

Policy: Coronavirus

Equality Statement

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is committed to the principles of equality and diversity. No member of the public, member of staff, contractor, secondee, volunteer or job applicant shall be discriminated against on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

Introduction

1. This policy is designed to provide you with important information about the Coronavirus outbreak and what we are doing to support our staff and those work with us. Please continue to take time to read the information and ask questions if you have any concerns.
2. This policy is non contractual, it may be amended or added to at any time and it will be updated, as appropriate, to reflect changing advice. It applies to all staff, but it doesn't apply to anyone we engage on a self-employed basis.
3. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Staff Handbook,

Symptoms

4. Coronavirus symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu. Current guidance indicates that among those who become infected, some will exhibit no symptoms. Of those who do develop an illness, the majority will have a mild to moderate illness similar to seasonal flu. A minority will develop complications severe enough to require hospital care, most often pneumonia and in a small number of these the illness may be severe enough to lead to death.
5. We are taking all reasonable steps to protect your health and safety. We require all staff to follow these simple steps to help stop the spread of germs like Coronavirus.
 - 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
 - Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – only use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
 - Always wash your hands when you get home or into work
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
 - Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
 - Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
6. There is national guidance, available from Public Health England on who the "at risk" groups are. Please tell us if you think you are at risk because you are in one of the high risk groups or you care for someone who is considered to be high risk; or you have been in contact with someone who is being tested for, has tested positive for Coronavirus or has been advised to self-isolate because they have coronavirus symptoms. We will conduct an

individual risk assessment for anyone we believe to be in a high risk group and will put in place appropriate safeguards.

7. If you develop Coronavirus symptoms at work, please speak to your line manager as quickly as possible and arrange to return home as quickly and safely as possible. Please try to avoid unnecessarily touching surfaces. If you become ill at home, please do not travel for work. You'll need to telephone us in accordance with our usual absence policy. You should take advice from Public Health England.
8. Please advise your line manager immediately if you test positive for Coronavirus, even if your symptoms are mild. You will not be able to physically return to work until you are considered fit by Public Health England or any other competent authority. You don't need to obtain a fit note from your doctor, but please send to us anything you do receive which confirms your diagnosis and/or fitness to return to work. If you feel well enough to work, please let us know. If your role lends itself to homeworking, we'll discuss how we can facilitate that. We will not inform anyone else about your condition unless it's necessary to do so and we are legally able to. Our overriding obligation is to protect the health and safety of our staff, and we may therefore have to speak to your colleagues and other people with whom you've been in close contact in order to protect them. Any information we disclose will be limited to what is necessary for that protection. Public Health England are responsible for 'contact tracing' (tracing anyone you have been in close contact with) and we will cooperate with them as appropriate.
9. You should follow the PHE guidance on whether to self isolate. If you must self isolate please advise your line manager. If you feel well enough to work, please let us know and we will arrange for you to work from home. If you don't feel well enough to work, or you are unable to work from home, please keep in touch with us.

Key Worker Status

10. According to the gov.uk guidance members of staff in policing organisations may be categorised as key workers. We have agreed that individuals may be designated key workers on a case by case basis in discussion with your line manager.

Entitlement to Sick Pay

11. If you are diagnosed with Coronavirus or have Coronavirus Symptoms and you are too unwell to work from home, we will pay you sick pay as per your contractual entitlement. You will need to comply with the usual rules around notification set out in our sickness policy in the Staff Handbook but you don't need to obtain a fit note unless your illness lasts for longer than 14 days. We will also pay you sick pay if you are responsible for looking after someone in your household who has been told to self-isolate, if you are not able to continue to work. You will need to meet the qualifying conditions and inform us immediately.
12. We may withhold sick pay to anyone who contracts Coronavirus after travelling somewhere contrary to the government advice as of their first day of travel. We may also withhold sick pay if we have reasonable grounds to believe that you are fit for work and can work remotely.
13. If you are advised to self-isolate and don't have any symptoms, we will pay you sick pay as set out above if you are not able to work from home. We may need to contact to you to ask about work related issues, so please tell your manager the best number to contact you on.

14. Coronavirus related absence will be treated as being outside of the triggers for the sickness absence policy.

Requirement to Work and redeployment

15. As a public sector organisation we do not anticipate a requirement to reduce salaries, nor to furlough members of staff. We will make arrangements for staff to be able to work from home where practicable. If there is insufficient work available in your normal role you may be redeployed into a different role for the duration, or a part of, the pandemic. If you are deployed into a role in the same or a lower band you will continue to be paid your current salary; if you are deployed into a role of a more senior grade you may be entitled to additional pay, at the level of the bottom of the band you are working at. This may be paid either as monthly pay increase, or if the deployment is for a short time as an honorarium to a value corresponding with the target Band SCP point.
16. We may also redeploy staff within our organisation or into force roles if we have excess capacity in our office. In the event that we ask you to work in the force we will make every endeavour to accommodate any requests or requirements that you have.
17. If you refuse to comply with a reasonable request for internal redeployment, or who do not demonstrate that you are working from home; this may be dealt with as a matter of misconduct.

Working from Home

18. We will make every endeavour to reduce the risk to staff and stakeholders and the general public by enabling work from home for all staff. Unless there is a reason where your role is not able to be carried out at home we will provide you with equipment to be able to work from home. You will be provided with a laptop and mobile phone as standard, and other equipment is available on request to support you to work from home; such as headsets. Please discuss your individual requirements with your line manager. If there is a long term need for individuals to work from home we will ensure that we are looking after the health and safety of staff in respect of the physical working environment and to ensure that no individual suffers a detriment from this approach.
19. The pandemic does not give any individual a long term right to work from home. If you would like to make a flexible working request you will find the information on this in Section 5 of the staff handbook.
20. If you are asked to visit a work premise for work purposes please discuss the arrangements with your line manager to ensure that you are taking sensible precautions. For example car park spaces are bookable at Lloyd House when the office is wholly remote.

Business travel, meetings and events

21. We will keep matters under review and will follow NHS and government advice. Currently, we recommend that you only travel if it is essential to do so outside of attending your normal workplace
22. We are providing support to enable you to hold telephone or video conferences and training will be made available on new systems. We do not expect physical attendance at events or conferences; if such an invite requires consideration please discuss it with your manager in the first instance.

23. If we need to carry out any formal HR processes we will explore the feasibility of conducting interviews, hearings and other meetings virtually.

Annual Leave

24. We want to be flexible with annual leave in order to maintain all of our functions and accommodate requests from staff. We expect you to manage your annual leave across the entire year; you should not bank all of your leave entitlement until we return to normal office working. We expect annual leave to be spread out across the year in a similar pattern to usual. Line managers should examine the annual leave plans for each staff manager and the entire team and ensure that plans are in place for each team member and the team as a whole to ensure business resilience is maintained.

25. During the time that the OPCC is required to work from home we can offer the additional temporary flexibilities:

- Staff can continue to take their annual leave in the normal manner, subject to the usual approval by line manager
- Annual leave should not be cancelled simply because staff are working from home. Any cancellations must be discussed with the line manager in advance.
- Line managers have flexibility to approve annual leave being taken in hours rather than the usual days or half days. An example of this might be to work reduced days per week or reduced hours per day (using annual leave entitlement to accommodate this). This can make home working easier for staff members and also suit the needs of the team.

Caring for dependents

26. We recognise that many staff will have dependents in the form of children, or adults for whom they have caring responsibilities. We accept that in current times there may be little outside support to care for dependents and will have a sympathetic approach to staff who have such responsibilities. We will make exceptional accommodations such as alterations to working patterns to address individual need and we ask you discuss your individual requirements with you line manager. Once business as normal resumes, we expect care to be in place for staff when they are working.

Bereavement

27. Section 5 in the staff handbook sets out your entitlement to special leave if you are bereaved. If you are affected by a bereavement please talk to your manager as soon as is practicable so that we can ensure you are supported in your individual requirements.

Wellbeing Support

28. We understand that you may be personally affected by Coronavirus, and we encourage you to make use of the force resources to support your wellbeing. A one stop shop can be found here: <https://es-one-stop-shop.custhelp.com/app/hubs/coronavirus/home>

Recruitment

29. Recruitment will be continued where there is a clear business need to do so. Where standard processes cannot be followed, creative solutions may be found and there may be some corrective action to be taken when business as usual resumes. This will be identified on a case by case basis and discussed with affected individuals as appropriate. Selection processes should be carried out virtually.

Recovery

30. We will work with you to ensure a smooth transition back into the office when government advice allows for this. We will ensure that your manager discusses individual requirements, which we align with business needs as far as possible.

Version Control

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1.0	Apr 2020	Polly Reed	Head of Business Services	First issue		