

Colleague Communication on Coronavirus – 22/09/2020

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 9am until 5pm 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 Coronavirus?

Yes, any colleague can get tested for the Coronavirus 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/>

Please refer to the Coronavirus Symptoms Policy for more details on testing - <https://colleaguesconnect.midcounties.coop/working-here/policies/coronavirus-symptoms-policy/>

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

If you have been tested positive for coronavirus you will need to self-isolate for 10 days and cannot return to work until you have completed the 10-day self-isolation period. You must contact your line manager to make them aware of your need to self-isolate and that you have tested positive.

You will need to contact the HR Advice Line on 01926 516 469.

3. I have been notified by the Track and Trace scheme that I need to self-isolate as I have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus?

Upon receiving the notification from the NHS, you will need to self-isolate for 14 days in line with the guidance you have received. You will need to make contact with your line manager to report your absence in line with usual absence reporting procedures and submit evidence of your need to self-isolate.

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

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, however mild, stay at home and self-isolate for **10 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/>

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

If you someone in your household or 'bubble' have developed 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 10 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period and arrange to be tested.

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/>

6. 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 and/or customers, wear a face covering in all areas of the workplace and go home to self-isolate.

7. I am unsure if I need to self-isolate based on my symptoms?

The following link will assist in helping to understand if you need to self-isolate or not - <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. What will I be paid whilst I am away from work?

The following link will provide you with various scenario and how each scenario should be logged/paid - <https://colleaguesconnect.midcounties.coop/siteassets/working-here/coronavirus/pay-scenarios.pdf>

11. 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

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.