



Responsible Care®
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Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy and Procedure

Business impact	<p>Immediate action these changes are business critical and to be delivered as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>CRITICAL IMPACT</p>
Reason for this review	New Policy
Were changes made?	Yes
Summary:	<p>This is a new policy that supports the Business Continuity Policy and Procedure. The policy reflects the current situation with COVID-19 and will be updated as the situation evolves. The policy contains a Factsheet so that information can be shared with staff and service users. The document references the guidance issued on 25 February by Public Health England for Social Care providers.</p>
Relevant legislation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 • Civil Contingencies Act 2004 • Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 • Equality Act 2010 • Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Registration and Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 • Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
Underpinning knowledge - What have we used to ensure that the policy is current:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author: UNICEF, WHO et al, (2020), <i>Social Stigma associated with COVID-19</i>. [Online] Available from: https://www.epiwin.com/sites/epiwin/files/content/attachments/2020-02-24/COVID19%20Stigma%20Guide%2024022020_1.pdf [Accessed: 26/2/2020] • Author: Department of health and Social Care, (2020), <i>Coronavirus (COVID-19): latest information and advice</i>. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public [Accessed: 26/2/2020] • Author: Public Health England, (2020), <i>COVID-19: infection prevention and control</i>. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control [Accessed: 26/2/2020] • Author: Public Health England, (2020), <i>COVID-19: guidance to assist professionals in advising the general public</i>. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-guidance-to-assist-professionals-in-advising-the-general-public [Accessed: 26/2/2020] • Author: Public Health England, (2020), <i>COVID-19: background information</i>. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-background-information [Accessed: 26/2/2020] • Author: World Health Organisation, (2020), <i>Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public</i>. [Online] Available from: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public [Accessed: 26/2/2020] • Author: Public Health England, (2020), <i>Guidance for social or community care and residential settings on COVID-19</i>. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-



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[community-care- and-residential-settings-on-covid-19/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and- residential-settings-on-covid-19](#)[Accessed:26/2/2020]



1. Purpose

1.1 To ensure that CARE COMPANY remains up to date and is able to respond in the event of a member of staff, Service User or contact, contracting the virus (SARS coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2)) which results in the disease COVID-19.

1.2 To support CARE COMPANY in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

Key Question

Key Lines of Enquiry

SAFE	S2: How are risks to people assessed and their safety monitored and managed, so they are supported to stay safe and their freedom is respected?
SAFE	S3: How does the service make sure that there are sufficient numbers of suitable staff to support people to stay safe and meet their needs?
SAFE	S5: How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?
WELL-LED	W5: How does the service work in partnership with other agencies?

1.3 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that CARE COMPANY is registered to provide:



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- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Registration and Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974



2. Scope

- 2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:
- All staff
 - Senior Management
- 2.2 The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:
- Service Users
- 2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:
- Family
 - Commissioners
 - External health professionals
 - Local Authority
 - NHS



3. Objectives

- 3.1 To ensure that safe, effective procedures are in place with staff and Service Users having information in an accessible format.
- 3.2 As the spread of the virus is resulting in response requirements changing daily, CARE COMPANY will ensure that it stays up to date with reliable sources of information and has the flexibility to respond when required.



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4. Policy

- 4.1 CARE COMPANY recognizes that the outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus SARS coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) which results in the disease COVID-19 is a fast-moving situation. With the WHO stating that it's too early to say whether the disease will be labelled an 'outbreak', CARE COMPANY understands that the World Health Organisation have stated that countries should be preparing themselves. As care providers, ensuring robust infection control and business continuity plans form part of preparing business at CARE COMPANY for any events.
- 4.2 CARE COMPANY will ensure that staff are aware and understand the importance of pandemic preparedness and will carry out preparations by following the checklist
- 4.3 CARE COMPANY understands that business continuity planning involves all aspects of the business and to be effective CARE COMPANY must work with their partners, suppliers and commissioners to ensure that a safe and effective service can be maintained.
- 4.4 CARE COMPANY understands that they have a responsibility for ensuring that staff follow good infection control and prevention techniques and that they support Service Users with this too. CARE COMPANY will ensure that staff have access to reliable information to reduce anxiety and dispel any myths and inaccurate information that may cause worry or distress to staff, Service Users or the wider public.
- 4.5 **Pandemic Policy.** CARE COMPANY recognises that the WHO has declared COVID-19 as a public health emergency of international concern, known as a PHEIC, but have not classified it as an epidemic. CARE COMPANY, however, will review the Pandemic Policy and Procedure and complete the checklist to ensure that the business is prepared and that robust business continuity plans are in place.
- 4.6 CARE COMPANY will ensure that staff have access to the Coronavirus Fact Sheet.



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5. Procedure

5.1 Reducing the Risk of Contracting or Spreading the Virus

CARE COMPANY will ensure that staff follow the WHO advice to reduce the risk of contracting the virus and reducing the risk of spreading it. The following procedures must therefore be followed;

- **Wash your hands regularly and properly** by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- **Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance** between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing (social distancing). When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.** Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick
- **Practice respiratory hygiene.** Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19
- **If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.** Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and are having difficulty breathing, seek medical attention by calling your GP or 111. Do not go directly to your GP or hospital. **Why?** 111 and your GP will have the most up-to-date information on the situation. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to direct you quickly to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help to prevent the spread of viruses and other infections
- **Stay informed and follow advice given by 111, your GP or Public Health England.** National and local authorities will have the most up-to-date information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area. They are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves
- People who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work

5.2 Handwashing

Staff should wash their hands:

- Before leaving home
- On arrival at work
- After using the toilet
- After breaks and sporting activities
- Before food preparation
- Before eating any food, including snacks
- Before leaving work
- On arrival at home

5.3 Confidentiality

CARE COMPANY will follow confidentiality and GDPR policies and procedures to ensure that the details of staff involved in caring for Service Users with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is kept confidential. Employees should also respect each other's confidentiality and take care not to inadvertently share information when using social media.

Where staff are suspected or confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, their personal details should be treated as confidential, as they would be for any other CARE COMPANY Service User.



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5.4 SafeStaffing

In the event of an outbreak of COVID-19, where staff are moved from other areas to support work on COVID-19, assessments should be made on the ability to continue to deliver safe and effective care in the services affected. Steps should be taken to mitigate any risks resulting from staff moving to other areas.

5.5 Reducing the Risk of Stigmatization

Stigma occurs when people negatively associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a specific population. In the case of COVID-19, there are an increasing number of reports of public stigmatization against people from areas affected by the epidemic, this means that people are being labelled, stereotyped, separated, and/or experience loss of status and discrimination because of a potential negative affiliation with the disease. CARE COMPANY will ensure that staff understand the importance of preventing and addressing social stigma by making sure facts are available to staff and Service Users.

5.6 Identifying Possible Cases of the Virus

The current advice from Public Health England is as follows;

If, in the 14 days before the onset of illness (cough or fever or shortness of breath), there has been travel to China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, or Thailand, this includes transit, for any length of time, in these countries or contact (see definition below) with confirmed cases of COVID-19 or someone has;

- Severe acute respiratory infection requiring admission to hospital with clinical or evidence of pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome on x-ray, or
- Acute respiratory infection of any degree of severity, including at least one of shortness of breath (difficulty breathing in children) or cough (with or without fever), or
- Fever with no other symptoms are immunocompromised but may not have the same symptoms as someone with a healthy immune system

the advice is to;

- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as you would with the flu
- Call NHS 111 to inform them of the recent travel to the country

5.7 If someone has returned from the areas below since February 19 and develop symptoms they must stay at home and call 111 for advice. They do not need to follow this advice if they have no symptoms.

- Northern Italy (anywhere north of Pisa, Florence and Rimini)
- Vietnam
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Myanmar

5.8 Definition of Contact

Contact with a case is defined as any of the following:

- Living in the same household
- Direct contact with the case or their body fluids, or in the same room of a healthcare setting when an aerosol generating procedure is undertaken on the case without appropriate PPE
- Direct or face to face contact with a case, for any length of time
- Being within 2 metres of the case for any other exposure not listed above, for longer than 15 minutes
- Being otherwise advised by a public health agency that contact with a confirmed case has occurred



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5.9 Actions if a Service User Meets the Criteria and Displays Symptoms

If a Service User complains of symptoms and meets the criteria above from either travelling or contact with others, staff must make sure;

- The Service User is safe and withdraw from the room
- They immediately wash their hands and avoid touching the face, nose, mouth or eyes
- They contact 111 for advice or 999 if an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk) and explain which country they have returned from in the last 14 days and outline their current symptoms
- They contact CARE COMPANY as soon as possible and advise of the situation. This must be a high priority
- They do not attend any other Service Users, visit their GP or travel in the community until advice is sought
- Whilst they wait for advice from NHS 111 or an ambulance to arrive, staff should remain at least 2 metres from other people. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in a bag then throw the tissue in the bin. If they do not have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow
- If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available. This will apply only to the period of time while waiting for transport to hospital

5.10 Action if a Member of Staff Reports Symptoms

- CARE COMPANY will ensure that the member of staff has sought advice from 111 or the GP
- CARE COMPANY must contact Northumberland County Council and the [local health protection team](#) for advice
- Advice must be sought on whether the member of staff will need to self-isolate and what action will need to take place for any Service Users that they may have had contact with
- If a member of staff reports that there are concerns about their children, close family, friends who they have had close contact with the local health protection team must be contacted for advice
- CARE COMPANY must ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that records are held in line with Data Protection Act requirements
- In the event of a confirmed case, closure of the office, workplace or residential setting is not recommended. CARE COMPANY will be contacted by the Public Health England (PHE) local [Health Protection Team](#) to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on actions that should be taken

5.11 Cleaning the Office and Workplace Where There are Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

The local Health Protection Team will provide advice on cleaning. Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the person has come into contact with must be cleaned including:

- All surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids
- All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones
- Clothing and linen used by the person should be set aside pending assessment of the person by a healthcare professional

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.

5.12 Rubbish Disposal Including Tissues

- All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and marked for storage until the COVID-19 test result is available, which will be within 24 hours
- If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste



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- Should the individual test positive, the local Health Protection Team advise you what to do with the waste and laundry

5.13 Raising Concerns

CARE COMPANY has effective procedures in place to allow staff to raise any concerns in relation to equipment, policies and processes for managing COVID-19 at the earliest opportunity. All staff must be aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure at CARE COMPANY and be able to raise concerns without any fear and receive timely feedback on their concerns.



6. Definitions

6.1 Pandemic

- A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease

6.2 World Health Organisation

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations that is concerned with world public health

6.3 COVID-19

- Novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China. The virus was named severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease it causes is called COVID-19

6.4 Outbreak

- A disease outbreak is the occurrence of disease cases in excess of normal expectancy. The number of cases varies according to the disease-causing agent, and the size and type of previous and existing exposure to the agent

6.5 Social Stigma

- Social stigma in the context of health is the negative association between a person or group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. In an outbreak, this may mean people are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated against, treated separately, and/or experience loss of status because of a perceived link with a disease. Such treatment can negatively affect those with the disease, as well as their caregivers, family, friends and communities. People who do not have the disease but share other characteristics with this group may also suffer from stigma. The current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours against people of certain ethnic backgrounds as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus

6.6 The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 was put in place with immediate effect on 25th February to impose restrictions on any individual considered by health professionals to be at risk of spreading the virus
- The regulations apply to any individuals seeking to leave supported isolation before the current quarantine period of 14 days is complete. It will also apply to future cases during the current coronavirus incident where an individual who may be infected or contaminated could present a risk to public health
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Key Facts - Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- CARE COMPANY must make sure they have the facts about the new coronavirus or the disease COVID-19 from a reliable source. Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care are 2 examples. Staff should read the fact sheet in the Forms section for more information
- CARE COMPANY must have an up to date business continuity plan in place. The Pandemic Policy and Procedure has a checklist to help plan for an outbreak of a disease like COVID-19
- It's important that Service Users are made aware of how they can help limit the spread of COVID-19 and that they understand the signs and symptoms of the disease
- CARE COMPANY will need to work closely with Northumberland County Council, health providers, suppliers and other agencies to ensure that there is continuity and consistency of care
- The current understanding is that the virus does not survive on surfaces for longer than 72 hours. Regular cleaning of frequently touched hard surfaces and hands will therefore help to reduce the risk of infection
- Washing your hands often, with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if handwashing facilities are not available - this is particularly important after taking public transport



Key Facts - People affected by the service

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- A coronavirus is a type of virus. Coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. This new virus is called SARS coronavirus- 2. The disease it causes is called COVID-19
- There is no vaccine at the moment for this virus. Washing your hands regularly with soap and water will help prevent the spread of the disease. Try not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Itsoktofeelworriedor anxious.CARE COMPANY hasplansinplacetomakesureyou will get the care that youneed



Further Reading

As well as the information in the 'underpinning knowledge' section of the review sheet we recommend that you add to your understanding in this policy area by considering the following materials:

Public Health England Blog:

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>



Outstanding Practice

To be 'outstanding' in this policy area CARE COMPANY could provide evidence that:

- CARE COMPANY has robust infection control policies and procedures in place and staff understand the importance of good hand hygiene, how to use personal protective equipment appropriately and they share their knowledge with Service Usersappropriately
- Staff have accurate and up-to-date information and CARE COMPANY can respond quickly and safely to a fast-changingsituation
- CARE COMPANY has shared its pandemic and business continuity plan and everyone knows what their roles and responsibilitiesare

Review History

Date Implemented	Date Reviewed	Changes Made
March 2020	X	Full policy and procedure implemented
X		