

**Covid-19 Preparation**

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. Symptoms include cough, fever, shortness of breath, or flu-like symptoms. Generally, coronavirus causes more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

**What can I do to help prevent catching and spreading COVID-19?**

* Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your coughs and sneezes. Then bin the tissue, and wash your hands, or use a sanitiser gel
* Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds each time with soap and water or hand sanitiser, especially when you:
  + get home or into work
  + blow your nose, sneeze or cough
  + eat or handle food
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
* Avoid close contact with people who are unwell

**Should I stay at home?**

​If you have either a new persistent cough, or a high temperature you should stay at home for seven days. You don't need to call NHS 111 or your GP to tell them you are staying at home, but make sure family and friends are aware. [Read the government's stay at home guidance](https://vcs.cmail19.com/t/d-l-myuvhy-jjujjuwlu-d/)

**Specific Advice:**

1. Currently the advice is for most people to continue to go to work, school and other public places.  There is no need for most staff or volunteers to avoid the workplace. However staff can work from home as they feel is necessary depending on their personal circumstances subject to discussion with line manager first.
2. Staff who wish to avoid taking public transport during peak hours may adjust their work schedule accordingly if this is feasible.
3. Virus transmission may peak soon and so staff may want to review their April meeting schedule to minimize face-to-face meetings during the peak and skype or call instead.
4. All staff should follow Public Health England guidelines which VAC will make available to staff as they are updated through the weekly e-bulletin and the Coronavirus update page on the website.

<https://vac.org.uk/corona-virus-covid-19-update/>

1. Should it be necessary for all staff to work from home, there will be a daily check-in meeting, assistance will be provided to use remote meeting applications and if needed the 2 laptops will be available for loan to staff.
2. Should the office be closed, the main phone number will be redirected to each staff member on rotation for at least 2 hours morning and afternoon.
3. Sick pay will be paid to any staff member who may become ill.
4. VAC will continue to monitor the situation and update this plan as appropriate.

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