

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy

As Coronavirus spreads worldwide we will work to ensure we keep up to date with the latest information from our Government, Public Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO) and pass this onto our staff and customers. We will follow Government advice, guidelines and any measures laid out.

We will endeavour to provide our full range of services for our customers; however, our number one concern is the health and well-being of our staff and customers, and we will implement measures to protect both as much as we can from Coronavirus.

We will:

- listen to all our staff's concerns and take appropriate measures to protect them, other staff members, customers and suppliers,
- work with our senior staff and Board of Trustees to keep up to date with latest advice on how to protect oneself and others and disseminate this to our staff and customers,
- implement any measures and/or actions laid down by the government in relation to Coronavirus, and
- work to continue to provide our services where possible.

Information dissemination

There is much information on national TV news programmes, internet and public health organisations. Individuals who have personal concerns regarding their health and that of their family can also contact their doctor or call 111 for advice.

We will ensure our staff are aware of any advice and measure to follow to help protect themselves and our customers and suppliers.

We have set up a directory regarding Coronavirus for our staff and Board for general information.

- For staff members this is on our organisations shared drive /STAFF BOARD/Coronavirus
- For our Board of Trustees this is in the Trustees shared drive /Coronavirus
- For our users we have information posters around the building, in reception and all our changing rooms and toilet facilities
- For all of the above and the wider public we have a page on our website with information on the Coronavirus from the WHO

Protecting yourself and others

Our main concern is the protection of our staff, users and suppliers. According to WHO most people who become infected experience mild illness and recover, but it can be more severe for others. It is important that all our staff take care of their health and take measures to protect others by doing the following:

- Washing their hands regularly – soap or hand gel can reduce the spread of the virus,

- Cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, ideally with a tissue, and wash hands afterwards – this will also help to prevent the spread of the virus,
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth especially if they have touched a surface contaminated by the virus, this could transfer it into their body, and
- Don't get too close to people coughing, sneezing or with a fever, they can propel small droplets containing the virus into the air, ideally keep 1 metre (3 feet) away.

Symptoms of Coronavirus

Symptoms seem to start with a fever, followed by a dry cough. After a week, it leads to shortness of breath and may require hospital treatment. The virus rarely seems to cause a runny nose or sneezing.

We require any staff member with a fever, coughing and difficulty breathing or if feeling unwell to follow normal absence reporting procedure, other measures include:

- Staying at home,
- Seeking medical attention and *calling in advance, and
- Following the directions of their local health authority, they will have the most up to date information on the situation in their area.

*Calling in advance will allow the health provider to quickly direct people to the right health facility. This will protect individuals and help prevent the spread of the virus and other infections.

Travel

Although we will not request staff cancel travel plans, we do ask that all our staff consider if any travel planned to affected areas is essential.

We will work with each member of staff returning from an area where the Coronavirus is spreading to discuss a plan of action even if they have no symptoms. This may result in that person working from home for the recommended fourteen days.

If an employee has recently visited (in the past fourteen days) areas where the Coronavirus is spreading they should follow the same guidelines above.

They should stay at home if feeling unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache and slight runny nose, until fully recovered. Avoiding contact with others and visits to medical facilities will allow these facilities to operate more effectively and help protect them and others from possible Coronavirus and also from other viruses.

Absence from work

Our usual sick leave policy and procedures and pay entitlements apply if a member of staff is off work with coronavirus i.e. they have tested positive for the virus, they have been advised by a doctor or following a call with 111 to self-isolate or with medical certification. This is not the case if they are just worried about catching the virus and want to stay home.

This does not apply if an employee is not sick but is in self-isolation or quarantine either by their own decision or have or are abroad in an affected area and are not allowed to travel back to the UK.

If in self-isolation (current advice is for fourteen days) or unable to return to the UK they are required to notify their Line Manager who will work with them on a plan of action. The reasons for self-isolation will need to be a genuine one and is at the discretion of the organisation and only with agreement by their Line Manager. This will include, for the period of absence:

- working from home,
- tacking annual leave or TOIL,
- tacking unpaid leave, or
- a mixture of the above options.

If asked not to come to work

If a staff member is not sick but we take the decision that they are not to come to work, they will get their usual pay. In such cases we may ask that they work from home.

Time off to look after someone

Although we want to support all our staff, absences have a huge impact on our organisation. We will work to support our staff when they need to take time off work to help someone who depends on them in an unexpected event or emergency, including situations relating to Coronavirus. For example, if their child's school is closed or to help their child or another dependant if they are sick or need to go into isolation or hospital.

Time off to look after a dependant is covered in our Special Leave Policy and includes cases where a member of staff needs to take time off to look after a dependent who is sick with Coronavirus.

This only covers situations where a dependant is severely ill. It does not cover cases of self-isolation or mild illnesses.

The amount of time off an employee takes to look after someone must be reasonable for the situation. For example, they might take two days off to start with, and if more time is needed, they may take annual leave or be required to work from home.

If employees do not want to come to work

We understand that some staff might feel they do not want to come to work if they are afraid of catching Coronavirus. We will listen to any concerns staff may have. If there are genuine concerns, we will try to resolve them to protect the health and well-being of our staff and users.

Although arrangements may be made for an employee to work from home or take the time off as holiday or unpaid leave this will only be in agreement with their Line Manger and after we have looked at the risks to that employee, other staff, the organisation and how genuine the persons reasons for not coming to work are.

The decision to allow an employee absence is discretionary and if an employee refuses to come to work it could result in disciplinary action.

If someone becomes unwell at work

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace and has recently come back from an area affected by Coronavirus, they should:

- move away from other people,
- go to a room or area behind a closed door,
- avoid touching anything,
- cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow,
- use a separate bathroom from others, if possible,
- use their own mobile phone to call their Line Manger and either:
 - NHS advice: 111

- an ambulance if they're seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk: 999

They should tell the operator:

- their symptoms
- which country they've returned from in the last 14 days

If someone with Coronavirus comes to work

If someone with Coronavirus comes to work, the workplace does not necessarily have to close.

The local Public Health England (PHE) health protection team will get in contact with the employer to:

- discuss the case,
- identify people who have been in contact with the affected person,
- carry out a risk assessment, and
- advise on any actions or precautions to take