A4People

Helping to build your bigger picture

Coronavirus Toolkit

Basic Information

In case coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads more widely in the UK, employers should consider some simple steps to help protect the health and safety of staff.

It's good practice for employers to:

- keep everyone updated on actions being taken to reduce risks of exposure in the workplace

- make sure everyone's contact numbers and emergency contact details are up to date

- make sure managers know how to spot symptoms of coronavirus and are clear on any relevant processes, for example sickness reporting and sick pay, and procedures in case someone in the workplace develops the virus

- make sure there are clean places to wash hands with hot water and soap, and encourage everyone to wash their hands regularly

- provide hand sanitiser and tissues for staff, and encourage them to use them

- consider if any travel planned to affected areas is essential

- employers must not single anyone out or treat an employee differently because of their race or ethnicity.

Sick Pay

The workplace's usual sick leave and pay entitlements apply if someone has coronavirus.

- Employees should let their employer know as soon as possible if they are not able to go to work

- You should pay if someone has to go into self-isolation

- The government has stated that if NHS 111 or a doctor advises an employee or worker to self-isolate, they should receive any Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) due to them. If the employer offers contractual sick pay, it's good practice to pay this

- The employee must still follow the sickness reporting in your policy and the same rules apply

- The employer might need to be flexible if they require evidence from the employee or worker. For example, someone might not be able to provide a sick note ('fit note') if they've been told to self-isolate for 14 days.

  Find out more :

  NHS 111

  self-isolating on GOV.UK

Sick Pay Continued

If an employee is not sick but the employer tells them not to come to work

- If an employee is not sick but their employer tells them not to come to work, they should get their usual pay. For example, if someone has returned from China, Italy or another affected area and their employer asks them not to come in.

If an employee needs time off work to look after someone

- Employees are entitled to time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependant') in an unexpected event or emergency. This would apply to situations to do with coronavirus. For example:
  - if they have children they need to look after or arrange childcare for because their school has closed
  - to help their child or another dependant if they're sick, or need to go into isolation or hospital
  - there's no statutory right to pay for this time off, but some employers might offer pay depending on the contract or workplace policy. Your normal policy will apply here.

What if an Employee doesn't want to work?

- Some people might feel they do not want to go to work if they are afraid of catching coronavirus.

- An employer should listen to any concerns staff may have.

- If there are genuine concerns, the employer must try to resolve them to protect the health and safety of their staff. For example, if possible, the employer could offer flexible working, working from home.

- If an employee still does not want to go in, they may be able to arrange with their employer to take the time off as holiday or unpaid leave. The employer does not have to agree to this.

- If an employee refuses to attend work, it could result in disciplinary action.

If someone becomes ill at work move at least 2 metres from everyone or go to a room by themselves. Call 111 from their own phone or 999 if serious and confirm why they think it is Covid-19.

If someone comes in who is infected?

If someone with coronavirus comes to work, the workplace does not necessarily have to close.

Contact 111 or your local Public Health England (PHE) health protection team to:

- discuss the case

- identify people who have been in contact with the affected person

- carry out a risk assessment

- advise on any actions or precautions to take

- [Find out more about PHE health protection teams on GOV.UK](#).

The process may be different in Scotland and Wales. For more advice, see:

- [Health Protection Scotland (HPS)](#)

- [Welsh Government](#)

Final thoughts

Check all of your policies are up to date and staff are aware of them; this will include:

- Absence/sickness policy

- Disciplinary Policy

- Grievance Policy

- Flexible working policy

- Time off for dependants

- Homeworking Policies

- Business Continuity

There will also be others so it is worth having an HR Audit of all policies and procedures. We can support you with this so please contact us.

Useful Links

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

https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/health-protection-infectious-diseases

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Thank You

Contact/Further Information

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