

COVID-19 FAQ

What if a staff member has symptoms? If employees have a “new, continuous” cough or high temperature, they should self-isolate for 7 days. Their travel history and contact with possible carriers is no longer relevant.

What if someone has been quarantined or told to self-isolate? If a staff member is told by a medical professional or NHS 111 to self-isolate, they should be treated as if they are on sick leave. It has been confirmed that employees are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay and this will take effect from the first day of absence. However, if an employee is not sick but you ask them not to come into work, you should pay them their normal pay. Employers with fewer than 250 employees will be eligible to reclaim two weeks’ SSP for each employee that has been affected by COVID-19.

What if an employee wants to return to work during self-isolation? If an employee has been told to self-isolate they should not be allowed to return to work until their self-isolation period has ended.

What if a staff member has coronavirus? They should follow medical advice and standard sickness procedures should be followed. Staff should contact you and update them on when they will be able to return. They will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay or Contractual Sick Pay if the contracts provide this.

What if someone attends the premises and is confirmed as having coronavirus? You should contact your local Public Health England who would identify people who have been in contact with the infected person, carry out a risk assessment and advise on any further action.

What if a staff member needs to care for a dependant? If a dependant has been asked to self-isolate, the staff member will have also been given the same instruction and will follow the advice above. However, if this is due to school closures and being unable to find alternative care, it can be treated as time off for dependants. You may also allow them to take this time as annual leave.

What if a staff member is refusing to come to work? If there is no reason for the staff member to self-isolate, then you should attempt to alleviate their fears. If able, you could attempt to offer flexible working or allow them to take holiday or unpaid leave with agreement.

If the business has to close, what do we do about staff? Unless the contracts allow or it is agreed otherwise, you should pay them their normal pay for this period. If your contracts allow, you are able to lay your employees off. Your employees will be entitled to guarantee pay in these circumstances which is currently £29 per day. If you do not close but there is a reduced need for staff, you can place them on short time working and they will only be paid for those hours worked.

Can we ask staff to change their working days and hours? Yes this would be reasonable if you needed to split staff into teams for example so they cover different days of the week.

Please note that the guidance on this area is subject to change and it is advisable to keep up to date with changes to the law. If a situation does occur you should make contact with Public Health England and follow the advice given by them.