

# CORONAVIRUS POLICY

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to address the current Covid 19 coronavirus which is currently infecting people across the world.
- 1.2 In light of the increasing number of cases in the UK and guidance being issued by the government we have developed this policy to communicate to all staff some of the steps we are taking to prevent the spread of infection and to answer some of your questions about what will happen in the event that we have a reported case within the workforce or wider community.
- 1.3 It is important to note that the guidance on this issue is changing and we will continually monitor and update this policy. We will communicate any changes to you as and when they happen.
- 1.4 We have assigned Tony Jack as responsible for this policy and ensuring that we are up to date with what is happening globally, nationally and locally. Any questions should be directed to them.

## 2. Steps we are taking to prevent the spread of the virus

- 2.1 Displaying notices for staff and visitors highlighting guidance provided by the UK government.
- 2.2 Additional hand sanitiser available for usage in office areas
- 2.3 Additional cleaning of door handles, desks and communal spaces.
- 2.4 Provision of anti-bacterial wipes for usage.
- 2.5 Cancellation of face to face meetings and using skype or telephone where possible

## 3. What we need from you?

- 3.1 Please ensure that you remain vigilant to the symptoms of the virus.
- 3.2 Frequently wash your hands.
- 3.3 If you cough or sneeze, please use a tissue and dispose of the tissue immediately.
- 3.4 Co-operate with managers and supervisors to ensure that you communicate regularly any symptoms or possible exposure to the virus.
- 3.5 Please read the guidance from reliable sources (listed below). Whilst social media can be an excellent tool for obtaining in the moment information it cannot be used as a reliable source of medical and legal information.
- 3.6 Test your internet and computer systems to see if you can work from home and/or communicate with colleagues in the event that you need to work from home or self-isolate.

## 4. Symptoms of the coronavirus

### 4.1 Symptoms are:

- a) a cough
- b) a high temperature
- c) shortness of breath

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

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

4.4 Symptoms list has been taken from the NHS website which you can view here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

## 5. What to do if you have symptoms?

5.1 NHS 111 has an online coronavirus service that can tell you if you need medical help and advise you what to do.

5.2 Use this service if:

5.2.1 you think you might have coronavirus

5.2.2 in the last 14 days you've been to a country or area with a high risk of coronavirus

5.2.3 you've been in close contact with someone with coronavirus

5.3 Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Call 111 if you need to speak to someone.

5.4 There is an online 111 service available here: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

5.5 Advice taken from <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

## 6. Travel Policy

6.1 If you are taking annual leave and plan to travel out of the UK you must inform Lisa Donald HR Manager of the location of your trip.

6.2 If your holiday is not already booked and paid for and you plan to travel to a country or region which is currently affected by the virus (as stipulated in the Home Office guidance on the .gov.uk website) then we may ask you to postpone or change your plans.

6.3 If you travel out of the UK to a region or country that is listed as being affected (as stipulated in the Home Office guidance on the .gov.uk website) and there is less than 48 hours between your return to the UK and return to work then we require you must work from home (if available) or you will have to take holiday, or unpaid leave for this time.

6.4 If you have any symptoms of the coronavirus whilst away or on return to the UK, then you must follow the guidance above and contact 111 and inform Lisa Donald as soon as possible.

6.5 You should not attend at work if you have any symptoms until you have been cleared to return by the 111 service or medical professional.

## Frequently asked questions

### 7. What if I have possible exposure to the virus, but no symptoms and I am told to remain at home by a medical professional or on medical advice issued?

7.1 You must follow the medical advice given and inform Lisa Donald immediately by telephone giving full details of what has happened and the advice you have received.

7.2 If you have received the instruction to remain at home (self-isolation) in writing, then you must provide a copy to Lisa Donald.

7.3 According to Public Health England the period of self-isolation required is 14 days however you will be advised of the length of time that you should stay at home by 111 or a medical professional.

- 7.4 If you have received instructions to remain at home (self-isolate) from the 111 service or other medical professional, then you will receive payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for this time from the 1<sup>st</sup> working day you self-isolate. This is subject to current criteria issued by.gov.uk 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020
- 7.5 If you have not received medical advice or instruction to self-isolate and you are fit for work (i.e. not actually sick) then you will not receive pay if you choose to stay at home. There may be an option to take holiday or unpaid leave during this time. Please speak to Lisa Donald if you wish to discuss self-isolation without medical advice.

## **8. What if I am diagnosed with the virus?**

- 8.1 You must follow the medical advice given and inform the office immediately by telephone giving full details of what has happened and the advice you have received.
- 8.2 If you have received the instruction to remain at home (self-isolation) in writing, then you must provide a copy to the office.
- 8.3 You must remain at home until you are fit to return to work and/or advised that you may return or leave self-isolation.
- 8.4 You will receive payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for this. This is subject to current criteria issued by.gov.uk

## **9. What happens if we decide to close the workplace or ask staff to stay away from the office/premises due to concerns?**

- 9.1 If we take the decision to close the workplace then where possible we will make arrangements for you to continue working from home.
- 9.2 You may be asked to undertake different tasks or other types of work from home during this time.
- 9.3 We would ask for your cooperation during this time in helping, where possible, for the business and work to continue. Therefore, you may need to be flexible and use your own IT equipment, telephone or resources.

## **10. What happens if I want to stay at home because I am worried about the virus?**

- 10.1 If you have not received medical advice or instruction to self-isolate and you are fit for work (i.e. not actually sick) then you will not receive pay if you choose to stay at home.
- 10.2 There may be an option to take holiday or unpaid leave during this time. Please speak to Lisa Donald if you wish to discuss self-isolation without medical advice.
- 10.3 Where possible we will seek to allay any fears, you have and take steps to address any risk of the virus. It is therefore important to communicate with Lisa Donald and ensure we have a full understanding of your concerns and reasons for wanting to remain at home.
- 10.4 If you fail to attend at work and have no legitimate reason for doing so, we may deal with this in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

## **11. What if I am told to stay at home (self-isolate) but want to come into work?**

11.1 If you are told that you must stay at home (self-isolate) by a medical professional or the 111 service, then you must not come in to work.

11.2 We have a duty of care to safeguard the health and welfare of colleagues and therefore if you refuse and come into work, we will have no choice but to deal with this in accordance with our disciplinary policy.

## **12. Will time off for the coronavirus be added to my sickness record?**

12.1 If you are told to stay home (self-isolate) by a medical professional or 111, because you have the virus or are at risk of exposure, then we will not add this time to your sickness record and it will not be included for any future sickness absence management process.

12.2 We recognise that this is a unique situation and that we all have an obligation to help to contain the impact of the virus and prevent the spread amongst colleagues and therefore we will not treat this absence in same way for disciplinary, capability and performance.

## **13. What if my child's school or nursery is closed?**

13.1 You have the right to emergency time off for dependants. Please see our Time off for Dependants Policy in the Staff Handbook.

13.2 The right to time off for a dependant is the right to take (limited time) unpaid leave. It is intended to be used for short periods whilst you make alternative arrangements for the care of the child.

13.3 We recognise that if the closure of the school or nursery becomes long term it may not be possible to make alternative arrangements and, in this case, we will discuss with you alternative working arrangements, working from home or other options available.

13.4 Where possible we will seek to make arrangements for you to continue working in some form so that you can continue to receive pay.

## **14. What if I wish to volunteer to help with the coronavirus in the UK?**

14.1 You may be aware that the government have announced emergency legislation which will enable individuals to volunteer to help with the coronavirus in the UK and retain their main employment for up to 4 weeks.

14.2 Currently the details of how this will work have not been released but once they are we will update this policy accordingly.

14.3 If you are a person with the skills and experience required to work in a health, community health and social care setting and you would like to volunteer then please speak to Lisa Donald who will discuss with you.

## Resources

Self-isolation guidance:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation?mc\\_cid=0269909608&mc\\_eid=f203c794a3](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation?mc_cid=0269909608&mc_eid=f203c794a3)

Government updates:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

ACAS guidance:

<https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Signed:  **Martyn Burnett,**  
Managing Director

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