



Coronavirus (COVID 19) Guidance

Based on information as of 3 March 2020

Crossroads Together has set out the following guidance to assist staff delivering our services to feel supported.

The organisation will seek advice from and guidance the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health England (PHE).

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.

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

How COVID-19 is spread

From what is known about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 meters - 7 feet) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission; these are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, in the same way colds spread.

There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- ✓ Infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 meters - 7 feet) 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 a door knob or shaking hands, then touching own face).

The Department of Health's current understanding is that the virus doesn't survive on surfaces for longer than 72 hours. There is currently little evidence that people without symptoms are infectious to others.

How long the virus can survive

How long any respiratory virus survives will depend on several factors, for example:

- ✓ what surface the virus is on
- ✓ whether it is exposed to sunlight
- ✓ differences in temperature and humidity
- ✓ exposure to cleaning products

Preventing the 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.

There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- ✓ washing your hands often-with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds), or use alcohol sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if handwashing facilities are not available (available from your local office) – this is particularly important after taking public transport.
- ✓ covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. See - Catch It, Bin It, Kill It (<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/5016>)
- ✓ employees should wash their hands:
 - ❖ before leaving home
 - ❖ on arrival at work
 - ❖ after using the toilet
 - ❖ after breaks
 - ❖ before food preparation
 - ❖ before eating any food, including snacks
 - ❖ before leaving work
 - ❖ on arrival at home
- ✓ avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- ✓ clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Guidance on facemasks - Public Health England (26/02/2020)

During normal day-to-day activities facemasks do not provide protection from respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19 and do not need to be worn by staff. Face masks are only recommended to be worn by infected individuals when advised by a healthcare professional, to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people. It remains very unlikely that people receiving care in the community will become infected.

PHE recommends that the best way to reduce any risk of infection for anyone is good hygiene and avoiding direct or close contact (within 2 meters - 7 feet) with any potentially infected person.

What to do if an employee becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19

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

If staff become 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 meters away from other people. If possible find a

room or area where they can be isolated behind a shut 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 or 999 if an emergency and explain which country they have returned from in the last 14 days and outline their current symptoms. If the person affected is not able for any reason to call NHS 111 themselves then a staff member should call on their behalf.

Whilst they wait for advice from NHS111 or an ambulance to arrive, they should remain at least 2 meters 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 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.

Returning from travel overseas

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 self-isolate.

There is advice in place for what to do if you have returned in the last 14 days from specified countries or areas (<https://gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk>) which is being updated on an ongoing basis.

All other staff should continue to attend work.

Closure of the office or workplace setting and other actions if staff, members of the public are undergoing COVID-19 testing and they have been in the office, workplace setting. (Public Health England 26/02/2020)

No restrictions or special control measures are required in these settings while a member of staff is waiting for laboratory test results COVID-19. In particular, there is no need to close or send staff home at this point.

What to do if someone with confirmed COVID-19 has recently been in the office, workplace. Public Health England (26/02/2020)

Closure of the office, workplace setting is not recommended.

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

An assessment of the setting will be undertaken by PHE's local Health Protection Team with the lead responsible person. Advice on the management of staff 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 office or toilets will be given by the Health Protection Team.

What to do if someone in the office, workplace setting has had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19

If a confirmed case is identified in this setting, the Health Protection team will provide the relevant people with advice and guidance. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams>)

Contacts are not considered cases and if they are well they are very unlikely to spread the infection to others:

- ✓ those who have had close contact will be asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the home isolation advice sheet (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation>)
- ✓ they will be actively followed up by the Health Protection Team.

People who have not had close contact with the confirmed case do not need to take any precautions and can continue their routines as usual.

Advice for people if they have returned from travel anywhere in the world within the last 14 days

Currently there are minimal cases outside the listed area and therefore the likelihood of an individual coming into contact with a confirmed case is extremely low (Public Health England 26/02/2020).

These people can continue to attend work and go about their daily routine, unless they have been informed otherwise by their local Health Protection Team.

If individuals are aware that they have had close contact with confirmed case of COVID-19 they should contact NHS111 for further advice.

Cleaning the office, workplace setting where there are confirmed cases of COVID-19

The local Health Protection Team will provide advice on cleaning; all surfaces that the person has come into contact with must be cleaned including:

- ✓ all surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluid
- ✓ all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones
- ✓ clothing and linen used by the person should be set aside pending assessment of the person by a healthcare professional

What social, community care setting need to do now (Public Health England 26/02/2020)

There is no need to do anything differently in any care setting at present.

If any of the staff do become infected through travel to affected countries they will be contacted by the local Health Protection Team whom will also work closely with to carry out a risk assessment

Health Protection Teams are part of Public Health England and will provide advice and guidance on infectious disease and non-infectious environmental hazards, manage and control outbreaks of infectious disease in the community and are a source of expert advice in new infections.

For further, frequently updated information see Department of Health website.

Please ensure you collect and wear your PPE (disposable gloves, disposable aprons, hand wash) from you local office.