

Serious Illness /Coronavirus

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

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.

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

Hand 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.

If visiting hospitals, use the sanitising gel stations provided at the entrances and exits to all wards.

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.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who should I contact if I have a query or concern about Covid-19, which is related to Fostering to Inspire/Homes2inspire or Shaw Trust?

We have a set up a dedicated response team within the Bristol contact centre. Please dial 0300 30 33 111.

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 (via [NHS 111](#))

2. 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.

3. 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. Alternatively, they should refer to their organisational policy regarding emergency dependants leave. If school closures accelerate, we may update this advice in line with our business continuity planning.

4. 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. However, any staff member displaying the above symptoms and who is believed to have either come into contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19 or recently attended a high risk country/region (see latest advice at [GOV.UK: COVID-19 specified countries and areas with implications for returning travellers or visitors arriving in the UK](#)), must be sent home immediately, where they should self-isolate and seek medical advice at [NHS 111](#)).

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

In the first instance the staff member should contact their manager via telephone and not come into work. Any staff member who has visited one of the high risk areas ([GOV.UK: COVID-19 specified countries and areas with implications for returning travellers or visitors arriving in the UK](#)) should be sent home immediately and asked to complete the NHS 111 online <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> assessment. They should then follow NHS advice to self-isolate if required. We advise all staff stay up to date with the [latest advice](#). We will also update our own internal communications, if the areas of high-risk change in line with Government guidelines.

6. 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 they leave. Advise them to return home and contact the [NHS 111](#) service and to follow the advice given.

If a participant is asked to leave under these circumstances this must be recorded on their participant/learner/beneficiary record and a follow-up call made with 24 hours to ensure they have contacted NHS 111 and followed the advice. If they have been instructed to self-isolate this should also be recorded on their client record. Staff should also be alert to the possibility that the participant/learner/beneficiary may have their benefits affected and or receive a sanction; detailed notes should be retained, and the exceptional circumstances highlighted as appropriate.

These incidences should be immediately reported to Andy Fairs, H&S Business Partner
andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk.

7. **What do I do if a staff member reports a family member has or is suspected to have Covid-19?**
 Confirm with staff member if they have had recent contact with the family member. Check if their family member has been to, or been in contact with somebody that has visited one of the high risk areas ([GOV.UK: COVID-19 specified countries and areas with implications for returning travellers or visitors arriving in the UK](#)) and if they are presenting any symptoms as above. If so, they should be immediately sent home and not engage face to face with anyone in the workplace and be advised to seek medical advice. <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>
8. **What will happen to my pay if I am medically advised to self-isolate?**
 If you are medically advised to self-isolate for 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.
9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **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.
12. **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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. What do I do if a community venue where staff outreach from reports 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.

17. Should we ask staff not to embrace or handshake?

Currently there is no government advice on shaking hands and social contact, however, many people are changing their daily habits and avoiding contact. Therefore, all staff should be considerate of other's decisions. We advise staff to maintain high standards of hygiene, including using tissues when coughing or sneezing, or the crook of the elbow or shoulder. Tissues should be disposed of immediately after use. Staff should also wash their hands thoroughly using soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds and/or hand sanitising gel (which has a minimum of 60% alcohol content).

18. 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.

This advice maybe updated based on government/commissioner advice and direction.

19. 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.

20. What if I have symptoms but I'm advised to self-isolate for 14 days, therefore cannot obtain a note from my doctor to cover my absence from the eighth day?

If a staff member is medically advised to self-isolate 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.

21. If a case/suspected case of Covid-19 is reported, who do I tell?

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. Please report **ALL** cases to Andy Fairs, H&S Business Partner andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk.

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. Will Shaw Trust be supplying face masks for staff?

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

28. 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.

29. What do we do if a member of staff or beneficiary has a suspected case of Covid-19 that they are being tested for?

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.

30. 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. Mark Earl, Chief People Officer should be immediately notified at mark.earl@shaw-trust.org.uk and Andy Fairs, Health and Safety Business Partner andy.fairs@shaw-trust.org.uk. 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.

31. 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>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

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. | | | |