

CORONAVIRUS POLICY

This policy has been written to cover the operational procedures necessary for Cornwallis to protect its service users, visitors and staff from the risks presented by Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

It includes:

- Information provision
- Travel requirements
- Infection control and prevention procedures
- Business continuity procedures
- Pandemic recovery planning

What is Coronavirus?

COVID-19 (coronavirus) is an infectious disease which causes respiratory flu-like symptoms ranging from very mild to very severe. The infection originated in China at the end of 2019 and has since spread to other countries initiating a global public health emergency. Risk levels in the UK have been raised from low to moderate but there are fears that the outbreak may become a pandemic.

How is Coronavirus Spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus.

It is understood that the virus moves from person to person in droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. In addition, the virus can survive for a certain amount of time out of the body on surfaces.

People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in the droplets or touch infected surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

What Are the Symptoms?

The most common symptoms are fever, tiredness, and dry cough.

COVID-19 is particularly dangerous for people with weakened immune systems, for older people, and for those with long-term conditions such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

Information

This organisation will keep up to date with the latest public health and government information about the risk of coronavirus in the UK. The infection control lead for the home will maintain close links with local health protection teams and will be responsible for circulating essential information to staff and residents and their families. They will also update the organisation's management team.

The home will comply fully with official advice, including *Guidance for social or community care and residential settings on COVID-19*, published by Public Health England.

Travel Restrictions

At present there is a risk for people travelling to and from any country where there is a coronavirus outbreak.

Latest travel advice can be found on the GOV.UK web platform at www.gov.uk

This organisation requires staff to comply with any advice given and to inform their line manager wherever the guidance may apply to them. People are being advised to stay indoors and avoid contact with other people (self-quarantine) if they have travelled recently to the UK from specified countries.

Infection Control and Prevention Procedures

This organisation believes that general adherence to high standards of infection prevention and control is the best way to prevent the person-to-person spread of pathogens such as coronavirus and maximise the safety of staff, service users and visitors. To achieve this the organisation's infection control policies and procedures will be implemented in full, especially those related to effective hand hygiene, sanitisation and environmental cleaning.

Care managers and supervisory staff should make sure that people:

- cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not their hands) when they cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately
- wash their hands with soap and water often and use hand sanitiser gel (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Staff should comply fully with hand sanitisation policies and procedures. Managers will ensure that policies are supported by the provision of appropriate resources such as hand sanitiser gels.

Environmental cleaning will be increased while the danger of a pandemic exists. Regular cleaning of frequently-touched hard surfaces with a suitable disinfectant and cleanser will be carried out.

During normal day-to-day activities Public Health England guidance states that facemasks do not provide protection from respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19, and need not be worn by staff in health or social care settings.

The infection control lead for the home will liaise with the local health protection team if any member of staff or resident is suspected to be infected with coronavirus or comes into contact with someone suspected to be infected with coronavirus. In such cases the individual who is unwell should call NHS 111 from their mobile, or 999 if an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk). A staff member should call on their behalf if the person affected is not able to comply.

This home will comply fully with all existing infection control and prevention guidance, including the *Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice for Health and Adult Social Care on the Prevention and Control of Infections and Related Guidance*.

Business Continuity Procedures and Pandemic Recovery Planning

In addition to the organisation's general business continuity and recovery planning policies, the company recognises the need to have a separate pandemic recovery plan and procedure. This is because a general continuity recovery plan focuses on a short-term recovery programme. Should the UK face a coronavirus pandemic, the effects of the pandemic could last months.

The following procedure sets out contingency measures to be introduced in the event of a coronavirus pandemic:

- a pandemic communications strategy will be developed to ensure that staff, residents and their families are provided with up-to-date and accurate information on the status of the pandemic and on the Homes response
- information will be provided to staff via e-mail and through team meetings on the symptoms of the virus and who to contact should they believe they, or a colleague, has the virus
- the organisation's leave and absence policies will be continuously reviewed as the status of the pandemic changes, for instance, it may become necessary to cancel leave in case of serious short-staffing
- staff will be informed of any additional measures to limit the spread of disease in a pandemic situation – this might include:
 - avoiding unnecessary travel
 - cancellation of face-to-face meetings
 - working from home where possible
 - as a contingency measure, staff will be cross-trained in various functions to ensure that adequate cover is provided in different roles should sickness rates rise

The Management of the home will link with any local resilience forums relevant to health and social care provision.

Care managers and supervisory staff will be responsible for ensuring that staff understand the organisation's pandemic recovery plan policy and procedure. Staff should familiarise themselves with the procedure and should speak to their line manager if they have any questions or concerns.

The procedure aims to ensure that the home will be able to continue to provide care to its residents during any pandemic.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be continuously monitored and updated to take account of any changes to the official advice provided about Coronavirus. It will also be reviewed if the situation worsens and a pandemic is declared.

Signed:	<u>Stuart Clarkson</u>
Date:	<u>12 March 2020</u>
Policy review date:	<u>April 2020</u>

Last reviewed 12 March 2020