

HEMOCARE DEPARTMENT

CORONAVIRUS [COVID-19]

ADVICE & ACTION CARD

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What is Coronavirus?

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

The evidence to date suggests that for people who are normally in good health the symptoms are generally mild. However these infections 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.

How is it spread

Spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

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

- infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) 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 door knob or shaking hands then touching own face).

Our 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.

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, or use alcohol sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol, only if adequate handwashing facilities are not available. Refer to hand-washing guidance provided.
- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. Catch It, Bin It, Kill It
- people who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

What do you do if you become unwell and believe you have been exposed to COVID-19

You should contact your Supervisor **by telephone** as soon as practicable to discuss your situation. If the matter arises out of normal office hours contact the Homecare Manager On-Call service.

Make contact with your GP by telephone to seek advice. Do not present in person at your GP surgery, hospital or pharmacy.

At the present stage it would only be considered possible for you to be affected by Covid-19 if you are displaying some of the symptoms as described [cough, fever, breathlessness] **AND** have been exposed to the virus. Exposure to the virus would be as a result of;

- Travel to an affected area [see details attached]
- Being involved in providing care to a person with Covid-19
- Being exposed to someone who has Covid-19, e.g. family member or colleague

When you contact your Supervisor they will discuss your situation with you and will advise what measures to take. They will also seek advice from Occupational Health.

Your GP will advise what you need to do next. This may involve self-isolation and / or testing for the virus. This will require a period off work. You would not return to work until it has been determined that you do not have the virus.

What do you do if a service user becomes unwell and it is believed that they have been exposed to COVID-19.

At this stage of the Covid-19 outbreak it would be considered very unlikely that a homecare service user would have been exposed to the virus given the prevalence of the virus and the travel associations. However if you become aware of a concern relating to one of your

service users you must make contact with your Supervisor as soon as practicable, if out of hours contact the Homecare Manager On-Call. Advise the service user or family member to make contact with their GP practice by phone for advice. Your Supervisor will liaise with the service user, their family and social worker who will make arrangements for the matter to be addressed. You will be advised by your Supervisor if there any implications for your ongoing care and support to the individual in question.

Care and Support to Service Users

As the Covid-19 outbreak develops in the weeks ahead there may be requests for Homecare to provide input to cases where individuals have, or are recovering from the virus. The arrangements for this scenario remains unclear at this stage. You will be provided with updated information in due course.

Further Information and advice

This is an evolving situation. The Trust will be provided with updated information in the days and weeks ahead. All relevant information will be shared with you by email.

If you have any questions about this matter speak to your Supervisor.

You can obtain the latest advice from the following websites;

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus>