YOUR ORGANISATION AND CORONAVIRUS

This information is intended to help you decide what steps you and your organisation may need to take in light of the spread of the covid-19 virus.

We'll keep this information up to date. This page was last updated on **6 March 2020**.

What is the coronavirus?

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. This strain, covid-19, is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020.

What are the symptoms?

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has covid-19 infection:

- A cough

- A high temperature

- Shortness of breath

If you are worried about symptoms, please call NHS 111 or go to the NHS 111 coronavirus advice website. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment.

The latest advice and developments on the covid-19 situation can be found on the GOV.UK website or the Public Health Agency's website.

What's the best way to prevent the spread of covid-19?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. This is particularly important after taking public transport.

- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin. You can download a 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' poster (PDF, 940KB) for your workplace from the NHS.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

What do we need to do to protect staff, volunteers and visitors?

- Information: Provide clear information using communication channels including posters and email.

- Handwashing facilities: Handwashing facilities should be available and well supplied. More regular handwashing may require more supplies. Provide hand sanitiser, tissues and cleaning products around your buildings for staff and visitors. GOV.UK has published clear and printable instructions on handwashing techniques (PDF, 130KB) which can be displayed around the workplace.

- Cleaning regimes: Viruses can live on hard surfaces for up to eight hours. Frequently clean key areas including keyboards and door handles.

- There is government advice on [social care](#) and [educational](#) settings you may want to review if they apply to your organisation.

- Support staff working from home: Staff and volunteers may be required to work from home, particularly if impacted by school closures. Consideration should be given to the infrastructure, equipment and processes required to allow staff to work remotely. These considerations include secure, remote access to servers, video conferencing facilities and guidance on home working.

- Manage travel risks: Keep up to date on current travel advice. The Foreign Office has published [information and advice on travel safety](#) and the World Health Organisation is providing updated [covid-19 travel advice](#).

- Review travel arrangements. Is travel necessary? Are there possible alternatives such as video conferencing? Maintain updated and clear advice for staff travelling.

- If UK staff or volunteers are working overseas consider what access they have to health care services.

- Ensure emergency contact details are up to date

Should our employees take sick leave?

- There is no need for most staff or volunteers to avoid the workplace.

- The government has listed high risk areas/countries by [category 1 (highest risk areas) and category 2 areas](#).

- Employees who are symptomless but have returned from category 1 areas within the last 14 days should [self-isolate](#) for 14 days from their return.

- Employees who have returned from a category 2 area within the last 14 days and who develop symptoms should self-isolate.

- Employees who are recommended to self-isolate are entitled to sick leave but not necessarily sick pay.

- If employees are sick with the virus then they would qualify for [Statutory Sick Pay](#) subject to meeting eligibility requirements, though you may well want to provide this anyway as a matter of being a good employer.

Should we cancel our events?

- Currently the advice is for most people to continue to go to work, school and other public places.

- If your charity is planning events which will bring together large numbers of people, keep your plans under review. If your events depend on volunteers, be aware that some may prefer to stay home.

How do we support our beneficiaries/service users?

- Generally, infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. See below for resources from charities.

- Some of your service users or beneficiaries may be more at risk or highly concerned about the virus.

- You can play a role in providing clear and updated information to raise awareness of prevention measures like handwashing, but at this stage the most important message may simply be one of reassurance.

- NCVO will be working alongside the NHS and the Health and Wellbeing Alliance on how best to support vulnerable service users and people in our communities, and we'll keep NCVO members updated with the latest information on this.

How will we develop a contingency plan and how will our insurance be impacted?

- You should think about how your organisation would run if a significant proportion of staff or volunteers were unavailable, or if you had to work from home. Who will make decisions about your operations, how and when? This checklist from Zurich Insurance helps you think through some of the issues and plan for them. The Charities Facility Management Group has more information on how to develop a business continuity plan.

- Your insurer should be able to tell you what risks you are covered for or if there are particular steps you need to take.

Will there be financial implications?

You and your board may want to consider potential financial impacts of the virus's spread continuing, and what steps you might need to take.

- You may want to budget for increased contingency costs over the next financial year:

- Your income may fall if there is serious disruption.

- You may face increased need for support from people who rely on your organisation.

- The value of investments has been affected by the scale of the virus. This is likely to be a particular concern if you have shorter-term investments.

- You may also face increased costs if the impact on global trade continues.

How are charities helping to deal with covid-19?

- Diabetes UK has provided an updated information page for people living with diabetes.

- Asthma UK has released a blog post with advice for people with asthma.

- The British Heart Foundation has published guidance for people with health problems.

- The Cystic Fibrosis Trust, Primary Immunodeficiency UK and the Mental Health Foundation have all issued advice and support.

Resources

Key up-to-date information from the government:

- GOV.UK: COVID-19 latest information and advice

- NHS coronavirus advice

- Public Health Agency coronavirus advice

- Public Health Agency useful downloads

Sector-specific guidance

- [GOV.UK: Guidance for social or community care and residential settings on COVID-19](#)

- [Public Health Agency guidance for employers and businesses](#)

- [GOV.UK: COVID-19 guidance for educational settings](#)

- [NHS England: Coronavirus information for health professionals](#)

Risk management

- [GOV.UK: Guidance on charities and risk management](#)

- [Zurich: Organisational resilience guidance on pandemic planning](#)

- [Charities Facilities Management Group: Business continuity for charities](#)

Travel advice

- [GOV.UK: COVID-19 travel advice](#)

- [GOV.UK: COVID-19 specified countries and areas with implications for returning travellers or visitors arriving in the UK](#)

Acknowledgement: Adapted by Volunteer Now with permission from information provided by NCVO