

## **SPECIFIC POLICY REQUIREMENT: CORONAVIRUS**

**To be read in conjunction with the Business Contingency and Emergency Planning, Good Governance, Infection Control & Cooperating with other Providers policies**

The Coronavirus disease named COVID-19, has now been classed by the World Health Organisation as a Pandemic. As the virus has the potential to spread extensively, it's likely to pose a significant challenge to many organisations.

Providers must work in a collaborative and multiagency way to mitigate the spread and contain the risk of the virus.

The government, Public Health England and all Local Authorities will be responsible for the advice and guidance disseminated to their Local Providers.

As a provider there are several things that need to be in place and that are continually monitored as the spread and breadth of the virus increases.

### **Inform**

Staff need to be aware of the responsibilities of informing the management of any symptoms of the virus. The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 and 14 days.

Symptoms of Coronavirus are:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

If staff exhibit any of the above symptoms, they must stay at home for the required time Refer to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms>

Do not go to your GP, an Outpatient Walk- In or Hospital. Follow the advice given on the above website. Staff must then inform their employer as soon as practicable to inhibit the spread of the virus.

Employers advice will then be given to individual staff who may have contracted the virus on what they must do next including where a sick note has been issued.

## **Employees returning from Annual Leave**

All employees returning from certain designated areas must contact NHS 111 and inform their employer, of the advice given before they return to work.

The Government updates the information about COVID-19 at 14:00 daily, and it's vital that everyone keeps up to date with the latest official advice on travelling to and from certain countries.

### **(UPDATE AS NECESSARY USING LATEST GOVERNMENT DATA)**

This is in order to delay the spread of infection to both staff, service users and residents. Staff must be kept up to date through formal identified communication channels.

## **Face Masks**

Employees are not generally recommended to wear facemasks (also known as surgical masks or respirators) to protect against the virus. Facemasks are only recommended to be worn by symptomatic individuals and those staff involved in their care and support (advised by a healthcare worker) to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people. However, guidance from CCG's, and Health Professionals can vary in different regions of the country and so ensure you follow local advice

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.

Any member of staff who deals with members of the public from behind a full screen will be protected from airborne particles.

## **Personal protective equipment distribution**

The Department of Health and Social Care began distribution of fluid repellent facemasks from the pandemic flu stock to care homes and home care providers on 18 March.

Every care home and home care provider will be receiving at least 300 facemasks.

Providers are not required to take any action; the stock will be delivered to them. The National Supply Distribution line is working rapidly with wholesalers to ensure longer-term supply of all aspects of personal care.

If care providers have immediate concerns over their supply of PPE, there is now a dedicated line: The National Supply Disruption line Tel: 0800 915 9964 Email: [supplydisruptionservice@nhsbsa.nhs.uk](mailto:supplydisruptionservice@nhsbsa.nhs.uk)

## **Communication**

This is a developing situation and changes daily. The following methods will be used to update staff on any developments of new advice issued by the Government or other statutory bodies:

Telephone  
Email  
Letter  
Text message  
Company Intranet  
Social Media

## **Prepare**

In order to prepare for any staff shortage, the Business Contingency Plan must be robust and tested to ensure reliability.

It's important to keep up to date with Government and Public Health England advice as the situation is developing hour by hour.

There are basic but effective ways to follow to help prevent the infection's spread including:

- Making sure your workplace is clean and hygienic
- Promoting regular and thorough hand-washing by everyone
- Providing all employees with an alcohol-based hand rub which is at least 60% alcohol
- Staff, visitors, contractors, service users and residents need to be aware of the importance of good personal hygiene practice including used tissue appropriately disposed of immediately after use
- All staff need to be aware of the need to comply with the Infection Control Policy

The Identified Lead or Teams must be the communication channel that feeds back to senior management who have the responsibility for the liaison with Local Authorities designated Leads.

Local Authorities will have already begun preparations to manage the pandemic it is therefore crucial that any guidance and advice issued via your Local Authority Commissioning is followed and implemented. Several Local Authorities have already issued contingency planning assessments for providers.

With over 155 Local Authorities it is not possible for us to give you a one size fits all policy, but we set out below the steps to take as a self-assessment exercise in managing the risk within your own organisation.

### **Business Contingency Planning**

As part of Regulation 17 Good Governance every provider will have in place a Business Contingency Plan. This plan needs to be reviewed, amended and tested for its reliability. Please find attached a Self-Assessment Contingency Checklist which should be used to ascertain the robustness of the Plan ensuring that any Amber or Red areas identified in the checklist are remedied.

As the situation develops those responsible for the contingency plan will meet regularly to review the preparations and ensure they are still fit for purpose. It is important to act early, even if planned contingencies are not then needed.

This organisation has a statutory duty of care for people's health and safety. Looking after our Service Users/Residents & Employees, health, well-being and safety is our number one priority during this outbreak.

### **Workforce Planning:**

Schedules will be planned based on essential calls (RED) prioritised First

Available staff will be asked to work overtime in accordance with working time regulations

Asking family members to act as the extra staff member on double up calls (subject to risk assessment being carried out)

Where possible cancel all annual leave

Offer incentives to work additional shifts/hours

Office staff to assist where possible

Use Agency Staff if required

Work with other providers to cooperate with each other and share resources where possible

Office staff will work remotely

Office will be closed if necessary

Flexible Working will be implemented

### **For Residential Services**

Available staff will be asked to work overtime in accordance with working time regulations

Ask staff to work split shifts

Where possible Management and Office staff to assist with care tasks

Use agency staff if required

Where possible cancel all annual leave

Work with other homes in the area to share resources

Flexible Working to be implemented

Are staff able to be accommodated overnight

### **Service Users or Residents**

All steps must be taken to protect and mitigate the spread of the virus to the people who matter most, our service users or residents. It is important that staff remain calm, diligent and observation will be key to picking up any likely infection source. Close monitoring of service users or residents should be introduced in order that any contagion is picked up as early as possible and appropriately reported in order that the required measures are put in place. Follow specific government guidance for care homes and community settings.

All service users, and their wider support network will be contacted to assess their wellbeing and to inform them that there is a disruption to the service and therefore an interruption or change to their normal service is going to be made. It is important that people are reassured during this time and anyone that is particularly alarmed or distressed should be offered some support.

Reassurance and support to service users or residents is paramount to prevent panic and distress.

For more information please click the links below:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19#guidance-on-facemasks>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19>
- [https://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKEAT/2020/0234\\_19\\_2003.html](https://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKEAT/2020/0234_19_2003.html)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

**Please complete this contingency Self-Assessment checklist.  
We recommend that this document is reviewed daily by the Organisations lead or team**

<b>Business Contingency Actions</b>	<b>Fully Ready</b>	<b>Part Ready</b>	<b>Not Ready</b>	<b>Action Taken/ Risk Mitigation</b>
Identify your Lead or team manager				
Have you tested your Plan for reliability				
Identify and mitigate risks				
Accessible, up to date and reliable information from government sources				
Update your communication strategy to staff, visitors and family				
Test your Plan with the staff and evaluate their reaction				
Check all supplies of all PPE, consumables and medicines				
Check pharmacy reliability				
Financial check on cash flow requirements.				

Check and test contingency of employee absences of 10%, 20% and 50%	Green	Yellow	Red	
Institute Red, Amber and Green priority for all service users/ residents	Green	Yellow	Red	
Consider how to reduce contact between staff to staff and service users/ residents e.g. staff or residents' meetings, visitors etc.	Green	Yellow	Red	
Monitor and implement government and employment advice on sick leave, pay and return to work	Green	Yellow	Red	
Consider flexible and at home working for relevant staff	Green	Yellow	Red	
Ensure adherence to all relevant policies and procedures	Green	Yellow	Red	
Establish quarantine procedures where applicable	Green	Yellow	Red	
Communicate all roles and responsibilities for triggering the Plan	Green	Yellow	Red	
In case of outbreak take immediate steps to reduce footfall for non-essential activities	Green	Yellow	Red	
Consider a central point of communication for Coronavirus only	Green	Yellow	Red	
Support and assist staff and communicate to allay rumours and anxiety	Green	Yellow	Red	
Develop platforms, intranet, social media, email for communicating actions to staff, customers and visitors.	Green	Yellow	Red	

How effective are the communication systems	Green	Yellow	Red	
Establish connection with Public Health Protection Team and all Local Authority relevant departments e.g. Local Emergency Planning.	Green	Yellow	Red	