** You will be advised to isolate yourself and not to work in contact with other people by NHS 111 or PHE if you are a carrier of, or have been in contact with, an infectious or contagious disease such as COVID-19.

The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 to 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not been infected.

If you are worried about symptoms, please call NHS 111. **[Do not go directly to your GP, local hospital or other healthcare environment.](#)** 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. ***Please see GOV.UK website for the most up to date information.***

### **What to do if there is a suspected case**

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace and has travelled to China or any of the 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. 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 it is an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk) and explain which affected country/region 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
- avoid touching people, surfaces and objects
- be reminded 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
- keep hand sanitiser to hand if available

Staff should continue to follow existing risk assessments and safe systems of work. Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the person has come into contact with must be cleaned including:

- all surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids
- all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones

In addition to this and as a precaution, PAHF has suspended all unnecessary visits to site until further notice.

If a person becomes ill in a shared space, these should be cleaned using disposable cloths and household detergents, according to current recommended workplace legislation and practice. Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.

All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and marked for storage until the result is available. If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste. Should the individual test positive, you will be instructed what to do with the waste.

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 site 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 required. Closure of the site is not recommended.

### **What to do if there is a confirmed case**

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. The management team will be contacted by the PHE local Health Protection Team to discuss the case (the person that is confirmed to have COVID-19), identify contacts (people who have been in contact with someone that has COVID-19) and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken. A risk assessment of the 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 confirmed case directly to advise on isolation and identify others they have been in contact with and will be in touch with any contacts of the confirmed case to provide them with appropriate advice.

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

- any staff member in close face-to-face or touching contact

- anyone talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the confirmed case was symptomatic
- anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids
- any close friendship groups or workgroups
- any staff member that is living in the same household as a confirmed case

Not all contacts are not considered cases and if they are well, they are very unlikely to have spread the infection to others. Those who have had close contact:

- will be asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the home isolation advice sheet on GOV.UK website
- they will be actively followed up by the Health Protection Team
- if they develop new symptoms or their existing symptoms worsen within their 14-day observation period they should call NHS 111 for re-assessment
- 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 14-day observation period and they test positive for COVID-19, they will become a confirmed case and will be treated for the infection

People who are self-isolating and have no symptoms do not pose a risk to others.

### **Certification of Absence**

We understand and respect everyone's need to stay at home when sick, especially where they are following government advice to do so.

We will show flexibility in the evidence we require from contracted employees that are self-isolating due to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, however a medical certificate may be requested after 7 days. (By law, medical evidence is not required for the first 7 days of sickness as employees can self-certify)

Sessional staff will not be required to obtain any medical certification for absence if self-isolating due to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. If you are affected by COVID-19 and you have no income you may be eligible to claim Universal Credit. (See GOV.UK guidance on employees with zero-hour contracts)

***For the most up to date information and full guidance on coronavirus & COVID-19 please see GOV.UK website***

# CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.



# BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.



# KILL IT

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.



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# Hand-washing technique with soap and water



1  
Wet hands with water



2  
Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces



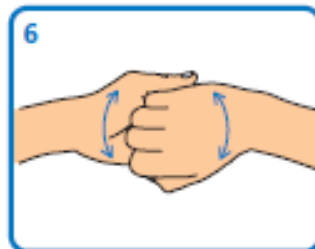
3  
Rub hands palm to palm



4  
Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand with fingers interlaced



5  
Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced



6  
Rub with back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



7  
Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using a rotational movement



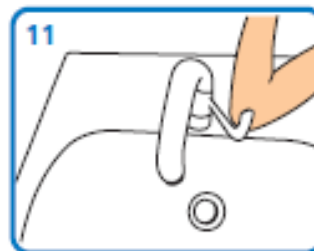
8  
Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion



9  
Rub each wrist with opposite hand



10  
Rinse hands with water



11  
Use elbow to turn off tap



12  
Dry thoroughly with a single-use towel



13  
Hand washing should take 15–30 seconds