

COVID-19.

Staff Briefing Pack

PET PROTECT
Redhill
UK

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Coronavirus – What is it and what do I need to do?

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus.

Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a cough, a high temperature and shortness of breath.

Do:

- 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 use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not 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
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Don't:

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Treatment aims to relieve the symptoms until you recover. It's not known exactly how coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads from person to person, but similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.

Further information about the virus can be found on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

Coronavirus – How are we managing the situation?

We take our duty of care and your health and wellbeing very seriously, and as such we are taking measures to prepare as best we can and to communicate with all our employees. As coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) continues to spread, we recognise that our organisation needs to adapt its ways of working.

We have created a temporary staff policy, that outlines the temporary measures in place during the coronavirus situation, this refers to time off work, pay and the process of notification and we would ask that you read this document carefully and keep it to hand should you need to refer to it.

If you have any upcoming travel plans, please discuss them with your manager. Additionally, if you have an underlying medical condition, that may be exasperated by the coronavirus please discuss this with your manager.

If you are required to self isolate at home, please follow the guidance from the NHS to avoid the spread of infection, advice can be found by visiting: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice

If you are required to stay at home at any stage of the coronavirus situation, you will be updated by way of the staff website page which you can find by visiting: www.petprotect.co.uk/staff

Temporary Changes to workplace policies and procedures: Coronavirus – Covid – 19

We want to help reduce the spread of coronavirus and safeguard the welfare of our staff during the coronavirus outbreak, while continuing our operations as normally as possible.

This policy explains what temporary changes we are making to our usual policies and procedures on sickness absence, flexible working, travel, and annual leave during the global health crisis.

At the point that this crisis becomes controlled and we are in a position to return to our standard practises you will be notified.

Sickness absence

Sickness absence reporting

Under our normal short-term sickness absence policy, if you fall ill and cannot attend work, you would be required to:

- notify your line manager before you are due to start work, or as soon as possible if that is not practical; and
- provide medical evidence (typically, a fit note from your doctor) for sickness of more than seven calendar days' absence.

During the coronavirus situation, it is vital that you DO NOT attend work if you fall ill and experience any common coronavirus symptoms. These are:

- a fever;
- a new and persistent cough;
- shortness of breath.

You should still notify your line manager of your absence before you are due to start work, or as soon as possible if that is not practical.

However, we recognise that you may be legitimately absent without having written medical evidence, we will not ask you to provide written medical evidence after seven calendar days' absence.

This is because public health advice is that, if you show symptoms, you should avoid going to your doctor or a hospital to prevent infection from spreading. Please review Public Health England for updates.

You will still be expected to keep in regular contact with your line manager.

Given the coronavirus situation, you must make sure that you have your line managers contact details for out of work hours and that your manager has your up to date telephone number and email address where they can reach you if you are in self-isolation.

Acceptable levels of absence

If you are given medical advice to self-isolate we ask you to self-isolate, or you decide to self-isolate, we will not take this absence into account when determining whether or not to take any action under absence management procedures.

Sick pay

Under our short-term sickness absence policy, you would normally receive, if eligible, statutory sick pay (SSP) where:

- you have a period of sickness absence from work of at least four calendar days in a row; and
- three "waiting days" (days on which you would usually be required to work) have passed.

Statutory sick pay is payable for up to 28 weeks in any one period of sickness absence, at a weekly rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year.

During the coronavirus situation, you will be paid full pay if:

- we have asked you to stay away from the workplace and self-isolate; or
- you are self-isolating in response to medical advice from NHS 111, your doctor, or a local health protection team; or
- you are choosing to self-isolate due to any symptoms

Flexible working

Requests for flexible working

Current practise is that if you are able to work from home and your manager has given you specific instruction that you may work from home, you can normally agree informally with your line manager to one-off or short-term changes to your working patterns or periods of homeworking.

However, if you wish to change your working patterns or work from home for an extended period, we normally ask you to make a formal request for flexible.

During the coronavirus situation, the organisation is putting measures in place to allow where possible for employees to work from home if there is a requirement for the office to be closed.

In the case of the organisation not closing the office, If your role allows for working from home and your manager has advised you of this and you have been provided with the tools to do so, as long as the organisation's operational needs continue to be met, you will be able to:

- adapt your working patterns, for example to allow you to travel on public transport at less crowded times; or
- work from home if you are self-isolating; or
- work from home if required to stay home with a dependant who is self-isolating; or
- work from home if asked to self-isolate

for an extended period without having to follow our formal procedure. You can agree informally with your line manager to these changes.

Once agreed with your manager, the temporary flexible working arrangement will continue until further notice. If circumstances change, your manager will discuss with you any adaptations to, or the withdrawal of, the flexible working arrangement, with the final decision remaining with your manager.

Requirement to work remotely

Standard policy is that except by prior agreement with us, we do not normally require you to work remotely for an extended period.

There is normally no expectation that:

- if you use a laptop, you always take it home with you after work each day; or
- if you use a desktop, you access your emails remotely while away from the workplace.

Given the current global health situation, you may be asked to work remotely at short notice. This could be the case if our workplace closes unexpectedly as a precaution or public health measures, such as an area-wide lockdown, are introduced.

This could mean working from home, your Manager will discuss with you if it is possible for you to work from home, you should discuss your options with your line manager.

You should ensure that, where possible, you take your laptop and any work required home with you after work each, and that you have the appropriate access to work remotely.

You should ensure that if the purpose of working from home is to self-isolate to avoid infection to yourself and others, that you actually isolate yourself and avoid public places except where it is essential.

You should complete a risk assessment form.

It is your responsibility to carry out your duties to the best of your ability whilst working from home. This is not time off work, it is continued work from an alternative location.

Time off for Dependents

If you have dependants who are required to self-isolate due to childcare/ care provider closures you will continue to be paid your salary for the period of isolation.

Travel

Work-related travel

Our organisation operates in other areas including Canada and whilst you may normally be expected to travel for work to meet the organisation's needs.

During the coronavirus situation, we are restricting all business travel.

Non-work-related travel

We do not normally have any rules around staff travelling outside work.

During the coronavirus situation, If you have been in a restricted area since the beginning of March 2020, you must inform your line manager immediately.

If you plan to travel to a restricted area in your own time, for example on a holiday or for family reasons, you must inform your line manager before you depart of where you are going.

You must not come to work on your return. Even if you have no symptoms, we will ask you to self-isolate for 7 days after your return from the restricted area.

On your return from a restricted area, your first step should be to self-isolate, and then visit the NHS website, where you can get further medical advice.

If possible, you should avoid going to your doctor or a hospital to prevent infection from spreading.

Annual leave

Changing your holiday plans

During the coronavirus situation, you may change your mind about travelling, or be unable to travel to your planned destination, and may wish to cancel or change annual leave that you have already booked.

If you would like to cancel or change planned leave, please speak to your line manager. We may allow you to change or cancel booked holiday, taking into account the coronavirus situation. However, this will continue to be a decision for your line manager, depending on the circumstances.

For example, if we have arranged cover for you, or arranged shift patterns on the basis that you will be on leave, we may require you to take the leave as booked.

Unused annual leave

Our organisation's holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December. Due to the timing of the Coronavirus outbreak we recognise that some holiday plans may be affected, and we will consider on a case by case basis any requirement to carry over holiday to 2021. However, you should endeavour to take your holiday entitlement in the relevant holiday year, and you should speak to your line manager if you think that you will be unable to do so.

If you contract the coronavirus, you should advise your manager as soon as you are able to. They will advise the HR department, who in turn will advise their PLT partner. You will be asked to confirm if you have been in contact with anyone at Pethealth and we will contact those individuals confidentially to advise them accordingly, that they should self-isolate. Your name will not be provided to those individuals.

UK Governments strategy to address Covid -19

The UK government has outline 4 stages in its plan to address the escalating coronavirus. These stages are set out as follows: -

1. Phase one – containment
 - a. The containment stage involves trying to catch cases early and trace all contacts to avoid the spread of the disease.
2. Phase two - delay
 - a. If containment does not work and the number of cases rise dramatically, the country will enter the delay stage. This means the government will ramp up efforts to delay the spread of the illness, by considering measures such as closing schools, postponing or cancelling large-scale gatherings and encouraging people to work from home
3. Phase three - research
 - a. If delaying the spread has failed, the government will intensify its focus on finding out more about how the virus spreads and how those who are infected can be treated most effectively. It is likely this Phase would also introduce stronger travel and working restrictions.
4. Phase four - mitigate
 - a. The government's plan implies this is essentially the worst-case scenario and it is likely to involve a nationwide self-isolation order.

Working from home risk assessment form

In order to prepare for the situation whereby you are required to work from home, please complete the following risk assessment and provide it to your HR department.					
Department:					
Name (Self-Assessed)					
Date:					
Significant hazard description	Harm and risk description (consider likelihood and consequences)	Existing and proposed control measures	Responsible party	Date action required	Action taken - signature and date

