

COVID-19 Coronavirus Policy & Procedure

Introduction

We have set out the following guidance to assist staff working in our services to feel supported, informed and enable us to plan effectively, in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Everyone should read this guidance and where possible, make the required preparations well in advance of a pandemic.

Aberdeen Nursing Agency will take advice from the Government, Local Authorities and through the World Health Organisation.

With this in mind, this simple guidance has been developed to raise awareness of the measures that may be employed to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus at work. It aims to:

- Allow the agency to evaluate potential situations where there may be possible exposure to the Coronavirus;
- Assess the risks for the environment and to individuals by providing a matrix that can be used to consider the best ways of reducing the spread of Coronavirus in a work environment;
- Describe the steps that can be taken to moderate any potential exposure to the Coronavirus in the projects;
- Set out the measures that might be used to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus in the workplace;
- Ensure staff are aware of the importance and value of personal protective equipment and their responsibilities in regards to these;
- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities to maintain and promote a safe working environment.

What are Coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that can cause illness in animals and humans. Some coronaviruses commonly circulate and usually cause upper respiratory symptoms such as cough or runny nose, although some can cause more serious illness. The 2019 novel (new) coronavirus causes the illness coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a disease that was identified in Wuhan, China, and is now being spread throughout the world.

COVID-19 has now been given pandemic status which is markedly different from other circulating strains and to which humans have little or no immunity and then spreads easily from person-to-person when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. It can also spread through hand/face contact after touching anything that may become contaminated with the virus. Illness develops a few days (average 2-3) after being infected. Everyone is susceptible. Because of this lack of immunity, the virus is able to:

- Infect more humans over a large geographical area;
- Spread rapidly and efficiently from person to person;
- Cause clinical illness in a proportion of those infected.

During a pandemic, the most successful infection control measures will be those, which are outlined in our Infection Control Policy. The focus for all our staff working in Care Homes or Care at Home should be maintaining environmental and general hygiene measures.

Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The symptoms of COVID -19 are similar to 'ordinary' flu but may be more severe. COVID-19 affects your nose, throat and airways. The most significant symptoms are the sudden onset of:

- Fever;
- Coughing, wheezing
- Shortness of breath.
- Ageusia (loss of taste)
- Anosmia (loss of smell)

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately.

Emergency warning signs are*:

- Difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any further symptoms that are severe or concerning.

People are most infectious soon after they develop symptoms. They can continue to spread the virus, for example in coughs and sneezes.

How can this be spread?

COVID -19 is spread from person to person by close contact. Some examples of how this may spread are:

- Breathing in air containing the virus produced, when an infected person talks;
- Large droplets from coughing and/or sneezing, within a close distance;
- Direct contact, by shaking or holding hands and through touching your own mouth and eyes etc..., without washing your hands;
- Through hand/face contact after touching a person or surfaces contaminated with the virus;
- Through soft furnishings and surfaces where the virus may be contained for longer periods.

Statement on Prevention and Control of Infection

As an organisation we are committed to reducing and minimising the transition of infection.

It is a requirement that each individual has the responsibility to ensure they manage their housekeeping and personal hygiene effectively within the principles of the Infection Control policy.

Although you cannot prevent the spread of the disease, you can take steps to control/reduce the spread by:

- Good hand washing practices;
- Practicing good personal hygiene;
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue while sneezing or coughing;
- Individuals should not use cloth handkerchiefs or reuse tissues. This practice carries a risk of contaminating pockets or handbags which may then re-contaminate hands every time they go into those pockets or handbags;
- Disposing of used tissues promptly and carefully (bag and bin them).
- Tissues should be disposed of in domestic waste they do not require any special treatment;
- Washing hard surfaces (e.g. worktops, door knobs) with a domestic cleaner regularly. Normal household detergent and water should be used to clean surfaces;
- Avoiding unnecessary travel;

Organisational Contingency Planning

The agency recognises the current health concerns and issues surrounding a pandemic and its potential impact on individuals and care homes, due to this we have introduced practical measures and systems that must be followed to ensure that potential risks are minimised/prevented and we have prepared a contingency plan to deal with any issues which may arise.

What should individuals do if they have symptoms or are ill?

If an individual feel ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, while at work or at home, it is important that he or she does not simply carry on working and follows guidelines below.

If individuals develop symptoms while at work, they should adhere to the following protocol:

- Report their symptoms immediately to the Manager/appointed person;
- The individual will be sent home;
- Contact NHS 111 service for advice and an initial assessment of symptoms in the first instance;
- The Manager/appointed person should immediately contact the agency and the agency can implement the Organisational Contingency Plan.

If individuals develop symptoms while not at work, they should adhere to the following protocol:

- Contact the NHS 111 service for advice and an initial assessment of symptoms in the first instance and take advice from them;
- Contact your Manager to inform them you are ill;
- The Manager/appointed person should immediately implement the Agency's Contingency Plan.

In both cases the individual in the first instance should contact NHS (111) and your General Practitioner, who will advise you what to do, this process is in operation and has been since the outset of the pandemic. You should not return to work unless advised to do so and must also keep your manager informed throughout this process.

Model for Risk Assessment

The following section provides details on the route of transmission/spread of COVID-19 and the routes for reducing the potential for spread.

For the disease to spread within a community there must be a source of infection, a route by which the infection is transmitted, and individuals who are susceptible to the disease.

The Source – the symptomatic individual

It is generally accepted that individuals should be considered potentially infectious from the time symptoms appear to the time their symptoms have completely disappeared, in general terms, the more severe the symptoms, the more infectious a person is likely to be.

Transmission – via droplets over a distance of under 1 metre or direct/indirect contact

COVID -19 is generally transmitted from person to person through close contact and over short distances – in the region of 1 metre. This pattern of transmission is known to be associated with spread by respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes, by direct contact with an infected person, or indirectly from objects or surfaces which have become covered with infected secretions. Coronaviruses can be removed or destroyed by soap and water, normal household detergents or hand-rubs, particularly above 60% alcohol-based.

The Recipient – the susceptible individual

In order to pass on the virus, individuals must be present, until an individual has acquired immunity, through natural infection.

For a person to become infected with COVID - 19, each one of three elements must be present:

- An individual with symptoms of COVID -19;
- Who transmits the virus by direct or indirect contact; with,
- Another individual.

Mitigating Actions

Interventions that may block all or part of the transmission route of a Caronavirus from a person with symptoms to a susceptible person have the potential to stop the chain of infection.

These generally have one of the following objectives:

- Reduce transmission of infection from an individual(s) with symptoms a susceptible person, and/or
- Reduce the risk of susceptible people becoming infected.

The measures that individuals may want to consider in an effort to reduce the spread of the virus within the work environment are as follows:

Environmental - Actions can be taken within the environment to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus.

Organisational - Actions taken to modify behaviour and practice in the workplace to help reduce the spread of the Coronavirus.

Individual Behaviour - Actions taken at the level of the individual to restrict the spread of the Coronavirus.

Environmental

Care Homes should prominently display signs, which encourage staff, individuals and visitors to follow good practice such as:

- “How to wash their hands”;
- The signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
- The importance of respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene at all times. Surfaces should be cleaned frequently with the usual cleaning materials.

There should be access to effective hand hygiene facilities for all staff, individuals and visitors. Staff can be issued with personal hand sanitizers where appropriate.

Organisational

It is the organisations responsibility to raise awareness among staff of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and the organisational and Care Homes contingency plans, to promote an environment in which staff who become unwell feel that they are given the correct advice and support to deal with this and we will consider alternatives to direct meetings and visits (e.g. phone etc...).

Where contact with those who may have symptoms is unavoidable, reduce the risk of transmission of disease to staff and others by encouraging:

- The use of proper hand hygiene before entering premises.
- When handling documents or money, staff should be encouraged to minimise contact with their mouth, eyes and nose until their hands have been cleaned;
- The practice of high standards of respiratory etiquette, such as covering mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing;
- A reduction of face to face meetings wherever possible and encourage only essential travel;
- Identification of individuals who may be at particular risk of adverse effects of COVID - 19.

Individual behaviour

- Staff should adopt good hand hygiene practices and minimise touching the mouth, eyes and/or nose;
- Avoid contact with any individual with symptoms;
- Adhere to policies, procedures and contingency plans;
- Have full commitment to attending work and being off if advised to do so by a health professional.

Risk Assessment Matrix

There is no single approach or measure that can be taken to reduce the spread COVID-19. Prompt self-isolation together with proper respiratory etiquette and effective hand hygiene should be actively promoted, encouraged and applied. An approach where environmental, organisational and individual actions are combined and applied will help to reduce the spread of the virus within the workplace.

To provide a simple framework to assess the practicality/practicability of possible mitigation measures, a matrix has been developed. This is illustrated below.

The matrix outlines ways of reducing the spread of the virus which combine the different levels of intervention and how they might be used to reduce individuals with symptoms. as well as reducing the risk that susceptible individuals might become infected.

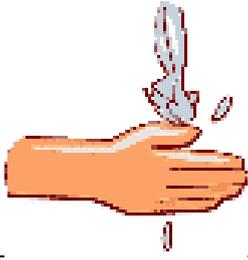
	To reduce transmission from a symptomatic individual to healthy/susceptible people	To reduce the risk of healthy/susceptible people becoming infected.
Environmental (action taken to alter the immediate environment)		
Organisational (measures taken to modify the		

organisation/pattern of project daily life)		
Individual (actions taken at the level of the individual to modify behaviour)		

Assessment Scenario

	To reduce transmission from a symptomatic individual to healthy/susceptible people	To reduce the risk of healthy/susceptible people becoming infected.
Environmental (action taken to alter the immediate environment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage those who are ill to take advice from NHS 111. • Encourage the use of the postal system, telephone and internet to communicate and stay in contact. • Ensure, wherever possible, that there are physical barriers between the individual and the member of staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide signage reminding people of the signs and symptoms of COVID – 19 and the steps that can be taken to minimise risk of infection. • Easy access to hand hygiene facilities. • Increase environmental cleaning – normal cleaning agents can be used to clean those surfaces frequently touched by hands. • Provide waste bins for contaminated tissues.
Organisational (measures taken to modify the organisation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate staff on the signs and symptoms of COVID – 19 to promote early recognition. • Be aware of organisational procedures for dealing with individuals with symptoms. • Home support should be made to infected people so that they are able to self-isolate and stay at home; this would have to be balanced against other considerations such as staff availability or risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate staff on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to promote early recognition. • Consider the feasibility of limiting, restricting or controlling the number visitors, contractors, agency visits or the individuals we support in order to decrease social interactions and increase social distancing.

Individual (actions taken at the level of the individual to modify behaviour)



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- Individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID – 19 should be encouraged to employ good hand hygiene.

- Encourage staff to clean their hands frequently and properly and not to touch their mouth, eyes and/or nose unless they have cleaned their hands.
- If close contact with an individual with symptoms is unavoidable, minimise that contact as far as practicable.

Guidance on Hand Hygiene

Wet

Soap

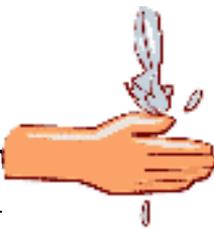
Wash

Rinse



Dry

Checklist



To reduce transmission between individual with symptoms healthy/susceptible people

Environment	Tick when complete
Use prominently displayed signs reminding people of signs and symptoms of COVID – 19 and measures to be adopted.	
Clean surfaces and cleaning materials.	
Where practical physical barriers to help restrict close interaction among highly ill service users or visitors.	
Consider improving facilities, e.g. making hand rubs available.	

Minimise the number of soft furnishings and other objects that could potentially become contaminated and are difficult to clean.	
Organisational issues to consider	
Raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of COVID – 19 and the need for an individual with symptoms consistent with COVID – 19 to self-isolate.	
Consider how best to manage people with symptoms in the workplace.	
Consider alternatives to direct meetings and visits (e.g. phone)	
Where visits from individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID – 19 are unavoidable, encourage the proper use of respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.	
Where practicable, direct contact should be avoided and, where possible, a distance of more than two metre should be kept between staff and individuals we support or visitors.	
Where social interactions are unavoidable, individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID – 19 should minimise close interactions and direct contact.	
Individual issues to consider	
Encourage proper hand hygiene.	
Encourage proper respiratory hygiene.	
Minimise interactions with people.	

To prevent the risk of healthy/susceptible people becoming infected.

Environmental issues to consider	Tick when complete
Assess access to hand hygiene facilities.	
Clean surfaces frequently with the usual cleaning materials.	
Organisational issues to consider	
Raise awareness of the importance of respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.	
Consider the practicability of the effective use of social distancing within work environments.	
Reduce face-to-face meetings wherever possible and only undertake essential travel.	
Encourage the use of email or telephone communication.	

Identify individuals who may be at particular risk of the adverse effects of COVID – 19 and deploy to areas where contacts are minimal.	
Individual issues to consider	
Identify individuals who may be at particular risk of the adverse effects of COVID – 19 and deploy to areas where contacts are minimal.	
Increase social distancing.	
Minimise contact with individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID – 19.	

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