

# Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Policy/Advice

This Policy/Advice is based on the recommendations of the UK Chief Medical officers and current Government guidelines.

Download our COVID-19 Risk Assessment [here](#).

## What is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Generally, coronavirus 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.

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China.

## Symptoms of coronavirus

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

But 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.

## How coronavirus is spread

This new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. If an infected person has droplets on their hands from a cough or sneeze, then they could pass the infected droplets to another person through touch such as shaking hands.

It's very unlikely it can be spread through things like packages or food, however, as the virus can stay on other surfaces it is best to follow good hygiene practices identified including the regular cleaning of surfaces with appropriate cleaning materials or leaving packaging untouched until the virus has safely died.

## Do public places need to be avoided?

The government understands that employers and businesses may have concerns about how they can remain open for business safely, and so play their part in preventing the spread of the virus. All employees should be encouraged to work from home unless it is impossible for them to do so. Not everyone can work from home: certain jobs require people to travel to, from and for their work – for instance to operate machinery, work in construction or manufacturing, or to deliver front line services. These places should still follow government guidelines in terms of social distancing and/or wearing suitable PPE/RPE to protect themselves and others.

## Safe Working Practices

Businesses and workplaces should make every possible effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, workplaces should make every effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government

A few general indicators will be relevant to the majority of business settings when looking at social distancing in the workplace:

- Make regular announcements to remind staff and/or customers to follow social distancing advice and wash their hands regularly
- Encourage the use of digital and remote transfers of material where possible rather than paper format, such as using e-forms, emails and e-banking
- Provide additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water, hand sanitiser and tissues and encourage staff to use them
- Where it is not possible to remain 2 metres apart, staff should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face if possible
- Where face-to-face contact is essential, this should be kept to 15 minutes or less wherever possible
- As much as possible, keep teams of workers together (co-horting), and keep teams as small as possible

Members of staff who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable, as well as individuals whom they live with, should be supported as they follow the recommendations set out in guidance on social distancing and shielding respectively

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.

Staff who are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) should not travel to or attend the workplace.

Staff may be feeling anxious about coming to work and also about impacts on livelihood. Workplaces should ensure staff are fully briefed and appropriately supported at this time and:

- Keep everyone updated on actions being taken to reduce risks of exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace
- Ensure employees who are in a vulnerable group are strongly advised to follow social distancing guidelines
- Ensure employees who are in an extremely vulnerable group and should be shielded are supported to stay at home
- Make sure everyone's contact numbers and emergency contact details are up to date
- Make sure managers know how to spot symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and are clear on any relevant processes, for example sickness reporting and sick pay, and procedures in case someone in the workplace is potentially infected and needs to take the appropriate action
- Make sure there are places to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, and encourage everyone to do so regularly
- Provide hand sanitiser and tissues for staff, and encourage them to use them

Any member of staff who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (a new, continuous cough and/or a high temperature) should be sent home and stay at home for 7 days from onset of symptoms. If the member of staff lives in a household where someone else is unwell

with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) then they must stay at home in line with the stay at home guidance detailed below.

Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products

Employees having to work should avoid using public transport.

### **How long does the coronavirus last on surfaces?**

In the workplace you should be aware how long the virus can survive outside the human body, especially when handling packaging.

Recent studies have shown that the virus can survive on cardboard for up to 24 hours, plastic and stainless steel for 2 to 3 days but longer on door handles, plastic-coated or laminated worktops and other hard surfaces, possibly up to 9 days unless cleaned properly, but has found that copper surfaces tend to kill the virus in 4 hours.

As a result, it's good practice to clean your mobile phone, laptop, keyboard etc where the virus may be present.

### **How to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus**

#### **Do**

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- Always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- 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 and wash your hands afterwards
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Follow social distancing advice, including at work where possible

#### **Don't**

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Work in close contact with colleagues if it is not necessary

### **Self-isolation/Stay at Home Guidance**

The main messages are:

- Anyone with symptoms should stay at home for at least 7 days.
- If you live with other people, they should stay at home for at least 14 days, to avoid spreading the infection outside the home.
- After 14 days, anyone you live with who does not have symptoms can return to their normal routine.
- But, if anyone in your home gets symptoms, they should stay at home for 7 days from the day their symptoms start. Even if it means they're at home for longer than 14 days.

Information:

If you live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else for them to stay for 14 days.

If you have to stay at home together, try to keep away from each other as much as possible.

### **If you still have symptoms after 7 days**

- After 7 days, if you no longer have a high temperature you can return to your normal routine.
- If you still have a high temperature, stay at home until your temperature returns to normal.
- If you still have a cough after 7 days, but your temperature is normal, you do not need to continue staying at home. A cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

This action will help protect others in your community while you are infectious.

### **What else you can do?**

- Plan ahead and ask others for help to ensure you can successfully stay at home
- Ask your employer, friends and family to help you to get the things you need to stay at home
- Stay at least 2 metres (about 3 steps) away from other people in your home and at work whenever possible
- Sleep alone, if possible
- Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser
- Stay away from vulnerable individuals, such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions, as much as possible

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](#). If you have no internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999

### **Overseas Travel**

#### **Do not travel abroad unless it's essential**

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) have advised British people against all non-essential travel, except to countries and territories listed by the government. This applies for an indefinite period due to unprecedented international border closures and other restrictions. All countries may restrict travel without notice.

#### **When you return to the UK: protect yourself and others**

When you return to the UK on a flight from another country, you should follow the government advice that applies to everyone:

- Go straight home from the airport, avoiding public transport where possible
- If you are returning from a country not listed on the exempt list, the you should self-isolate for 14 days following your return.

If you start to have symptoms like a high temperature or frequent cough, go straight home and self-isolate for 7 days and call NHS 111 if your symptoms worsen.

### **Medical Help**

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

## Test and Trace

Get a free NHS test to check if you have coronavirus. Anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can get a free test to check if they have the virus. Some people without symptoms can have the test too.

You can get a test:

- for yourself, if you have coronavirus symptoms now (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- for someone you live with, if they have coronavirus symptoms
- for yourself, if you have been told to have a test before you go into hospital, for example, for surgery
- for yourself, if you live in Leicester, where there is a coronavirus outbreak

You need to get the test done in the first 5 days of having symptoms.

Explains what kind of test you can order on different days – up to day 6 of symptoms

<b>Days since symptoms started</b>	<b>What you can order</b>
Days 1 to 4	Book a drive-through or walk-through test at a test site or order a home test kit.  Order the kit by 3pm on day 4 to make sure you can do the test in the first 5 days.
Day 5	Book a test at a test site. It's too late to order a home test kit.
Day 6 onwards	It's too late for a test.

You can apply for a test online.