

Serious Illness /Coronavirus

This document applies to: all Fostering to Inspire staff and foster carers

If you require further help in the interpretation of this guidance you can contact the Head of Risk & Compliance at dave.beadnall@homes2inspire.co.uk or 07786277204.

AIM OF CONTINGENCY

Homes 2 Inspire has an Infectious Diseases Policy (Appendix H); and this contingency plan gives further guidance designed to meet core requirements for the management of any illness within the fostering agency and which:

- Must take into account the emergency procedures to be adopted by First on Scene staff following the discovery of any injury or sudden illness.
- Must take into account the differing circumstances under which emergency health incidents may occur, particularly the need to enter a young person's bedroom at night
- Must take into account any visitors to the home.

1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is designed to:

- (i) Secure the health, safety and welfare of people at work,
- (ii) Protect persons visiting work places, and
- (iii) Control the storage and use of dangerous substances

2. Injuries and accidents involving staff, young people and visitors are subject to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Coronavirus

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. The virus is especially risky to those who are very young, elderly or have pre-existing medical conditions.

We have to remember that the UK Government's health advisers are working on the assumption that Britain will not see infection rates peak for up to three months! We need to get our contingency plans right for stricter measures because people could tire of them after a few weeks.

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

Because it's a new illness, we do not know exactly how coronavirus spreads from person to person.

Similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.

It's very unlikely it can be spread through things like packages or food.

Do I need to avoid public places?

Most people can continue to go to work, school and other public places.

You only need to stay away from public places (self-isolate) if advised to by the 111 online coronavirus service or a medical professional.

Preparation and Protection

It is critical that that all preparation and protection measures are put into place to protect ourselves, our children and young people in placement, and our fostering families and our colleagues.

Whilst organisations owe a duty of care to employees to take reasonable steps to ensure their health and safety, there is currently no legal obligation to impose a precautionary suspension of non-symptomatic employees returning from holiday or work in an area known to have experienced incidences of Coronavirus.

Where an employee appears to have possible symptoms, they should be referred to their GP or NHS 111 and matters taken from there on a case by case basis and the employee is to advise their line manager accordingly.

If the GP determines that they are unfit for work, then they should be treated as off sick as per normal organisational procedure.

However, colleagues who have had contact with a symptomatic employee should be made aware of the symptoms and advised to contact their GP if they display these symptoms.

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

Don't

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the first line of defence in preventing the spread of viruses. Wash them frequently with soap and water, or hand sanitising gel for at least 20 seconds.

You can also take the following precautions:

- Always wash your hands before you eat
- Be especially careful in busy airports and other public transport systems about touching things and then touching your face
- Carry disposable tissues with you, cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze and dispose of the tissue carefully (catch it, bin it, kill it)
- Do not share snacks from packets or bowls that others are dipping their fingers into
- Avoid shaking hands or cheek kissing if you suspect viruses are circulating
- Regularly clean, not just your hands, but commonly used surfaces and devices you touch or handle
- Sanitise door handles and surfaces twice a day or more frequently as required
- Use the dishwasher on the highest heat setting
- Ensure all bathroom bins have bin liners in and are emptied prior to being full.
- Frequent handwashing (hand sanitiser (at least 60% alcohol or soap) and use the catch it, bin it, kill it strategy and employees and residents should wash their hands:

Before leaving your own home

On arrival at your workplace

After using the toilet

After breaks and sporting activities

Before food preparation

Before eating any food, including snacks

Before leaving your place of work

On arrival at your own home

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (current understanding is that the virus doesn't survive on surfaces for longer than 72 hours).
- Please maintain the same levels of hygiene in staff sleep in rooms as currently expected
- Wash your hands more often for 20 seconds with soap and hot water.
- Watch this short NHS film for guidance:
- <https://youtu.be/bQCP7waTRWU>
- Teach young children how to wash their hands with the NHS handwashing song:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9VjeIWLnEg>
- Anti-bac all communal door handles and work surfaces/key presses twice a day
- Ask any visitor to complete the health and safety visitors form which has been updated to seek key information that may require the visitor to be denied access to the home. New version controlled form has been distributed.
- Testing will only now focus on identifying people with the virus in hospital (any absence from work needs to be covered by a Statement of Fitness). You do not need to self-isolate if somebody in your family has self-isolated but has not been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Ensure each location has suitable thermometers
- Home Deep Cleans to be considered by each location's Manager in consultation and approval with Head of Risk and Compliance
- So far no obvious sign that pregnant women are more likely to be seriously affected
- The established Q&A rolling update for all H2I will be updated by Head of Risk and Compliance
- Desktop contingency completed (12th and 13th March) in all H2I locations covering Reasonable Staffing Levels and Illness.

Social Distancing (slow the spread, if it does take hold, lowering the peak impact and pushing it away from the winter season)

- Limit external visitors to each location in accordance with the health and safety visitors form
- Limit external visitors to the agency where staff or young people could be considered to be in a high-risk group. Head of Risk and Compliance to liaise with the Registered Manager
- Reduce external social group activities for foster carers and where these are essential use your health risk profile to task those in better health to attend the essential activity
- Multi-agency working at both a national and local level ensures joint planning between all organisations/stakeholders
- Contacts are not considered cases and if they are well, they are very unlikely to spread the infection to others:

Confirmed case

If there is a confirmed case within one of our foster homes, then we will follow instructions from Public Health England. As a foster home is an essential service and would need to maintain appropriate care for children.

Strategies may include:

- Staff have already volunteered to work in the agency and provide an on-call rota
- Any confirmed or suspected cases should be reported to the agency and LASW forthwith
- Instructed deep clean of the home to be completed
- All surfaces that the person has come into contact will form part of a deep clean.
- All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied. 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 COVID-19 test result is available, which will be within 24 hours. If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste.

Final Thought

The majority of people with COVID-19 have recovered without the need for any specific treatment, as is the case for the common cold or seasonal flu - and we expect that the vast majority of cases will best be managed at home, again as with seasonal colds and flu. Those significantly impacted will be those with underlying health conditions which therefore MUST inform your contingency practice.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) – Frequently Asked Questions

Who should I contact if I have a query or concern about Covid-19, which is related to Shaw Trust?

We have a set up a dedicated response team within the Bristol contact centre. Please dial 0300 30 33 111 or email CovidResponse@shaw-trust.org.uk.

If you have medical symptoms or been in contact with someone with suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 then you should seek medical advice (visit [NHS 111](#)).

Where can I find regular updates, downloadable reporting forms and the process document I should follow if I have a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19?

All documents can be found on the Loop <https://looplatest.org.uk/Latest-News/Corona-Virus-Updates> including both the downloadable Process Document and Record Form.

Who are the key contacts for Covid-19 at Shaw Trust?

The Covid-19 Response Group are:

Andy Fairs, Health and Safety Business Partner

Tel: 01179 989 110 Mobile: 07974 232 234 andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk

Mark Earl, Chief People Officer, Shaw Trust

Tel: 07884 494 342 mark.earl@shaw-trust.org.uk

Jacqueline Oughton, Chief Operating Officer

Tel: 01245 505664 Mob: 07803 624926 Jacqueline.Oughton@ixionholdings.com

Stephen King, Chief Financial Officer

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Sejal Patel, Director of Assurance and Intelligence

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Tracy Richards, Head of Risk and Assurance

Tel: 0203 215 2740 X82740 Mob: 07714 059685 tracy.richards@shaw-trust.org.uk

Alona De Havilland, Head of Marketing and Communications

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Emma Fuller, Marketing Manager

Tel: 07701 388 276 Emma.Fuller@ixionholdings.com

Alan Webb, Group Head of BTIS

Alan.webb@prospects.co.uk

What is the difference between a pandemic and an epidemic?

An epidemic is something which affects people in a particular population, whereas a pandemic is “an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people”. The World Health Organization adds that, in a pandemic proper it is a simultaneous community transmission in multiple countries. The severity of the infection on individuals is unaffected.

Where else can I get advice?

A daily communication will be available on the Loop website. Staff can also visit the following accurate sources of information:

- <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Contact with a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

What do I do if a staff member reports they have, or are suspected to have, Covid-19?

It is important we record **ALL** confirmed or suspected cases of staff with Covid-19. Please contact Andy Fairs, H&S Business Partner andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk in the first instance. We will advise other staff members and/or public health officials appropriately to ensure any contact with others is formally addressed to prevent against further spread.

We have set up a team to manage the recording/reporting of such cases so that we can assess any impact internally and externally where necessary. This team consists of HR, Health & Safety and Facilities.

What should I do if a participant or beneficiary attends a one to one meeting or group session declaring or exhibiting any symptoms of Covid-19 or any infectious disease?

You must politely request anyone with symptoms should leave. Advise them to return home and go online to [NHS 111](https://www.nhs.uk/111) and to follow the advice to self-isolate for 7 days.

If a participant is asked to leave under these circumstances this must be recorded on their participant/learner/beneficiary record. A follow-up call made in 7 days to discuss gain an update on their condition and agree future engagement with the programme or course recording this on their record

What do we do if a member of staff or beneficiary has a suspected case of Covid-19?

The official advice where it is only a suspected case in the workplace, then no restrictions or special control measures are required. In particular, there is no need to close the workplace or send other staff home at this point unless advise by one of the public health bodies. However, anyone with a new persistent cough or fever should self-isolate for seven days.

If a member of staff is being tested for Covid-19 should immediate colleagues be informed?

No, the confidentiality of the individual should be protected as this is not a confirmed case. You should contact Andy Fairs, Health and Safety Business Partner andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk if any member of staff is being tested for Covid-19. The official advice where it is only a **suspected** case in the workplace, then no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for Covid-19 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.

What do I do if a staff member reports a family member has or is suspected to have Covid-19?

Government advice is for partners and families not to self-isolate. Current advice is anyone suspected to have Covid-19 should self-isolate at home for at least seven days:

- try to keep at least 2 metres (3 steps) from other people in your home, particularly older people or those with long-term health conditions
- ask friends and family and delivery services to deliver things like food shopping and medicines – but avoid contact with them
- sleep alone if possible
- regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.

For further advice visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>.

A learner has a partner who has just returned from Italy what should we do?

Government advice is for partners and families not to self-isolate. However, anyone suspected to have Covid-19 should self-isolate at home for at least seven days:

- try to keep at least 2 metres (3 steps) from other people in your home, particularly older people or those with long-term health conditions
- ask friends and family and delivery services to deliver things like food shopping and medicines – but avoid contact with them
- sleep alone if possible
- regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.

For further advice visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>.

What do I do if a staff member refuses to come to work due to worry about catching Covid-19 virus?

The staff member should be encouraged to seek immediate medical advice and the manager should listen to any concerns the employee has. If there is no medical reason for the staff member to abstain from work, their absence will need to be recorded as annual leave or unpaid leave if the manager is able to approve this.

What do I do if staff cannot attend work due to school closure? (but self-isolation has not been recommended)

Staff who have no alternative means to provide childcare may, if their role permits and their manager is in agreement, work from home. Employees are entitled to time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependant') in an unexpected event or emergency. This would apply to situations to do with Covid-19. For example: if they have children they need to look after or arrange childcare for because their school has closed to help their child or another dependant if they're sick, or need to go into isolation or hospital.

If school closures accelerate we may update this advice in line with our business continuity planning.

What do I do if a staff member has flu/cold/respiratory symptoms and comes into work?

Staff should not be encouraged to attend work if they have any symptoms of an infectious disease. Government advice is anyone with a new persistent cough or raised temperature should self-isolate

for seven days. Therefore these incidences should be immediately reported to Andy Fairs, H&S Business Partner andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk.

Current advice is anyone suspected to have Covid-19 should self-isolate at home for at least seven days:

- try to keep at least 2 metres (3 steps) from other people in your home, particularly older people or those with long-term health conditions
- ask friends and family and delivery services to deliver things like food shopping and medicines – but avoid contact with them
- sleep alone if possible
- regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.

For further advice visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

What do I do if someone becomes unwell at work?

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace with Covid-19 symptoms, they should:

- get at least 2 metres (7 feet) away from other people
- go to a room or area behind a closed door, such as a sick bay or staff office
- avoid touching anything
- cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow
- use a separate bathroom from others, if possible.

The unwell person should visit:

- [NHS111](#), online for NHS advice
- Telephone 999, if they're seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk.

They should tell the operator:

- their symptoms
- which country they've returned from in the last 14 days.

What should I do if a customer tells me they have Covid-19 symptoms or has recently returned from a highly affected area? Can I tell anyone?

A number of our commissioners have issued guidance if we believe a customer has a suspected case of Covid-19. Operational Directors and senior managers will have the latest advice if provided. It is important that we do not pass on any personal customer data. However, we can contact the customer ourselves and advise them to contact [NHS 111](#). For the majority of our contracts the Data Controller is the commissioner, therefore we cannot breach our agreement. If however, we have genuine concerns the individual will not comply with or contact NHS 111 we should contact our Data Controller directly for advice.

What should I do if staff in the workplace have had contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19?

Contact Andy Fairs, Health and Safety Business Partner andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk.

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 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
- 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 visit [NHS 111](#) for reassessment
- if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they may be tested for Covid-19 depending on severity of symptoms
- 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.

What do I do if a staff member has recently visited one of the areas with Covid-19 but does not have any symptoms?

The staff member should follow government advice ([GOV.UK: COVID-19 specified countries and areas with implications for returning travellers or visitors arriving in the UK](#)) and contact [NHS 111](#). The staff member should contact their manager via telephone and if possible arrange to work from home. Staff should be discouraged from visiting high risk areas.

Meetings and contractual requirements

A member of staff needs to attend a conference - should they attend?

Managers and staff should make a decision whether to attend conferences or external events to minimise both travel and contact with members of the public. If a decision is made to attend, the delegate should ensure the event organisers are taking all reasonable precautions and following updated advice.

Will internal meetings still be going ahead?

We would request that staff arrange for internal meetings to be undertaken remotely using teleconference, video or webinar technology. For more details visit <https://loopleveltest.org.uk/Quick-Links/Travel-and-Expenses>.

Should we stop running group sessions?

Based on the current government advice as long as office and personal hygiene guidance is followed group sessions can continue. Managers and staff will however need to ensure participants are made aware of the office and personal hygiene guidance on arrival at sessions.

Should we stop face to face meetings with participants/learners/beneficiaries?

Based upon the current government advice as long as office and personal hygiene guidance is followed face to face meeting can continue. Staff will however need to ensure participants; learners

or beneficiaries are made aware of the office and personal hygiene guidance on arrival at meetings. This advice maybe updated based on government/commissioner advice and direction.

Will targets be reduced if we have to work from home?

This is in discussion with operational directors/managers who are in regular contact with commissioners and Jacqueline Oughton. Jacqui has advised the following:

We are working very closely with all of our funders and commissioners to understand how Covid-19 will impact our contracts. Until we are informed otherwise, we need to continue business as much as possible until we hear otherwise.

If staff have to work from home, they need to agree with their line manager how they will conduct their job role as efficiently as possible. We all need to ensure we are working as flexibly as we can to ensure we meet targets and support our beneficiaries. However we are reviewing contracts on a daily basis at present to understand any impact from which we can make appropriate decisions.

It may be that in the coming days and weeks, we may not be able to meet targets, however we will keep everyone updated as we get information from our commissioners and funders. We are expecting guidance from DWP next week and we already have some guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency that managers have already received. We all need to ensure we are safe and healthy as far as we can do, maintain contracts as much as we can do, and monitor all beneficiaries to ensure they are attending sessions and one to ones, learning programmes, work experience, etc.

This is all we can do at the moment. I appreciate this is not a definitive answer however we have a changing daily situation and therefore we will respond daily as we get more information.

Working from home

Will we be allowed to work from home?

This will need to be agreed with your line manager, however where a role can effectively work from home then this should be permitted. It is important that line managers maintain regular contact with anyone home working.

Is an employee expected to work from home where possible if they are in a period of self-isolation?

Yes, as they will be paid, they will be expected to work from home as far as is practically possible. A sensible, balanced approach in respect of business need and continuity should be taken along with any personal practical implications that may affect the individual's ability to work from home.

What is our group policy on home working in the case of self-isolation - can staff claim back costs if they need to work from home?

If it is possible and appropriate for staff to work from home, costs towards the first two weeks of self-isolation will not be covered except in exceptional circumstances. The operational manager can authorise home working. However, we will review any costs incurred on a case-by-case basis following this self-isolation period. Managers should contact their operational directors for a decision to be made regarding any payments.

What happens if public transport routes close down and staff can't get in?

Staff working from laptops are advised to take these home each evening in case there are transport routes closed the following day. If a staff member cannot get into work, they should speak to their

manager right away to discuss other options, including taking paid/unpaid leave and/or possibly working from home.

Pay and absence

What will happen to my pay if I am asked to self-isolate?

If you are advised to self-isolate for up to 14 days you will be paid sick pay at the equivalent of your normal full pay. The absence should be recorded as sick leave using the self-isolation option listed under sickness type.

Will staff be paid an enhanced sick pay if they are only entitled to statutory sick pay?

If a staff member needs to self-isolate, or they are sent home as a precaution due to their symptoms, they will be paid full pay. This is precautionary to protect other members of staff and our beneficiaries during this infection outbreak. We would expect all staff self-isolating to work from home wherever possible.

If a staff member is confirmed as having Covid-19 what will happen to their pay?

In all cases of confirmed Covid-19 individuals will need to be recorded as sick due to Covid-19 and they will receive sick pay equivalent to normal salary for the duration of the illness. Any period of absence related to Covid-19 that extends beyond a total of one month will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

How do I record an absence on my HR system?

A new Covid-19 self-isolation and confirmed Covid-19 case recording option has been created on HR systems. It is essential managers use these options to ensure full pay is retained.

What will happen to normal contractual sick pay entitlement and absence management procedures if someone needs to be absent from work for a Covid-19 related reason?

Instances of absence related to Covid-19 will be dealt with entirely separately and discounted from any normal contractual sick pay entitlement and any absence management processes.

What if I have symptoms but I'm advised to self-isolate for 14 days, how do I get a note from my doctor?

All staff can self-certificate for seven days; if a staff member is medically advised to self-isolate for a longer period during the current Covid-19 infection outbreak we will continue to pay sick pay equivalent to full pay. We reserve the right to request medical evidence of self-isolation recommendations, but we will be flexible in our approach.

Premises

What do I do if a member of staff or the public with suspected Covid-19 has recently been in my workplace?

For contacts of a suspected case in the workplace, no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for Covid-19 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.

What do I do if a member of staff or the public with confirmed Covid-19 has recently been in my workplace?

Closure of the workplace is not recommended.

You should contact Andy Fairs, Health and Safety Business Partners andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk following notification by PHE of a confirmed case. You should follow the Covid-19 process and complete the Covid-19 recording form (downloadable from <https://loopleveltest.org.uk/Latest-News/Corona-Virus-Updates>).

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.

What do I do if a community venue where staff work outreach reports a case of Covid-19?

Staff should seek advice from [NHS 111](#) or their local GP where they may be advised to self-isolate. The staff member should then contact their line manager.

Our landlord has asked that all visitors sign and declare they have not visited a high risk area. Are we doing anything similar?

Government advice has changed as we have moved to a delay phase and cases are not geographically specific so this would not be an appropriate approach. We would advise if anyone shows any symptoms, even very mild, they should be politely asked to leave and advised to go home and self-isolate.

Will Shaw Trust be issuing hand sanitizer gel?

Washing hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds is considered to be more effective than hand gels; therefore we advise staff to follow hand washing guidance. If any offices do not have soap available please make facilities teams aware or managers can make purchases for local premises. Stocks of hand gel have become increasingly difficult to obtain, however, managers are able to make local purchases for premises and reclaim these costs.

Will we now be increasing cleaning in premises?

All staff should ensure they keep their work areas acceptably clean and managers are able to make local purchases for premises of wipes or domestic cleaning sprays if required, especially door and desk handles and keyboards. There are no plans to increase the level of cleaning undertaken by our cleaning contractors.

The government is advising we use paper towels and tissues are Shaw Trust supplying these?
Managers are able to make local purchases of paper towels if required. It is recommended if staff have reason to require tissues they carry their own supply and dispose of these after use.

Will Shaw Trust be supplying face masks for staff?

Shaw Trust will not be supplying face masks. These are not proven to be effective.

Prevention advice to staff

An employee with a disability/long-term health condition is worried about coming into work or travelling for work because they are more susceptible to catching infections. What should we do?

Some of your employees might have a condition or be taking medication which means that they have a compromised immune system. They might, therefore, be reluctant to come into contact with people who might have the coronavirus (Covid-19) and so not wish to come into work or travel on public transport even if they are not themselves unwell. If it is possible for these employees to work from home you should permit them to do so.

It is also possible that this is the first time that the employee tells their manager about a disability or health condition because for example, it has been newly diagnosed or because it has not had an impact on their ability to work until now. Managers can obtain advice from HR department in these circumstances.

An employee does not want to come into work or travel for work for fear of catching the virus and infecting people they live with who have a disability or health condition that makes them more susceptible to severe symptoms of the coronavirus. What should we do?

If the employee themselves does not have a disability they are not entitled under the Equality Act 2010 to reasonable adjustments. They are protected as someone associated with a disabled person from direct discrimination and harassment. Best practice would be to allow the person to work from home if this is possible. If it is not possible for them to do their job from home you should consider allowing them to take time off from work. Employees are entitled to time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependant') in an unexpected event or emergency. This would apply to situations to do with Covid-19. For example: if they have children they need to look after or arrange childcare for because their school has closed to help their child or another dependant if they're sick, or need to go into isolation or hospital.

Will start and finish times be varied to allow staff to avoid travelling during peak commuting hours.

The line manager responsible will need to carefully consider and, where possible, agree any temporary changes to working hours. It may become more and more important, as matters progress, that we consider and adopt further smart and agile working practices not only for business continuity purposes but also for the wellbeing of our staff.

I have asthma/heart condition/special conditions what should I do?

Staff with pre-existing conditions should seek advice from [NHS 111](#) or their local GP.

In relation to Coronavirus (Covid-19) What is social distancing?

The government's new Coronavirus action plan recognises that as we start to see more cases in the UK, and more widespread community transmission of the virus, further measures to reduce the contact people have with each other may be needed. These measures, sometimes referred to as "social distancing", could include things like temporarily reducing socialising in public places such as entertainment or sports events, reducing our use of non-essential public transport or recommending more home working. With each measure, scientists and experts will assess the need for them as the outbreak progresses, balancing their effectiveness against any impact on society. These decisions will recognise that for most people Covid-19 will be a mild illness, but it can cause severe symptoms in older people or people with health conditions, and has the potential to increase the demands on our public services, especially the NHS, particularly if large numbers of people became ill at once. Social distancing is not a new idea that's come about because of Covid-19. These measures are well-established and have been discussed and planned for many years, including as part of the government's preparations for a flu pandemic.

Should we avoid shaking hands?

Yes, whilst the risks associated are low we would recommend that staff now avoid shaking hands and other forms of physical contact such as hugging are avoided during this time whilst at work.

Should we continue to accept retail donations, collecting these where necessary?

All staff should take reasonable precautions including wearing gloves and being careful not to touch your nose, mouth or eyes. Collectors should ask donations are left on doorsteps. Donations should then be stored for 24 hours before being sorted and all reasonable precautions taken.

Illness of Child/Young Person/Foster Carer – Acute Illness

1. Whenever any child/young person/foster carer appears to be ill or complains or being ill, he/she must receive immediate treatment.
2. As a general rule the treatment will be provided in the foster home.
3. The foster carer will call NHS '111' (NHS Emergency and Urgent Care Service) /make appointment at local GP / walk in centre or attend accident and emergency dependent on illness severity and treatment required
4. If the illness is such that emergency hospital treatment is required, the carer should call an ambulance
5. The fostering agency must be informed whenever a foster carer/child/young person is suffering from an illness more serious than what may be treated at the home.
6. There should never be any delay in calling an ambulance if there is any suspicion that the carer/child/young person may be seriously ill.
7. Where confirmation is received that a carer/child/young person is suffering from a reportable disease the local Health Authority will be contacted and advice sought with regard to precautions etc.
8. The fostering agency will ensure that all significant others are informed and Responsible individual as appropriate.
9. Notify the Head of Risk & Compliance as this incident may be RIDDOR (Reporting, Injuries, Diseases, Dangerous, Occurrence, Regulations) Reportable to the HSE (Health and Safety Executive).

Action of Fostering Agency

CHECKLIST	Yes /No	Time	Comments / Remarks
Enquire into the illness and ensure that the correct steps are being taken to obtain appropriate treatment.			
Where it is necessary to send the young person to hospital deploy at least one staff member travel with the young person and remain with them at all times.			
Await news from the hospital about the condition of the young person			
If the condition is life threatening inform family/carers/ external agencies and the Responsible Individual without delay			
Maintain liaison with the hospital and deploy addition and/or relief staff as required.			