

March 8, 2021

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy has been written to inform all staff, clients, relatives and other visitors to the homes of service users about the risks associated with Coronaviruses and other infectious respiratory diseases. It is important that all staff know about these conditions, as their jobs may involve working with and helping people who have been exposed to these respiratory infections.

Coronaviruses Overview

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like the common cold. However, three new coronaviruses have emerged over the past two decades to cause serious and widespread illness and death.

There are hundreds of coronaviruses, most of which circulate among such animals as pigs, camels, bats and cats. Sometimes those viruses jump to humans—called a spillover event—and can cause disease. Four of the seven known coronaviruses that sicken people cause only mild to moderate disease. Three can cause more serious, even fatal, disease. SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) emerged in November 2002 and caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) is caused by the MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV). MERS was identified in September 2012 and continues to cause sporadic and localized outbreaks. The third novel coronavirus to emerge in this century is called SARS-CoV-2. It causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which emerged from China in December 2019 and was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020.

At present, there are no known treatments for the Coronaviruses, and currently treatment only seeks to relieve symptoms. Research for vaccines is ongoing.

CORONAVIRUSES PROCEDURES

Whilst Coronaviruses are more likely to have more severe effects on those that are elderly, or have pre-existing health conditions, some young and healthy individuals have been known to suffer severely with the Coronavirus, hence precautions must be taken for all staff and service users.

People that have one of the Coronaviruses may not show symptoms straight away whilst, however they are still able to transmit the virus, hence it is imperative that during an outbreak everyone should be treated as though they are infected.

Staff that are in contact with service users during an outbreak of a Coronavirus will be required to observe and practice the following precautions for infection control:

1. If the company is informed of a service user contracting Coronavirus there is a duty of care to inform any staff involved in the care of that service user and report the instance to the HSE under the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.
2. Any person affected by a Coronavirus infection must maintain appropriate standards of cleanliness and hygiene in relation to premises, equipment and re-usable medical devices, so complying with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Public Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 1988.
3. All food prepared in the home of the Service User is cooked and stored to comply with the

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Food Safety Acts 1990, 1995 and the Food Safety temperature control) Regulations 1995.

4. Correct use of disposable protective clothing will be practised, remembering that protective clothing is not an effective substitute for effective hand-washing, use of gels and personal clothes washing procedures, complying with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.
5. Fluid resistant surgical masks will be worn 'sessionally' (unless the mask is required to be removed – for example to have a drink. In this case the mask must be disposed of) in the event of an outbreak. Masks will be worn where staff are providing care within 2 meters of the service user, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms.
6. Fresh disposable gloves are to be worn for each task eg. Meal preparation, personal care. Aprons will be worn at every visit where staff members are providing care within 2 meters of the service user, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms.
7. Visors will be worn where the service user is symptomatic, and disinfected following the service user's visit.
8. All clinical waste will be disposed of safely following the guidelines on the Care Plan, so complying with the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Additionally, any new specific Coronavirus guidance information on disposing of clinical waste, washing personal items or disposing of general waste must be adhered to.

DIAGNOSIS

At present, tests do exist to determine whether a person is infected do exist, however at present, testing is not being done for suspected patients in the community.

Service User

If a service user develops symptoms synonymous with Coronavirus infection, this must be reported to the office as soon as possible, advice must then be sought from 111. In most cases, 111 will advise that the service user is treated as though they have a Coronavirus infection, and that the service user is to self isolate for 7 days, or until their symptoms have subsided. If the service user's symptoms worsen, then a medical professional should then be contacted for further advice.

Staff Members

If a staff member is to develop symptoms synonymous with Coronavirus infection, they are to contact a member of management to inform them. Their allocated work will be covered, so as not to risk the further spread of infection. They will be advised to contacted 111 for advice on their situation. If available, Homecare D&D will refer the staff member for a test at a designated testing site.

Upon receipt of a negative test result, the staff member will be able to return back to their normal work, provided they are well enough to do so. If the test is positive, the staff member will be instructed to isolate for 7 days, or until their symptoms have subsided.