



Coronavirus

An Update for Employers – 9 March 2020

As COVID 2019 develops many of you may be falling into uncharted territory regarding your HR policies and what you should be advising your employees.

This guide hopefully provides some useful answers.

As the situation changes quickly it is also important to keep an eye on <https://www.gov.je/Health/Coronavirus/Pages/CoronavirusInformation.aspx>

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What Employers Should Be Doing

- **Health & Safety**

- Understand your legal obligations – the primary focus of health and safety law is to require every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees

- **Business Continuity**

- Ensure that someone within your business has overall responsibility for coronavirus issues and keeps these up to date
- Test your business continuity plans
- Prepare for individuals to work remotely, if required and possible

- **Keep monitoring**

- The best advice is to ensure you keep up to date with the situation – it is dynamic and continues to develop at a rapid pace. Here are some reliable sources:
 - [Government of Jersey](#) provides official guidance
 - [ACAS](#) provides advice from an HR perspective
 - [World Health Organisation website](#)

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What Employers Should be Doing

- **Communicate regularly in a calm and structured approach**
 - Educate your employees on the virus [video](#) and display [posters](#) in communal areas
 - Promote hand washing in the office through emails and posters, provide hand sanitisers and disinfectant wipes for keyboards and mobile phones
 - Review your office cleaning procedures and consider a deep office clean and disinfect more regularly
 - Encourage employees to speak up if they feel they may be showing symptoms associated with Coronavirus, concerned they may be / may have been close to an infected person or they are or may be vulnerable
 - Consider each case individually



Incubation Period

In line with the incubation period, there is an isolation period of 14 days to protect and reduce the risk of spreading the virus to colleagues from anyone returning from a location that has been named by national advice

- **Latest** Government of Jersey update regarding anyone arriving in Jersey can be found at this link
- Employers should organise working from home in any Asian offices or organisations you may have
- Employers should make necessary working from home arrangements for anyone affected by the incubation period



14 DAYS



Employee Travel Considerations

- **Business Travel Considerations**

- Consider extra approvals for any required business travel
- Implement a no business travel approval to classified infected areas
- Implement a 14-day isolation period of anyone that has returned from a classified infected area

- **Personal Travel Considerations**

- Employers should request that employees do not travel to affected countries
- Advise employees that if they elect to go to a classified infected area, they will need to self isolate upon return and if this means they cannot work from home, they will need to take the leave as holiday or unpaid leave



HR Considerations

- Ensure your managers understand the situation and how they should be communicating with employees and clients / customers / service users
- Check your policies around remote working, sick pay, private health insurance, sickness absence and other types of leave (special leave / dependent leave)
- The workplace's usual sick leave and pay entitlements apply if someone has coronavirus
- Employees should let their employer know as soon as possible if they're not able to go to work.



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Isolation & Pay

- Employees must tell their employer ASAP if they cannot work, including if this is to care for a dependent in isolation, in which case follow the usual policy for time off for dependent care.
- There's no legal ('statutory') right to pay if someone is not sick but cannot work because they:
 - have been told by a medical expert or their employer to self-isolate or go into quarantine;
 - are not allowed to travel back to the UK / Channel IslandsHowever, if this is the case they should receive their usual pay.
- It is good practice for employers to treat this as sick leave and follow the usual sick pay policy or agree for the time to be taken as holiday. Otherwise there's a risk the employee will come to work because they want to get paid. They could then spread the virus, if they have it.
- If Jersey employees need to self-isolate and cannot get to work, they can claim Short Term Incapacity Allowance (STIA) for two weeks.
- If an employee elects to go to a classified infected area for personal reasons, they must self-isolate upon return, taking the time as unpaid leave or holiday – they should be informed before travelling
- Justify and record any exceptions to usual policies



If Employees Do Not Want To Go To Work

- Some people might feel they do not want to go to work if they're afraid of catching coronavirus - an employer should listen to any concerns staff may have.
- If there are genuine concerns, for example the employee is at high risk due to health reasons, the employer must try to resolve them to protect the health and safety of their staff. For example, if possible, the employer could offer flexible working.
- If an employee still does not want to go in, they may be able to arrange with their employer to take the time off as holiday or unpaid leave, however the employer does not have to agree to this.
- If an employee refuses to attend work, it could result in disciplinary action.
- Justify and record any exceptions to usual policies

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Coronavirus in the Workplace

- If someone becomes unwell in the workplace and has recently come back from an area affected by coronavirus, they should:
 - Move to at least 2 metres (7 feet) away from other people
 - Go to a room or area behind a closed door, such as a sick bay or staff office
 - Avoid touching anything
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow
 - Use a separate bathroom from others, if possible
 - Use their own mobile to call an ambulance if seriously unwell
- If someone with coronavirus comes to work, the workplace does not necessarily have to close - call the helpline on [+44 \(0\) 1534 445566](tel:+44201534445566) for advice



Further Information

- Coronavirus on gov.uk
- [World Health Organisation website](#)
- Call [+44 \(0\) 1534 445566](#) if you develop any of the following symptoms:
 - Cough
 - Fever
 - Difficulty Breathing
- If you feel very unwell call an ambulance. Explain your symptoms and travel history. Do not visit your GP or the Emergency Department without contacting them first.

