



COVID-19 Policy

Overview:

This policy is designed to provide you with important information about the Coronavirus outbreak and what we are doing to support our staff, volunteers and clients/customers.

Please continue to take time to read the information and ask questions if you have any concerns. This policy is non contractual, it may be amended or added to at any time and it will be updated, as appropriate, to reflect changing advice. It applies to all staff, including those who work for us on a casual basis, which includes our volunteers.

Symptoms:

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

But, these symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness.

The Coronavirus Symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

Current guidance indicates that among those who become infected, some will exhibit no symptoms.

Of those who do develop an illness, the majority will have a mild to moderate illness similar to seasonal flu.

A minority will develop complications severe enough to require hospital care, most often pneumonia and in a small number of these the illness may be severe enough to lead to death.

Preventative steps and hygiene:

We are taking all reasonable steps to protect your health and safety.

We require all staff and volunteers to follow these simple steps to help stop the spread of germs like Coronavirus.

Do:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – only use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Don't:

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

At risk groups:

Current advice is that the risk of severe illness increases amongst people aged 70 and over and those with underlying health risks, such as diabetes, heart disease and lung disease and those with weakened immune systems.

Pregnant women have also recently been included in the “at risk” group.

Please tell us if you think you are at risk:

1 Because you are in one of the high risk groups or you care for someone who is considered to be high risk;

or 2 Because you have recently returned from one of the countries considered to be high risk

3 You have been in contact with, or live in the same household as, someone who is being tested for, has tested positive for Coronavirus or has been advised to self isolate because they have coronavirus symptoms.

We will conduct an individual risk assessment for anyone we believe to be in a high risk group and will put in place appropriate safeguards.

What to do if you have Coronavirus symptoms:

If you become ill at work, please speak to your line manager, although this is now not mandatory. We would like to be informed as we would with any illness that presents itself within the workplace.

If you become ill at home, please do make us aware and we will give the necessary advice in line with new government guidance. You'll need to telephone us in accordance with our usual absence policy.

What to do if you test positive for Coronavirus:

Under new government guidance, if you test positive for Coronavirus, you are no longer required to self-isolate. You are still expected to present yourself to work unless you are too unwell to do so.

You must however, still keep contact to a minimum and maintain a good level of hygiene throughout the day.

If you choose to take time off in the event of a positive test, you will not be paid for that time off. This will be noted as unauthorised absence.

If you are in an “at risk” category, please come and speak with the line manager, so appropriate action can be taken.

We will not inform anyone else about your condition unless it’s necessary to do so and we are legally able to.

Our overriding obligation is to protect the health and safety of our staff, and we may therefore have to speak to your colleagues and other people with whom you’ve been in close contact in order to protect them.

Any information we disclose will be limited to what is necessary for that protection.

Public Health England have now removed track and trace and COVID passes are no longer required.

What to do if you are advised by a medical professional to self-isolate:

If for some reason you are at higher risk, you may be advised to self-isolate.

This means you should:

- Stay at home
- Not go to work or public areas
- Not use public transport or taxis
- Ask friends, family members or delivery services to carry out errands for you
- Try to avoid visitors to your home, although it’s okay for friends, family and delivery drivers to drop off food.

There is no guidance set on how long this will be necessary, so you should seek the advice of a medical professional in this instance.

The government has up to date information for individuals who have travelled overseas and returned to the UK. If you have been abroad recently, please consult this and inform us if you are required to self-isolate.

Sick pay policy:

Statutory sick pay:

We are no longer required by law to make any payments for absence relating to Covid-19.

We are aware that guidance has been fully relaxed around self-isolation and testing but please can you do the following in order to keep everyone as safe as possible:

- Wash hands/use antibacterial hand gel when arriving on site
- Sanitise hands between deliveries
- Keep your distance when delivery to clients

Please keep the senior manager informed of any positive results as soon as you can.