

Colleague Communication on Coronavirus – 22/05/2020

What is the Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. Currently a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans known as COVID-19 has been spreading across the world, stemming from Hubei a province within China.

Symptoms of Coronavirus

The most common symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

These symptoms do not necessarily mean someone will have the virus and the symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as a cold and flu.

Colleague Contact – HR Advice Line

If you have any questions, queries or concerns that are not covered in this FAQ please contact the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469 or email at hr.advice@midcounties.coop where an advisor will be able to assist. The advice line is open from 8am until 6pm daily.

Further Reference Points

Guidance is being updated daily regarding Coronavirus; the following links can provide the most up to date information.

NHS - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Gov.uk - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

World Health Organisation - <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Colleague Frequently Asked Questions

1. Am I able to get tested for COVID-19?

Any essential worker or a member of their household can now be tested for COVID-19, if they are displaying symptoms of the virus. Colleagues can request a test by using the following link and filling in their details. Colleagues can choose to request either a home delivery kit or to attend a regional testing site <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>

If you or the member of your household displaying symptoms receive a negative test result, then you are able to return to work and must notify your line manager. If you receive a positive test result, please notify the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469 as we will need to make a note of this information.

2. I have tested positive for Coronavirus, what do I need to do?

If you have been tested positive for coronavirus you will not be able to enter the workplace until a medical professional has told you that you can return to work.

Upon receiving this information, you will need to contact the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469. You must keep your manager up to date in line with the normal absence reporting procedures.

3. I have started to display symptoms of the Coronavirus?

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, however mild, stay at home and self-isolate for **7 days** from when your symptoms started.

You must notify your manager of this in line with normal absence reporting procedures and gain a self-isolation note to cover the period of your absence. An isolation note can be gained through the following link - <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

4. I am living with someone who is displaying symptoms of Coronavirus?

If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then **all** household members must stay at home and self-isolate for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, needs to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.

You must notify your manager of this in line with normal absence reporting procedures and gain a self-isolation note to cover the period of your absence. An isolation note can be gained through the following link - <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

5. I am at work and have started to display symptoms of the Coronavirus, what should I do?

If you become unwell in the workplace and displaying symptoms of coronavirus i.e. a cough and/or a temperature, you should notify your line manager immediately, try to remain at least 2 meters away from any other colleagues or customers and go home to self-isolate.

6. I am required to self-isolate; can I still work from home?

Yes, if you are able to perform part or all of your duties from home and have the necessary equipment to allow you to do this.

7. How will I know my Company/Statutory Sick Pay entitlement?

All the information you need can be found on Colleague Connect in the policy section, please refer to the Colleague Handbook. Alternatively, you can contact the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469 and they will be able to provide you with this information and make you aware of any temporary changes to the Company Sick Pay entitlements if applicable.

8. I am in the increased risk/vulnerable category for coronavirus, what should I do?

The government are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. However, the Society position is to allow colleagues who fall within this category the option to self-isolate should they wish to do so.

If you chose to self-isolate please notify your site manager and call the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469. We may request you to submit evidence of your condition to the HR Advice Line email – hr.advice@midcounties.coop and once received we can follow a process to furlough you, and make use of the government job retention scheme, further details will be sent to regarding this and we will need to gain your consent.

Further information on being furloughed and the job retention scheme can be found here - <https://colleaguesconnect.midcounties.coop/working-here/coronavirus/>

Colleagues who fall into this category and are showing no symptoms of coronavirus may remain in work if they chose to do so.

9. I am in the “extremely vulnerable” category and have received an NHS letter about shielding, what should I do?

The Society has made the decision that colleagues who receive this letter must shield, the current government guidance suggests that these colleagues should continue to shield until 30th June 2020.

Please scan or take a photo of the letter and email it to the HR advice line at hr.advice@midcounties.coop. If you are unable to send it electronically, please post a copy to Coop House, Warwick Technology Park, Warwick, CV34 6DA.

Upon receipt the society will follow a process to furlough you and make use of the government job retention scheme, further details will be sent to regarding this and we will need to gain your consent.

Further information on being furloughed and the job retention scheme can be found here - <https://colleaguesconnect.midcounties.coop/working-here/coronavirus/>

10. I have received the NHS letter outlining that I am “extremely vulnerable” however I have received further communication from the NHS to confirm my case has been re-assessed and I no longer meet the threshold of “extremely vulnerable”?

If you have received a letter similar to this and believe that you are no longer deemed as “extremely vulnerable” please make contact with the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469 and an advisor will be able to discuss your options through with you.

11. I am choosing to self-isolate as I live with someone in the who is either classified at vulnerable or extremely vulnerable?

If you live in the same household as someone who is either vulnerable or extremely vulnerable (where an NHS letter has been received) then please contact the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469 and an advisor will be able to discuss the support in place for you as a colleague.

12. I’m pregnant, what should I do?

If you are pregnant and in a customer facing role you will be placed on medical suspension and the society will follow a process to furlough you and make use of the government job retention scheme, further details will be sent to regarding this and we will need to gain your consent.

Further information on being furloughed and the job retention scheme can be found here - <https://colleaguesconnect.midcounties.coop/working-here/coronavirus/>

If you are in a non-customer facing role and able to work from home, then they should do so.

13. I am classed as a key worker and my school/nursery have asked for a letter from my employer?

Please speak to your line manager, as letters have been sent to line managers to give directly to colleagues at each site.

14. What is the society doing to ensure the safety of its colleagues at this time?

The society is constantly reviewing the situation and working with various departments for example PSG, Health and Safety and the Property Team to ensure a plan is in place for various eventualities. Each group will have guidelines in place regarding appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) which should always be utilised.

15. How can I help prevent the spread of Coronavirus in the workplace?

Colleagues can take their own preventative measures to avoid the spread of the infection through basic hygiene practices for example –

- Utilise the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) which has been put in place to protect you and others around you
- 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
- Using hand sanitizers regularly where 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
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

16. I'm a reservist and have been notified that I need to be available to assist?

The Society recognises the important role that the Auxiliary Forces have in supporting the full time armed services. Please speak to your line manager or the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469 as soon as you receive notification that you have been called up for duty, so that the Society can discuss and agree any necessary arrangements with you.

For further details you can find more information regarding this on our Special Leave Policy

The Society will continue to review the situation and how this evolves, and any such guidance contained in this document will be under constant review.