

Infectious Disease (Including Coronavirus (Covid-19)) Policy

Policy

As the government have moved their strategy into the 'Delay' phase of virus control in relation to Covid-19 it has and will continue to have effect on many aspects of our business. With that in mind, and noting that guidance will evolve and change, our policy will be to continue working as normal with some extra safeguards in place.

Some of our clients will have their own approaches and policies that will be similar, but not necessarily identical to ours. As always, when on a client's premises/site their policies should be followed accordingly and may take precedent over ours. When the premises/site is wholly controlled by Infnitus the following should be enacted.

As per the current advice, the most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves remains washing their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Make sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue, put it in a bin and wash your hands.

Anyone who shows certain symptoms is being asked to self-isolate for 7 days, regardless of whether they have travelled to affected areas. This means people should stay at home and avoid all but essential contact with others for 7 days from the point of displaying mild symptoms, to slow the spread of infection.

The symptoms are:

- a high temperature (37.8 degrees and above)
- a new, continuous cough

You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days contact NHS 111 online at 111.nhs.uk. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

Infection control

As people are already practicing social distancing it would seem wise at this point to state that physical contact should be avoided except when absolutely necessary.

- Avoid handshakes and hugs
 - A simple 'hello' will do
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
 - Use a tissue or the crook of your elbow
 - Tissues are available from the office if you can't obtain any
- Increase your personal space to 2m
 - limit being in others personal space to under 15 minutes
- Wash your hands regularly
 - be mindful that type of soap and temperature according to guidance is not important, although warm/hot water and harsher soaps can lead to skin irritation and increased risk of infection
 - Surgical gloves are available from the office
- Use hand sanitiser when soap and water are not available
 - Hand sanitiser is available from the office and in some cases will be issued on site
- Clean your workspace
 - Use soap and water to wipe down surfaces and do this on a regular basis

- In some cases, wipes will be provided

Self-isolation

If you develop the symptoms of infection contact management at the first opportunity and inform us. Self-isolate at home and follow the guidance [here](#). Sick pay will be available from the first day of illness.

Lone Workers

Our IPD010 Lone Working Policy remains unchanged and it is likely that those who are lone working are at reduced risk of infection provided the 'Infection Control' guidance is followed.

Door Supervisors

During the course of DS duties physical intervention risks and therefore physical contact risks are a recognised daily probability.

Follow the IPD018 Physical Intervention Policy for all PI situations and in addition:

- Wear surgical gloves if PI is anticipated
- Wash your hands and any contaminated clothing/surfaces afterward

If you suspect the presence of someone who is infected use your conflict management skills to negotiate a peaceful resolution instead of physical contact.

- Under no circumstances are customers to be required to submit to testing (thermometers etc) before entry
- If PI skills are used wash your hands and any contaminated clothing/surfaces afterward
- Report the situation to Infnitus management at the earliest opportunity

There currently appears to be no evidence or guidance that Covid-19 is caught from the blood of others or is reportable under RIDDOR.

Effects on work patterns

There is likely to be a fair amount of disruption to our work patterns as some events are cancelled, and there may be some increase in requirements from other businesses if staff go sick or companies temporarily shut.

We will aim to continue as normal with our operations and those who remain well or recover from infection may be asked to cover shortfalls. Please be prepared for change, as those changes may come at short notice.

Guidance

Further information is available at [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)
See hand washing guidance [here](#)

Government guidance for businesses can be found [here](#) and is reproduced in full below.
Updated 10/03/2020

1. Background and scope of guidance

This guidance will assist employers and businesses in providing advice to staff on:

- the novel coronavirus, COVID-19
- how to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19
- what to do if someone with suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a workplace setting
- what advice to give to individuals who have travelled to specific areas, as outlined by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) (full list is available [here](#))
- advice for the certification of absence from work resulting from COVID-19

2. Information about the virus

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 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.

3. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19

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.

4. How COVID-19 is spread

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 produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes containing the virus 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.

5. Preventing spread of infection

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

Public Health England (PHE) recommends that the following general cold and flu precautions are 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 hand washing guidance
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

If you are worried about symptoms, please call NHS 111. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment.

Further information is available on the PHE blog and NHS.UK.

Face masks for the general public are not recommended to protect from infection, as there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments.

People who have returned from Hubei Province, including Wuhan, in the last 14 days should stay at home whether they have symptoms or not. This includes avoiding attending an education setting or work until 14 days after they leave Hubei Province.

People who have returned from Hubei Province, including Wuhan, in the last 14 days should avoid attending work. They should call NHS 111 for advice and stay at home.

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.

With regards to travel information to China or other countries for individuals working in the UK, we recommend following the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) country advice pages.

At present, FCO advises against all travel to Hubei Province due to the ongoing novel COVID-19 outbreak. The FCO also advises against all but essential travel to the rest of mainland China (not including Hong Kong and Macao).

6. How long the virus can survive

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

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.

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

See hand washing guidance.

7. Guidance on facemasks

Employees are not 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 (advised by a healthcare worker) to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people.

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.

8. What to do if an employee or a member of the public becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19

If the person has not been to specified areas in the last 14 days, then normal practice should continue.

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace and has travelled to China or 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, such as a staff office. 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 an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk) and explain which country 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. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised 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.

If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available.

9. Returning from travel overseas to affected areas

People who have returned from Hubei Province, including Wuhan, Iran, Daegu or Cheongdo in the Republic of Korea, and any area within Italy under containment measures in the last 14 days should avoid attending work. They should call NHS 111 for advice and stay at home.

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.

All other staff should continue to attend work.

10. What to do if a member of staff or the public with suspected COVID-19 has recently been in your workplace

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 workplace 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 that the workplace needs to take.

11. What to do if a member of staff or the public with confirmed COVID-19 has recently been in your workplace

Closure of the workplace is not recommended.

The management team of the office or workplace will be contacted by the PHE local Health Protection Team to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.

A risk assessment of each 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 case directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the case to provide them with appropriate advice.

Advice on cleaning of communal areas such as offices or toilets will be given by the Health Protection Team. and is outlined later in this document.

12. When individuals in the workplace have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19

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

- any employee in close face-to-face or touching contact
- talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the employee was symptomatic
- anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids
- close friendship groups or workgroups
- any employee living in the same household as a confirmed case

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 stay at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the home isolation advice sheet
- 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 reassessment
- 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

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.

13. Certifying absence from work

By law, medical evidence is not required for the first 7 days of sickness. After 7 days, it is for the employer to determine what evidence they require, if any, from the employee. This does not need to be fit note (Med 3 form) issued by a GP or other doctor.

Your employee will be advised to isolate themselves and not to work in contact with other people by NHS 111 or PHE if they are a carrier of, or have been in contact with, an infectious or contagious disease, such as COVID-19.

We strongly suggest that employers use their discretion around the need for medical evidence for a period of absence where an employee is advised to stay at home due to suspected COVID-19, in accordance with the public health advice being issued by the government.

14. Advice for staff returning from travel anywhere else in the world within the last 14 days

Currently, there are minimal cases outside the listed areas and therefore the likelihood of an individual coming into contact with a confirmed case is extremely low.

These staff can continue to attend work unless they have been informed that they have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19

If individuals are aware that they have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should contact NHS 111 for further advice.

The latest country information is available on the NaTHNac Travel Pro website.

15. Handling post, packages or food from affected areas

Employees should continue to follow existing risk assessments and safe systems of work. There is no perceived increase in risk for handling post or freight from specified areas.

16. Cleaning offices and public spaces where there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19

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

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.

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.

17. Rubbish disposal, including tissues

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.