

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updated 25/3/20 Information/Protocols for All Staff

This is the 3rd of these updates to staff and **supersedes** all previous versions. Please take the advice below seriously. This is a guidance document for all staff, Aspire sent guidance for supported individuals and their families/informal supports on 17/3/20 via e-mail and letter. Aspire will make every effort to maintain an optimum level of communication with staff and those supported/their families at all times. **It remains the responsibility of each of us to do the right thing with the most current advice available.**

Updates regarding spread within the UK and internationally are changing rapidly. We **expect all staff** to keep aware of what is happening and identify what they can do to reduce risk to themselves, their families and the people we support. As additional information becomes available where it changes, or adds to the advice below, we will sent out updates to reflect these.

Question	Guidance	Further Info
What is Coronavirus?	Coronavirus is a new strain of virus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.	Stay aware of up to date information from trusted sources –e.g., national news, government websites and internal Aspire updates
What does the delay phase mean?	During the 1 st phase in managing the virus – the focus was placed on containing the virus. This phase had now passed and we have entered the delay phase.	We all need to take the issues relating to coronavirus seriously and manage these risks in a considered, sensible manner
How is it spread?	<p>This advice has not changed.</p> <p>Respiratory secretions are most common means of transmission which occurs when an infected person coughs or sneezes, in the same way colds spread between people.</p> <p>There are 2 main routes the virus can spread</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From respiratory secretions to people who are nearby, (within 2 metres). Could be inhaled into the lungs from coughing, sneezing. 2. From hard surfaces. Touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face). 3. Current understanding is that the virus doesn't survive on surfaces for longer than 72 hours. <p>There is currently little evidence that people without symptoms are infectious to others.</p>	Stay aware of how the virus is spread.
How do I prevent becoming infected?	<p>Wash your hands often – this is still one of the most important interventions you can carry out.</p> <p>Wash with soap and water. Only use alcohol sanitisers that contain at least 60% alcohol if handwashing facilities are not available.</p> <p>Wash your hands for the amount of time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice (around 20 seconds)</p> <p>Dry your hands completely with a disposable towel Use the disposable towel to turn off the tap</p> <p>Wash your hands after:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking public transport 	Select or click on the words " hand hygiene " for further information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • before leaving home • on arrival at work • after using the toilet • after breaks and sporting activities • before food preparation • before eating any food, including snacks • before leaving work • on arrival at home • after using supermarket trolleys etc. <p>Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands</p> <p>Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. Catch It, Bin It, Kill It</p> <p>Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces at least x2 (and as needed) daily with domestic/anti-bacterial cleaning products in work or domestic settings</p> <p>Remove rings from your hands and bracelets to minimise the possibility of germs on your hands and wrists</p>	
<p>Why is this important?</p>	<p>Recent announcements from the Chief Medical Officer have stated the virus could affect up to 80% of the population</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some studies have suggested up to 250,000 people could die in the UK as a result of this outbreak. This is a huge amount of people and risk to the general population that we have not seen in 100 years 2. It is important that all staff know what is expected of them during this outbreak. Individually and collectively, we need to take care of each other and those we support. If staff do not follow guidelines, they could expose themselves, their families and supported individuals to risk. 3. We provide support to a lot of frail, vulnerable people who are at higher risk of becoming very unwell from this virus 4. It could also mean that a lot of staff are either in self-isolation/or are infected which could create problems in our ability to providing support, leaving those we support at risk. 	<p>It's important we all take responsibility to minimise the impact this has on ourselves, our families, the people we support and our employee owned business.</p>
<p>What are the symptoms?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high temperature – over 37.8 degrees or your chest or back feels hot to touch • A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than 1 hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you normally have a cough, it may be worse than usual) • Difficulty in breathing 	<p>Stay alert to the symptoms of the virus and respond appropriately of they become evident reporting to your line manager</p>
<p>What do I do if I feel unwell?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact either your line manager or the on-call manager advising them of your concerns as soon as you are able. • If a member of staff is concerned they have COVID-19 they should follow <u>NHS advice</u>. • If they are advised to self-isolate at home they should follow the <u>stay at home guidance</u>. 	<p>Aspire may ask staff to work from home (if this is possible within their normal duties) to reduce people's exposure to risk or to support the self-isolation of staff.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If advised to self-isolate at home, they should not visit and care for individuals until safe to do so. • If staff are worried about their symptoms or those of a family member or colleague, Do not go to your GP or other healthcare environment. • Only call 111 if you cannot get help online. 	<p>Click or Select NHS advice for more information</p> <p>Click or Select stay at home guidance for more information</p>
<p>What happens if I need to stay off work?</p>	<p>If you are required to shield due to underlying medical concerns or as a result of symptoms or self isolation you should report this to your line manager.</p> <p>Statutory sick pay will be paid from day 1 of your absence. We realise that this will be less than you will normally earn and discussions are ongoing at national level to try to minimise the financial impact of people.</p> <p>For those employees who earn less than the lower earnings limit of £118 you may be eligible to claim universal credit or other benefits to assist you financially over this time. Aspire's Finance Manager is creating a document to signpost the team to the appropriate places where they may receive financial support or guidance.</p>	<p>As employee owners, this is your company. We all need to do the right thing by the company to ensure it remains financially viable and support genuine staff need. We do not intend to support anyone who may see an opportunity to take advantage this current situation.</p> <p>Some decisions will be determined at the manager's discretion. Any such situations will be taken fairly and with all relevant information to ensure fairness for all staff.</p>
<p>Working from Home</p>	<p>The government has urged people who could work from home, should work from home. This was implemented to reduce the amount of people circulating in the general population and in turn decrease the opportunity for the virus to spread</p> <p>We have set up systems to ensure only essential personnel for essential reasons will attend any of Aspire's bases. It may be the offices need to be closed down and office based staff work from home full time. We are keeping in contact via phone and video conferences.</p> <p>We are also speaking to staff who normally work directly supporting people to see if telephone and or video support can be given to maintain supports for supported individuals as best we can</p>	<p>We all need to think about how we can work differently, working smart to maintain as much business continuity as possible.</p>

<p>When do I have to isolate myself and/or my family?</p>	<p>If you have any of the symptoms above, you have to self-isolate for 7 days from when your symptoms started.</p> <p>If you live alone and after 7 days you feel better, and no longer have a high temperature, you can return to your normal routine.</p> <p>If you live with others then all members of the household have to quarantine for 14 days. If at day 13 or 14, someone develops symptoms the isolation for the household does not need to be extended.</p> <p>Only the person with new symptoms has to stay home for 7 days.</p> <p>People who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 are advised to self-isolate for 7 days.</p> <p>People who are self-isolating and have no symptoms do not pose a risk to others. They are self-isolating to allow closer monitoring in order to identify early symptoms, and to enable prompt medical action if required.</p>	<p>We need to be continually assessing the people we support to determine whether they have any of the signs or symptoms listed.</p>
<p>I have a chronic health condition – what should I do?</p>	<p>Guidance on social distancing was released 16/3/20. There is an extensive list (on Govt websites) specifying who this covers. Namely, over 70's, people with chronic disease, people with cancer, pregnant women and various other health issues. Please read the Govt list if unsure if you fit into any of the categories listed.</p> <p>If this is the case and you have not yet received a phone call from Debbie Elrick, HR Manager, please contact her via email delrick@aspireinc.co.uk and she will arrange a call with you.</p> <p>The latest guidance is that the NHS will contact you from Monday 23 March 2020 if you are at particularly high risk of getting seriously ill with coronavirus. You'll be given specific advice about what to do. Do not contact your GP or healthcare team at this stage – wait to be contacted. Please ensure that if you are contacted by your GP or healthcare team that you notify Debbie Elrick, HR Manager on delrick@aspireinc.co.uk as well as your line manager.</p>	<p>This has been implemented to try to reduce transmission of the virus.</p> <p>Please pay heed to not meeting in groups and stick to the government guidelines.</p> <p>This guidance is intended to help protect you, your family and supported individuals and should be taken seriously</p> <p>Access Self-help guide: Coronavirus (COVID-19) at https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-coronavirus-covid-19</p>
<p>What if an individual I care for has symptoms of COVID-19?</p>	<p>If the individual receiving care and support has symptoms of COVID-19, then you should contact your line manager immediately to report this whilst keeping a safe distance.</p> <p>The risk of transmission should be minimised through the following safe working procedures.</p> <p>Personal protective equipment Care workers should use personal protective equipment (PPE) for activities that bring them into close</p>	<p>Follow guidelines</p>

	<p>personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids. Aprons, gloves and fluid repellent surgical masks should be used in these situations. If there is a risk of splashing, then eye protection will minimise risk.</p> <p>New personal protective equipment must be used for each episode of care. It is essential that personal protective equipment is stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin.</p>	
<p>What is a supported person has no symptoms but is part of a household that is isolating?</p>	<p>If the individual being cared for and their worker can remain at a safe protected distance from the symptomatic member of the household, then care can be provided without additional precaution.</p> <p>This would apply, for example, where the symptomatic family member can remain in their own room, is using separate bathroom facilities and is observing robust isolation procedures, staying 2 metres away from other family members.</p> <p>Where this is not possible – and this will vary on a case-by-case basis – the same procedures should be adopted as if the person being cared for did have symptoms of COVID-19 (see above). Care should continue to be taken to limit contact with any household member that has symptoms.</p> <p>See guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.</p>	<p>Follow guidelines</p> <p>Select or Click on guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. For further information</p>
<p>What if neither the individual nor the care worker have symptoms of COVID – 19?</p>	<p>If neither the care worker nor the individual receiving care and support has symptoms, then no personal protective equipment is required above and beyond normal good hygiene practices.</p> <p>General interventions may include increased cleaning activity and keeping property properly ventilated by opening windows whenever safe and appropriate.</p> <p>Care workers must always follow advice on hand hygiene.</p>	<p>Select or click on the words “hand hygiene” for further information.</p>
<p>What areas should be cleaned?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids 2. All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones, keyboards, desks, tables etc <p>In Service Cleaning</p> <p>If care workers undertake cleaning duties, then they should use usual household products, such as detergents and bleach as these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly.</p>	<p>Clean surfaces with disposable disinfectant cloths and sprays at least x 2 daily</p> <p>In areas where staff share keyboards, clean keyboards x 2 per day and use gloves to type</p> <p>Please note that where we support people in carrying out their shopping that we should be ensuring that they have adequate cleaning supplies</p>

	<p>Personal waste (for example, used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the person's designated private space. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin for disposal as normal.</p> <p>Laundry If care workers support the individual with laundry, then they should not shake dirty laundry before washing. This minimises the possibility of dispersing virus through the air. Wash items as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.</p> <p>Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items. If the individual does not have a washing machine, wait a further 72 hours after the 7-day isolation period has ended; the laundry can then be taken to a public Laundromat.</p> <p>Items heavily soiled with body fluids, for example, vomit or diarrhoea, or items that cannot be washed, should be disposed of, with the owner's consent.</p> <p>Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected. Please be aware of cleaning light switches, remote controls etc</p>	<p>in order that this can be undertaken effectively.</p>
<p>How do I dispose of Rubbish</p>	<p>All waste that has been in contact with the at risk individual, including used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied.</p> <p>The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place, labelled with date and time and set aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin.</p>	<p>Follow the guidance as stated</p> <p>Please ensure that supported persons have enough bags in their homes to allow for these measures to be taken. Should you have any concerns regarding the availability of bags please contact your line manager.</p>
<p>What should I do following the Prime Minister and First Ministers addresses on 23rd of March</p>	<p>As you may be aware the government have now urged people to stay at home, with the only permissible exceptions being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shop for basic necessities once per day 2. Exercise once per day 3. Medical reasons or to care for a vulnerable person 4. Essential Work for Key Workers <p>Even when following the above guidance, people should minimise the amount of time spent out of</p>	<p>Follow guidelines, for further information please refer to New Rules on staying at Home and Away from Others Published on the 23rd March 2020 which can be found by selecting this link: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874742/Full_guidance_on_staying_at_home_and_a_way_from_others_1.pdf</p>

	<p>their homes and should keep two metres away from people they do not live with where possible. Gatherings of more than 2 people are not permitted (excluding the people you live with) and the police can fine you if you are not following these rules.</p> <p>Employees delivering front line care and support are key workers delivering essential work and so you are permitted to attend work in order to fulfil your duties to those we support.</p> <p>In order to be able to do this without obstruction you must ensure that you carry your Aspire ID with you at all times, along with the on call number and access to your rota. You may also wish as an additional measure to have a picture of your SSSC Registration Certificate to hand within your mobile. Should you have misplaced your ID card please contact Elaine Couplan on ecouplan@aspireinc.co.uk to request a new one.</p> <p>Should you face enquiry from an official, for example the police as to where you are travelling to you should be able to show them your ID and explain that you are a care worker. Should they require additional verification then they could be provided with the on call telephone number to phone and enquire.</p> <p>It is important that when not at work that you are only permitted to leave your home for those reasons as stipulated by the government. Full information on these guidelines can be found by clicking the following link:</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874742/Full_guidance_on_staying_at_home_and_away_from_others_1.pdf</p>	
<p>What do I do if I have to stay at home to take care of my children when their school is shut down? And will I get paid?</p>	<p>The Scottish government have published new guidelines on 20th March 2020 an excerpt is detailed below. Should you wish to read the full guidelines please select or click on this link:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision</p> <p>The most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.</p> <p>It is important to underline that schools, all childcare settings (including early years settings, childminders and providers of childcare for school-age children), colleges and other educational establishments, remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school,</p>	<p>We need to minimise the potential negative impact for supported individuals and also income to Aspire.</p> <p>Therefore, some decisions will be determined at the manager’s discretion. Any such situations will be taken fairly and with all relevant information to ensure fairness for all staff at all times.</p> <p>Scottish government have implemented new supports for full info please follow the link:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision</p>

	<p>and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.</p> <p>Schools, and all childcare providers, are therefore being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.</p> <p>Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care. Many parents working across sectors may be able to ensure that their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.</p> <p>Please, therefore, follow these key principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be. 2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them. 3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions. 4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults. 5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible. <p>If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response (which social care is), and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision:</p> <p>Health and social care which includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.</p> <p>Where your children's school is closed as an Aspire worker in Health & Social care you can contact your local authority, who will seek to redirect you to a local school in your area that your child, or children, can attend.</p> <p>Should you have any questions or concerns please discuss those with your line manager.</p> <p>In addition to these guidelines Aspire would expect staff to work with their family and informal supports to minimise the impact of childcare issues. Please note there is no statutory payment</p>	
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	<p>available for taking time off to care for your children and so this new support will hopefully be of great assistance to you in these challenging circumstances.</p>	
<p>I am going on Holiday; will I be able to go?</p>	<p>The foreign office has advised 17/3/20 that only essential international travel will take place in the next 30 days</p> <p>Please note that only absolutely essential travel should happen at this time. Aspire employees should not travel out with Scotland unless there is an urgent medical reason or some other substantial essential reason to do so. If you still intend on travelling during this time against the request of government you should first speak with your line manager to understand how that may effect your employment.</p> <p>You will need to contact your travel agent for advice also re refunds/different destinations etc.</p> <p>Please also note that we will require your flexibility when it comes to holiday requests, this is an unprecedented time and we must ensure that your colleagues have adequate support in the workplace and that too many employees are not on holiday during this challenging time.</p>	<p>Unlikely this is going to change soon. Internal holidays need to be assessed also.</p> <p>Social isolation measures would suggest that 0 holidays should be taken until further notice</p>
<p>What to do if someone <u>with confirmed COVID-19</u> has recently been in the office, workplace or support setting?</p>	<p>Guidance 19/3/20 from public health England states ‘it is not necessary to close the business or workplace or send any staff home if someone has become unwell whilst in the workplace’.</p> <p>This is quite different from before – because we are in a different stage of the transmission of the virus.</p> <p>If an individual receiving care and support has symptoms of COVID-19, then the risk of transmission should be minimised through safe working procedures.</p> <p>Staff should use personal protective equipment (PPE) for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids. New personal protective equipment must be used for each episode of care and all used equipment disposed of by double bagging and setting aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin.</p> <p><u>IF NEITHER THE STAFF NOR THE INDIVIDUAL RECEIVING CARE AND SUPPORT HAS SYMPTOMS, THEN NO PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS REQUIRED ABOVE AND BEYOND NORMAL GOOD HYGIENE PRACTICES.</u></p> <p>General interventions may include increased cleaning activity and keeping property properly ventilated by opening windows whenever safe and appropriate.</p>	<p>Follow the updated guidance as stated</p>

	<p>Care workers should follow advice on <u>hand hygiene</u>.</p>	
<p>What do I do if staff sickness levels are high and we have difficulty in providing support?</p>	<p>Service Managers have completed a Red, Amber, Green risk rating assessment of each service/individual supported. These will be managed in the same way that we would for adverse weather conditions.</p> <p>Team members should be aware that should the need arise and in order that we continue to provide support to the most vulnerable people and ensure service continuity that you may be asked to deliver support in areas and for people that you do not normally work in / and with. This will be communicated with you and we ask that all employees co-operate with this reasonable request.</p> <p>Should you be aware of any employees who have worked with Aspire in the past and who may consider returning to Aspire for additional income and to provide additional support please contact recruitment@aspireinc.co.uk who will progress this with the particular ex employee on an individual basis. Also should you be available to under take work in additional services across Aspire please contact your line manager as soon as possible.</p> <p>Staff fit to work but unable to provide direct support because of their own underlying health risk issues should liaise with the Aspire team on how they could remotely support our efforts in delivering continuity of care and support.</p>	<p>We are in regular contact with each local authority. Working with them to minimise risks.</p> <p>Conversely, we may be asked by the local authority to provide support to others for the same reasons.</p>

Sources

- GOV.UK - Guidance for social or community care and residential settings on COVID-19. Published 19th March 2020,
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-home-care-provision>
- NHS Website
- NHS Inform
- ACAS
- Health Protection Scotland
- [Full Guidance on Staying at Home and Away from People Published 23/03/20](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874742/Full_guidance_on_staying_at_home_and_away_from_others_1_.pdf)
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