

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR EMPLOYEES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About COVID-19

Updated 26 March 2020

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The key symptoms are:

- a high temperature of more than 37.8C – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly

How does this new coronavirus spread?

Because it's a new illness, it is not known exactly how it spreads from person to person, but similar viruses spread by cough droplets or sneeze droplets. These droplets fall on people in the vicinity and can be directly inhaled or picked up on the hands and transferred when someone touches their face.

Can the virus survive on supplies or materials that have arrived from an affected area?

There is currently no evidence to suggest that the virus can be transmitted from post, packages or parcels from China or any other affected area.

Can we test people for coronavirus at work?

We are not encouraging any form of self-diagnosis testing and will leave all testing for the virus to health professionals.

SELF-ISOLATION, PAY AND SICK LEAVE

How do I inform my manager/the business that I am self-isolating?

Anyone required to self-isolate even if they are working from home, should let us know using the [self-isolation reporting tool](#). Please also contact your line manager. If for any reason you are unable to do this, please let your line manager know and they can do this for you.

In accordance with Government guidance I need to self-isolate for 7 or 14 days. I am fit for work and able to work from home. What will I be paid and what do I need to do?

It's important that you [use the Self-isolation reporting tool](#) on Edi whether you are working from home or not. You must also inform your line manager if you are self-isolating and agree with them the work you will be undertaking from home and how you will keep in touch. You will continue to be paid your contractual pay.

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In accordance with Government guidance I need to self-isolate for 7 or 14 days. I am fit for work but unable to work from home. What will I be paid and what do I need to do?

You must let us know that you are self-isolating using the [Self-isolation reporting tool](#) on Edi and also let your line manager know. You should also obtain and forward to your line manager an isolation note through the [NHS 111 online coronavirus service](#) and agree how often you will keep in touch with your line manager. Provided all notification requirements have been met you will receive sick pay in accordance with your contract of employment.

In accordance with Government guidance I need to self-isolate for 7 or 14 days and I am not fit for work. What will I be paid and what do I need to do?

This will typically occur when you have a symptom associated with possible COVID-19 (high temperature above 37.8 C and/or a persistent dry cough) and are in self isolation and unable to work due to ill health. This does not necessarily mean that you have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.

You must [use the Self-isolation reporting tool](#) on Edi and notify your line manager that you are unfit for work. You should remain at home in accordance with self-isolation advice but will not be required to work from home. During this time, normal sickness reporting rules apply.

We accept you may not be able to provide a fit note within the usual timeframe and you will not be penalised for this, however the [NHS 111 online coronavirus service](#) should be able to provide you with an isolation note that you should forward on to your line manager.

You must keep in touch daily, or as agreed with your line manager.

You will receive sick pay in accordance with your contract of employment.

In accordance with Government guidance I need to self-isolate for 12 weeks. I am fit for work and able to perform my role from home. What will I be paid and what do I need to do?

It's important that you use the [use the Self-isolation reporting tool](#) on Edi whether you are working from home or not. You must also inform your line manager if you are self-isolating and agree with them the work you will be undertaking from home and how you will keep in touch.

You will continue to be paid your contractual pay.

In accordance with Government guidance I need to self-isolate for 12 weeks. I am fit for work but am unable to perform my role from home. What will I be paid and what do I need to do?

If after discussions with your manager you are told the role you perform cannot be performed from home, then your 12 weeks will be treated as sickness absence and you should obtain and forward on to your line manager a self-isolation note via the [NHS 111 online coronavirus service](#) and provide any other supporting documentation you have that supports the need for you to self-isolate or be shielded for 12 weeks.

You must keep in touch daily, or as agreed with your line manager.

You will receive sick pay in accordance with your contract of employment.

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In accordance with Government guidance I need to self-isolate for 12 weeks and am unfit to work. What will I be paid and what do I need to do?

You must let us know that you are self-isolating using the [Self-isolation reporting tool](#) on Edi and you should also let your line manager know.

We accept you may not be able to provide a fit note within the usual timeframe and you will not be penalised for this however the [NHS 111 online coronavirus service](#) can provide you with an isolation note that you should forward to your line manager. You should also agree how often you will keep in touch with your line manager. Provided all notification requirements have been met you will receive sick pay in accordance with your contract of employment.

When can I return to work if I have had a confirmed case of COVID-19

If you have had a confirmed case of COVID-19 you should return to work after your 14-day isolation period in accordance with any specific advice you're given from a medical professional. You should not return to work if you continue to have a high temperature until this has returned to normal. If you continue to have a persistent cough you can return to work

Will I be paid if I need to take care of someone who has COVID-19 e.g. a child, parent?

You are entitled to request time off work to help someone who depends on you (a 'dependant') in an unexpected event or emergency. There is no statutory right to pay for this time off, but employees are able to use their annual leave entitlement or utilise our Carers Leave policy.

Can I choose to self-isolate if I or members of my direct family have serious underlying medical conditions?

Please see the most up to date guidance on self-isolation contained on the NHS website, accessible through the link on the Coronavirus site on Edi.

ANNUAL LEAVE

I was due to go on holiday, but my holiday/flight was cancelled. My annual leave had been approved. Can I cancel it and take it later in the year?

Many of us will have already had holiday and flights cancelled or will have in the future. Whilst we recognise how disappointing this is, the Executive Committee has made the decision that all pre-booked, approved annual leave must be taken. The reasons for this are that the business will not cope with the majority of leave being deferred to later in the year and that it remains important that we all have time away from work, especially during this difficult time where levels of anxiety and uncertainty are high.

I was due to take some annual leave which was approved, but given the current social distancing guidelines can I cancel it and take it later in the year?

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FLEXIBLE WORKING AND SPLIT TEAMS

Why are you splitting some teams in offices and sites and how will it work?

The main objective of this is to reduce the risk of entire teams being impacted simultaneously by the virus. In line with Government guidance, the decision was made to close all our office locations from Tuesday 24 March until further notice and those who are office based should now work from home.

If you work on one of our sites (projects), the site will have been designated as red or blue. Your individual colour allocation and that of the site will remain constant throughout these arrangements.

The principles of this are:

- Individuals don't change colour
- Sites (projects) don't change colour
- You can only visit a project or mix with people of the same colour group. Red and blue team members are to remain separated both at work and in social settings for as long as these measures are in place.

How long will these arrangements at our sites and offices be in place?

These arrangements will be in place until further notice. We are closely monitoring the situation and advice given by the Government and will adapt our plans accordingly.

What happens if somebody in my team colour on the site I am based at is unwell?

In accordance with Government guidelines, anyone showing any symptoms of COVID-19 should self isolate for a period of seven days and not travel to any Wates sites. There is no need for anyone else in the workplace to self-isolate. However, you need to monitor yourself - if you become symptomatic (see Government guidelines), you should self-isolate. You should keep your line manager informed - as soon as you begin your period of self-isolation, and during the time you are away.

What happens if a member of my family is symptomatic?

In accordance with current government guidelines you should self-isolate for a period of 14 days if this is someone who lives with you. You should keep your line manager informed - as soon as you begin your period of self-isolation, and during the time you are away.

I work on a construction site. My job can't be done from home. Do I still have to come in to work and isn't this placing me at more risk than someone working in an office?

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In our business many activities simply can't be performed from home. In particular, site-based construction activities can't be managed remotely and until such time as our customers ask us to cease operations, all of our offices, projects and contracts remain open for business, allowing us to continue to support our customers and supply chain partners and to deliver our contractual commitments.

We have introduced even more rigorous protocols on all of our sites to reinforce the importance of personal hygiene, early reporting of any potential COVID-19 symptoms and maintenance of clean working environments. We also closed our sites for a 48-hour period from 25 March to ensure they could operate within the site operating procedures. Our first priority remains the health and well-being of all our employees and supply chain partners, so if you feel unwell and are experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 infection, you should go home and inform your manager.

WATES PROPERTY SERVICES RESIDENT FACING STAFF AND OPERATIVES

In my role I am regularly entering residents' properties to deliver a maintenance service. What additional precautions should I take where residents are self-isolating or displaying Coronavirus symptoms?

The WPS management team is working closely with our customers to identify where residents are self-isolating or displaying Coronavirus symptoms. This includes changes to call centre questions and the repairs booking process.

Planned work programmes are being re-assessed with our customers to prioritise external improvement programmes in the short-term.

To manage the risk and protect our workforce where accessing an affected property is required the following guidance has been produced:

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) – Advice for Frontline Staff and Operatives

Covid-19 – Self-isolated Properties – Del 002 – Risk Assessment Template

WPS Coronavirus ppt – Briefing Slides.

The above guidance has been distributed to the WPS management team.

You should not enter an affected property until a full assessment of these documents has been completed and agreed by your Operations Manager.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

What should we be telling our customers about our response to the virus?

We have prepared a customer statement which is available from the Wates and SES websites. You can also find it from the Coronavirus hub on Edi.

What are we advising our supply chain?

We have prepared guidance for our supply chain - please refer to the Coronavirus hub on Edi.

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Are we closing any of our sites?

At the current time (26 March 2020), all our sites that can comply with the site operating procedures will remain open. We are monitoring the situation closely and will review this as necessary, in consultation with our customers and supply chain partners.

OTHER

Will you close my workplace if someone is confirmed as having Covid-19?

The current advice from PHE is that closure of the workplace is not necessary even where a positive diagnosis has been made. However, the situation may change as things evolve and we will update advice to employees in line with PHE guidance.