

## COVID-19 Q&A for Colleagues as at 24/3/20

### **Are masks being provided for all staff if supporting anyone with a suspected case of COVID-19?**

Yes masks have been provided for this. A Triage system has been put in place by the Scottish Government to prioritise supplies of personal protective equipment (P.P.E.).

### **How many staff can travel together?**

There is no specific guidance on this at present but we suggest no more than 2 per vehicle and that all surfaces should be disinfected at start/end of each journey.

### **Can rotas be implemented with longer hours and less days to reduce the risk to both service users and staff. I know that managers have been asked this but I have rotas that have staff on short shifts.?**

We are looking to implement this as soon as possible to minimise travel and exposure to different people.

### **Who is defined as non-essential staff?**

We have been in discussion with our Commissioning Teams to agree what services are classed as non-essential. These are the services that have either been closed temporarily or have an alternative method of delivery, e.g. home working. All other staff working within our critical services, in any capacity, are deemed to be delivering essential work.

The redeployment of staff to other services ensures we meet our duty of care and is in line with the principle being applied across a range of public sector areas, including Police, Education, Health etc.

### **Are guidelines being sent out for handovers to minimise the risk of infection?**

All staff should be trying to adhere to the social distancing guidelines as much as possible.



## COVID-19 Q&A for Colleagues as at 23/3/20

### **Who should I contact if I am off sick and I am redeployed to another service?**

You should contact both your new manager and your own line manager. Your usual line manager remains responsible for logging your absence on i-Trent.

### **How do I claim for my hours, overtime or travel expenses in my new service?**

You should log your claims as normal on i-Trent and these will be sent to your usual line manager to authorise. They will contact your new line manager to confirm the accuracy of claims before authorising.

Please note: Even though you are working in a new service all claims should continue to be allocated to your usual cost centre.

### **What travel costs can I claim?**

Under HMRC rules you are able to claim for any extra costs/mileage that you incur travelling to your new place of work. For example: you are normally based at Riddrievale and your commute is 5 miles; you are redeployed to Barrhead, and your commute is now 10 miles. You can now claim for the additional 5 miles using I-Trent. If you use public transport and the additional cost of your travel is £5.00 this is the amount you can claim.

### **I have vulnerable family living with me at home, should I be attending work?**

You are expected to adhere to increased hygiene measures and social distancing within your home. It is deemed appropriate to attend work. The latest guidance from NHS can be found at <https://www.nhsinform.scot>.

If a colleague or service user displayed symptoms of COVID-19 or was diagnosed then we would seek to redeploy you to another service to minimise risk.

### **I have received a letter from NHS advising me to self-isolate for 12 weeks, can I still attend work?**

No you should not attend work in these circumstances and follow the guidance within your letter. Please send a copy of your letter to your line manager who will scan this to HR. This period will be paid as sick pay; however to avoid the situation of staff moving to half pay or SSP you will be encouraged to use a quarter of your annual leave for this, including any holiday you have already booked in that period. Please discuss this with your line manager in the first instance.

### **I have underlying health concerns, currently not on the list issued by the Government. What will the organisation do to help keep me safe?**

On current advice it is deemed appropriate for you to attend your place of work. If a colleague or service user displayed symptoms of COVID-19, or was diagnosed, then we would seek to redeploy you to another service to minimise the risk to you.



## **COVID-19 Q&A for Colleagues as at 20/3/20**

This is a difficult and challenging time for all of us. COVID-19 poses a serious health risk to many of us, our loved ones, and the people we support. As a result we are being forced to temporarily change our way of life, with major implications for the way that we work, relax and look after our children. The situation continues to evolve on a daily basis - we are committed to keeping our staff up to date with the latest information regarding support, restrictions, limitations to services, etc.

In this Q&A you'll find information regarding self-isolation, sickness absence, redeployment of staff, limitations to services, childcare advice and more. Keep checking back as this document will be updated on a regular basis.

### **What are the symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?**

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature (above 37.8C)

According to the NHS, a new and continuous cough "means you've started coughing repeatedly".

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

### **What should I do if I have symptoms?**

If you have either of the above symptoms you should self-isolate for 7 days. You can end your self-isolation after 7 days. The 7-day period starts from the day when you first became ill.

The cough may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus infection having cleared. A persistent cough alone does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days.

When required to self-isolate you should not invite or allow social visitors, such as other friends and family, to enter your home. If you want to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, you should use the phone or social media.

### **Why is it so important that I self-isolate?**

Hopefully, none of your family will suffer more than flu-like symptoms – for most people COVID-19 will be a mild illness. However, some people are badly affected by coronavirus, particularly the elderly and those with certain medical conditions. The



virus is incredibly contagious, and if you leave the house, you are highly likely to pass it on to someone else, who may be in contact with one of the vulnerable groups mentioned above. By staying home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

### **How does social distancing differ?**

The Government have advised the over 70 population and certain more vulnerable groups practice social distancing. As we are delivering front line life and limb services it is still expected that staff within these groups attend work as normal. The Gov.UK website suggests the following guidance:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
3. Work from home, where possible (which is accepted that for the majority of our staff is not possible)
4. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

Indeed the whole population is expected to be trying to follow these measures as much as is pragmatic.

### **What should I do if I've been in *direct* contact with someone confirmed with symptoms?**

If you live with someone who is self-isolating, you should isolate everyone in your household for 14 days. This may seem confusing, given the person who first showed the symptoms of the virus only has to self-isolate for 7 days. The reason **all other** members of the household must self-isolate for 14 days is that this is the incubation period for coronavirus (symptoms may not present immediately). People who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious. The 14 day period starts when the first person becomes ill.

If, after 7 days the first person to get ill feels better, and no longer has a temperature, they can return to their normal routine. If other family members become unwell during the 14 day lockdown, they should follow the same advice: if, after 7 days of their symptoms starting they no longer have a high temperature / feel unwell they can also return to their normal routine.



Should a household member develop coronavirus symptoms late in the 14-day household-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) **the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days.** The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on - it is not necessary to re-start 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.

At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation.

If any ill person in the household has not had any signs of improvement and has not already sought medical advice, they should contact [NHS 111 online](#). If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

#### **How do I confirm that I have the symptoms for COVID-19 or a diagnosis?**

You should contact your line manager as soon as possible and self-certificate yourself as absent as normal. Your manager will log your sickness absence on i-Trent. Please ensure that your manager ends your absence when you return. We have set up a specific absence reason on i-Trent for your manager to record COVID-19 related absences.

#### **How do I confirm if I am advised to self-isolate for 14 days?**

For those people that require to self-isolate for 14 days because a family member is showing symptoms this should be communicated as soon as possible to your line manager. Although you are not technically 'sick' when self-isolating in these circumstances, the advice is that you register your absence as sickness to obtain appropriate sick pay. This will be recoded as sickness absence on i-Trent by your manager; we have created a separate reason of COVID-19(Self Isolation). You should self-certificate for the first 7 days as current practice.

The Government are currently developing an alternative form of evidence to the traditional 'fit note' for this situation for the remaining 7 days. They have advised these will shortly be available through NHS online. In the interim you are not required to submit a fit note for the second week at home, if you are self-isolating because of COVID-19. If you are off work for another reason, you do need to submit a 'fit note', as normal, provided by your GP.

Certain staff may be permitted to work from home in these circumstances where job roles and available technology permits. Other staff will be encouraged to use some of their annual leave for this purpose. In both cases you should discuss this with your line manager.



## **Will I get paid if I have symptoms of COVID-19**

For permanent/temporary staff normal sick pay arrangements are in place in line with your entitlement. We have relaxed Absence Management procedures in relation to absence triggers for COVID-19 related absences. Anyone who has exhausted Occupational Sick Pay will, automatically move to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), as normal, in line with eligibility criteria.

Relief staff who have earned £118 per week or more in the 8 weeks prior to the absence will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) which the Government have agreed will commence from Day 1 of absence. This will be the case for many of our Relief Workers who work regular hours.

## **What if I work Relief and don't qualify for SSP, because I earn less than an average of £118 / week?**

If we confirm you are not eligible for SSP you can visit <https://www.gov.uk/> to find out what benefits you may be entitled to; it's possible you may be eligible for Universal Credit (UC) or an Employment Support Allowance (ESA). Our Welfare Rights Officer, Thomas Murphy is available to help with guidance on applying for benefits. You can reach Thomas at [Thomas.Murphy@themungofoundation.org.uk](mailto:Thomas.Murphy@themungofoundation.org.uk) or on 07980 702 347.

## **Why is my Service suspended or delivering a limited service?**

In line with many front line services across Scotland we are responsible for the delivery of essential (or 'life and limb') services. As such we are required to identify non-essential service provision, which if withdrawn or suspended would result in no immediate harm or threat to life. This then enables the redeployment of staff towards essential life and limb services.

Staff who are redeployed will be given training and guidance in their new role, along with a period of shadowing, where possible. We have had confirmation that SSSC and other regulators will relax registration regulations. Staff required to be redeployed to another area will be able to claim additional travel expenses via i-Trent. These claims will be authorised by their usual line manager. We are also exploring other options such as taxis, minibuses, pooling of hire cars etc.

## **What will happen now that Schools and Nurseries are going to close?**

As a Social Care provider we are classed as front line (life and limb) services. It is our understanding that children with a parent who falls within front line services will be able to attend a school setting in their area, supervised by Teachers.

The advice on this area is changing by the day and we understand different schools are issuing differing advice to parents. Where necessary, staff will be granted up to 2



days' Dependent's Leave to organise their new childcare arrangements, in order to be able to return to work. We will also prepare letters for any staff member who requires to submit evidence of working in front line services. Please contact [hr.department@themungofoundation.org.uk](mailto:hr.department@themungofoundation.org.uk) to request a letter.

### **Will I end up working longer hours?**

We are currently looking at implementing longer shifts within Services to support staff with travel, child care arrangements and to maintain our service delivery. Your manager will discuss this option within teams in the coming days. If long shifts prove to be an easier way of managing cover, and minimising social contact for staff (enabling longer periods off in between work) we may need to roll out this wherever possible.

### **Will I still be able to take Annual Leave?**

We will suspend all non-essential leave over the next 8 weeks. We will however be reasonable in all cases and understand as people as asked to work long shifts and under additional pressures that staff may require some rest and recuperation. Please discuss any requests with your line manager.

### **Will staff be working from home?**

For the majority of our staff this is not possible due to the nature of our services. There will be some element of home working for staff who can do this (such as certain outreach services and some Rogart Street staff) and this will be advised across the organisation. The Senior Management Team will be present at all times as will a reduced telephone/admin and finance support. Other Rogart Street staff will attend on a periodic basis. We anticipate being able to staff our Rogart St support functions throughout the working week, via a combination of reducing staffing levels and remote working.

### **I am feeling anxious, where can I get support?**

We recognise that we are in uncharted waters; there are many questions we can't answer in full just yet. The situation continues to evolve on a daily basis, but we are committed to keeping you updated, as much as possible.

Many of us are worried for economic reasons. We've had people ask: 'Will my service still be running once this is over?' and 'Will I be asked to work reduced hours?' We are taking every step possible to seek assurance of guaranteed income from our Funders, particularly where services have been suspended or reduced. We are proactively pursuing responses from Local Authorities and will update you as these are received. We remain in close contact with our Union partners to ensure that the steps we are taking are reasonable and minimise the risks to services and staff.



We recognise this may be a difficult time for all of us. If you are feeling anxious, and would like emotional support, you can reach out to our Employee Counselling Service? They can be contacted on: 0800 030 5182 or [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com).

We are exploring the possibility of setting up some social media support, or digital forums for employees where employees can ask questions and engage in peer-to-peer support. We will update you on any developments as they arise.

If you have any additional ideas as to how we might stay connected and support each other, during the weeks ahead, please email [rollo.strickland@themungofoundation.org.uk](mailto:rollo.strickland@themungofoundation.org.uk)