



# DEALING WITH CORONAVIRUS IN THE WORKPLACE

## INTRODUCTION

The Company is committed to ensuring the health & safety of all employees. To this end, this policy sets out steps that the Company is taking in order to tackle the coronavirus outbreak, alongside expectations that are placed upon employees.

## INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES

We strongly encourage all employees to follow these guidelines from the World Health Organisation on infection control, both whilst at work and in their daily lives. This includes:

- frequently cleaning their hands by using alcohol-based hand sanitiser, or soap and water
- when coughing and sneezing, covering mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue, throwing this tissue away immediately and washing their hands
- avoiding close contact with anyone who has a fever and cough.

## IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS

If you begin to display symptoms of the virus, you must follow government guidance to find out what to do next. This may involve internet and phone services. You should not go to your doctor's surgery. You must also notify your manager at the earliest opportunity.

## BUSINESS TRAVEL

If travel is deemed necessary, we will conduct a full risk assessment into the risks associated with the trip with involvement from employees who are being asked to travel.

## PERIODS OF SELF-ISOLATION

The Government is currently advising people to self-isolate in certain situations, which means staying at home and not having contact with other people. We ask that all employees keep up to date on government guidance on who should self-isolate. In the event that this applies to you, you must not attend work during the isolation period. You must inform your manager at the earliest opportunity that you are under guidance to self-isolate. Your manager will keep in contact with you during this period. Where feasible we can agree a period of paid annual leave with you. Where no other agreement is made you will receive contractual sick pay subject to normal qualifying criteria

In addition, employees may have been strongly advised to remain at home due to being classed as at particularly high risk of catching coronavirus, otherwise known as 'shielding'. Any employees who fits in to this category will receive furlough payments at the government rate, this will be reviewed when furloughing finishes .

## SENDING EMPLOYEES HOME/REQUIRING EMPLOYEES NOT TO ATTEND WORK

If we are concerned that you may have been exposed to the virus, even though you are not displaying symptoms, we may take the decision to send you home and require you not to attend work. This may occur if, for example, you inform us that you have been in close contact with someone else who has, or may have the virus but fall outside of the Government rules on self-isolation. This is treated as a period of suspension for medical reasons. It is not considered a disciplinary sanction; the period of suspension will be in recognition of the possibility that your continued presence in the workplace

poses a risk of spreading the virus. You may receive full pay during this time off. Alternatively, we may agree a period of paid annual leave with you.

If, during this period of suspension, you develop symptoms, you should follow government guidance on what to do next, which may include using internet or telephone services, and also follow our normal sickness reporting procedures. You will then be treated as being on a period of sickness absence.

## **EMPLOYEES WHO CONTRACT THE VIRUS**

If you contract the virus, you should take and follow medical advice on the length of your sickness absence. You are required to produce a medical certificate for illnesses lasting more than seven calendar days, however, we appreciate that you are not likely to be in a position to obtain a medical certificate in usual timescales, therefore you should provide it as soon as is reasonably practicable. During your absence, our normal sickness absences rules will apply and you will receive pay in accordance with our contractual sick pay subject to meeting qualifying criteria. If you do not meet the criteria, you will receive statutory sick pay (SSP) in accordance with legal requirements in force from time to time.

## **ATTENDANCE AT WORK**

Unless you have followed our usual reporting procedures in relation to sickness absence, are in self-isolation following government guidance, or not attending work under our specific instruction, you are expected to work. However, if there is a reason why you think you may have been exposed to the virus, you should let your manager know before you attend the workplace.

## **TEMPORARY BUSINESS CLOSURE**

As time progresses, it may become clear that the business is temporarily unable to continue its operations as normal. In this scenario, we may be forced to close all, or part, of the business temporarily until such a time as we are able to resume operations and will not be able to provide you with work. Alternatively, whilst we may be able to continue operating, we may identify some roles for which no work can be provided. Whilst we will do everything we can to ensure that this does not happen, we may be left with no option but to place you on short time working. During this period, your pay will be reduced according to the hours

As an alternative, we may discuss with you designating you as a furloughed worker under the Government's Job Retention Scheme which includes the ability for us to receive a grant to cover 80% of your basic pay, to a maximum of £2,500 per month. This will mean temporarily changing your status to a 'furloughed worker' and you will do no work for us for a period of time to be defined by us. If we decide to take this step, we will seek your agreement before designating you as a furloughed worker.

## **HARASSMENT/BULLYING**

We operate a zero tolerance policy to all forms of harassment and bullying in the workplace. We will not tolerate any unacceptable behaviour to colleagues, suppliers, members of the public etc. Any complaints of this nature will be investigated in line with our usual policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

We would like to remind employees that, if they have any worries or concerns about any aspect of the current situation, they have access to a confidential 24-hour telephone counselling service on **0800 032 7097**