

Safety Management System



Coronavirus Protocol for Office staff

Coronavirus Protocol for Office Staff – March 2020

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Due to the current situation with the Coronavirus Covid 19 we have created this specific action plan for our office, in order to alleviate any customer concerns.

General information - Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses with some causing mild illness, such as the common cold, and others more severe disease such as Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Generally, coronavirus 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.

Transmission - According to World Health Organisation (WHO) the main route of transmission of COVID-19 reported so far is droplet transmission. From a sick person to a healthy person through respiratory droplets when the sick person coughs, sneezes or talks closely to another person. 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 live on surfaces for longer than 72 hours.

The incubation period is the time between infection and the onset of clinical symptoms of disease and current estimates of the incubation period range from 1-12.5 days, with median estimates of 5-6 days. These estimates will be refined as more data become available. Based on information from other coronavirus diseases such as MERS and SARS, the incubation period of COVID-19 could be up to 14 days. WHO recommends that the follow-up of contacts of confirmed cases is 14 days.

Symptoms - A coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through contact with an infected person through respiratory droplets generated when a person, such as coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva, or discharge from the nose. It is therefore important that everyone practices good respiratory hygiene.

As with other respiratory illnesses, infection with COVID-19 can cause mild symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. It can be more severe for some people and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely, the disease can be fatal. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as, diabetes and heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

Preventing 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.

Public Health England (PHE) recommends that the following general cold and flu precautions are taken to help prevent people from catching and spreading COVID-19:

- 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. CATCH IT, BIN IT, KILL IT
- wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitizer gel if soap and water are not available.
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Generally face-masks are not recommended to protect from infection, as there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments. They are only recommended to be worn by those already infected to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people.

Action we take here to minimise any risk to our staff & visitors:

- 1. Cold/Flu like symptoms:** If you as a visitor have any flu or cold like symptoms in particular a raised temperature or a persistent cough, then we kindly ask you to refrain from coming into the office,
- 2. Staff** – In the same vein, any staff displaying any cold or flu like symptoms as above will be asked to self isolate at home and remain off work for the first initial 7 days period.
- 3. Cleaning Regime** – We have instigated a hospital grade disinfection regime to minimise any chance of transmission in our office. All equipment used is being sanitised and any surfaces, chairs, doorknobs, bathroom etc. are sanitised regularly to prevent the spread of any virus.
- 4. Hand Sanitising** – We have provided hand sanitizers around the office and we would urge everyone to use these on arrival and departure from the office. Our staff will also be using this product if they have been eating, smoking; using the toilet or any other non-work related activity in order to reduce the risk of any transmission.
- 5. Tissues** – We have provided tissues around the office in case anyone has a need (sneezing can simply be a result of a physical reaction and not necessarily cold or flu related). However, we kindly request everyone to follow the PHE protocol in terms of **Catch It, Bin It, Kill it** after sneezing.

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Coronavirus Protocol for staff:

1. Staff must call in sick and/or remove themselves from the office self-isolate and ensure they prevent any spread of infection by using tissues and sanitising hand gel if they display any cold or flu like symptoms whilst at work. (In particular a fever or persistent cough). They should remain off work for an initial 7 day period. Statutory sick pay will be paid for this from day one.
2. Staff will also get 14 days statutory sick pay from the first day off work if they are subsequently diagnosed with Covid 19
3. All staff must enforce strict hand washing protocols and ensure everyone uses hand sanitizer regularly throughout the day, especially after eating, smoking, going outside etc.
4. We will make tissues available and promote Catch It, Bin it, Kill it when sneezing to both visitors and staff
5. We must ensure all equipment and public facilities in the office are cleaned and sanitised regularly. We need to prevent the spread of infection via good sanitisation procedures. (Door knobs, handrails, hard surfaces, high traffic areas, touch screens, tea/coffee making facilities etc).
6. Advise any visitor who calls in wanting to re-arrange their appointment with us due to worry of Covid 19 that we are taking all necessary precautions to minimise the risk and have comprehensive Coronavirus Protocols in place.
7. **COMMUNICATION** is Key – we will make these plans visible to both our staff and visitors so that everyone is aware of the action we are taking

