Unite Health and Safety Guide Coronavirus COVID-19
Officers and Representatives

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This guide is for officers and reps and represents the current situation at time of writing, and will be updated on a regular basis.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE VIRUS

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China.

Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. The current evidence is that most cases appear to be mild. Those who have died in Wuhan appear to have had pre-existing health conditions. The UK is now one of the first countries outside China to have a prototype specific laboratory test for this new disease.

How does it spread?
The main way the virus spreads is by contamination when someone carrying the virus coughs. The Virus can also spread through an infected person touching their mouth and then objects around them these can remain on surfaces for many hours.

The NHS web site has more information about how coronavirus is spread:
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

RISK LEVEL

As of 11 March, the World Health Organisation has defined the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. The UK Chief Medical Officers are continuing to assess the situation in the UK on a regular basis, at present it is set at high risk.

The UK government gives regular updated daily health advice regarding COVID-19, which is provided by the four devolved health authorities.

England: Public Health England (PHE)
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

Scotland: NHS Scotland
https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/wuhan-novel-coronavirus/

Northern Ireland: Public Health Agency:
https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus

Wales: Public Health Wales Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru:
https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/

The health authority for the Republic of Ireland and COVID info can be found **here**:

Republic of Ireland: Health Service Executive(HSE)Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhise Slainte:
https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html

What is a 'pandemic'?

A pandemic is an outbreak that affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide, leading to a large proportion of them becoming ill. Pandemics occur when a virus with very different features emerges. Because it is new, people have little or no immunity. Normally there are around two or three such pandemics every century. The most recent was in 2009 with the H1N1 virus, commonly referred to as 'swine flu'.

COVID 19 has spread rapidly to many countries around the globe and now requires national and international co-ordinated infection controls. Please find google map which is regularly updated of confirmed cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
Here: https://google.org/crisisresponse/covid19-map

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS
HSE latest on COVID-19 here: https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm

There is a primary duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) together with associated legislation for employers to protect the health safety and welfare of their workforce and others affected by their operations. The duty applies in common law to take reasonable care for the health and safety of the workforce.

Specific legislation applying to infectious micro-organisms/biological agents, of which COVID 19 is a group, is the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

Risk Assessments for COV-19 under COSHH

The Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens ACDP has an approved list of biological agents. The Approved List provides the approved classification of biological agents as referred to in COSHH. COVID-19 is a new virus, however previous coronaviruses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV), a previously unlisted virus, have now been listed and classified. **Found here:** https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/misc208.pdf

COSHH ASSESSMENT INFECTIOUS AGENTS

HSE guide here: https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/infection.pdf

ASSESS THE RISKS TO HEALTH

We know that this varies. Current findings from researchers at China's Centre for Disease Control and Prevention on more than 72,000 COVID-19 cases shows a fatality rate of 2.3%. However, most cases were mild, but the disease hits the elderly and vulnerable the hardest, such as those with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory conditions based on clinical findings **here:** https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2762130

ASSESS WHO ARE MOST AT RISK OF EXPOSURE:

Depends on the type of work being performed and exposure risk, including potential for interaction with infectious people and contamination of the work environment. Different jobs will carry a higher risk of being exposed to the virus such as front line staff in health, at airports, education, prisons and frequent travellers. The government has issued advice for various sectors including those in the front line:

GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Comprehensive government guidance introduced for health professionals was updated on 18 March 2020. Includes guidance on the assessment and management of suspected UK cases. The latest update includes the current information on **investigation and initial clinical management of possible cases** of COVID-19. Please access the full guide **here:**

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus

The advice includes preparing for an assessment of a possible case of COVID 19, and entails precautionary procedures to be used including appropriate PPE.

GUIDANCE IN NON CLINICAL SETTINGS

Updated on 18 March 2020 and includes various sector guidance, such as shipping and ports, transport, prisons, education and other non - clinical situations such as cleaning and mass gatherings. **Find Here**

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance#guidance-for-non-clinical-settings

COVID 19 CRITICAL WORKERS **find here:**   Critical worker list

PREVENT OR ADEQUATELY CONTROL EXPOSURE

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. **The best way to prevent infection is to reduce the risk of being exposed to the virus.** In practice this requires appropriate combinations of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent worker exposures. **It is very important that workers receive appropriate training on all aspects of control measures identified from the assessment.**

Infection controls will also need to extend to government intervention, social distancing, travel restrictions and a strategy to protect vulnerable people. Current government strategies are set out further down this document

FOR ALL WORKERS,
REGARDLESS OF SPECIFIC EXPOSURE RISKS, THE RECOMMENDATIONS REMAIN:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol. See hand washing guidance **here:** https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/866065/Handwashing_techniques.pdf
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.**
- **Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell**
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces**
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. See Government materials here:** https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/5016
- **Put used tissues in the bin straight away**

Action for Officers and Reps: Ensure employers are providing facilities for washing, soap and hand sanitisers when needed. Also appropriate training, instructions and signage.

PROCEDURAL CONTROLS IN WORKPLACES

Will vary depending on the workplace, some examples of workplace infection controls:

- Enhanced and regular cleaning across all areas of the workplace utilising approved cleaning products includes all building touch points – door handles, handrails, toilets, desks, computer keyboards, phones etc.

- Enhanced and regular cleaning of escalators, lifts, vehicles, buses, etc.…

- Enhanced and regular cleaning of all canteens and all eating areas including cooking areas, tables, chairs, etc. Utensils issued wrapped up in napkin or throw away utensils. Condiments in paper bags and sauces in individual sachets.
- All food covered and not accessible as self-service, or pre-packaged

- All welfare areas – showers, toilets, changing rooms subject to enhanced cleaning programme

- LGV drivers have route planning taking into account available toilet and washing facilities, this will be a unique problem to this situation as public eating places are now closed. HSE Guide **here:** Driver welfare and hours

- Visitors to sites should be curtailed unless essential and business critical such as delivery drivers, outside maintenance or repairs.

- Any meeting are performed via video link/ skype/ conference call

- All non - essential staff to work remotely

- All inductions if needed undertaken with social distancing close contact protocols rigorously observed

- Observe social distancing and close contact between work colleagues as much as possible

- Workplaces that are operational need to have daily communication with line mangers

- Hand Sanitiser is located in numerous locations across the site, including canteens, time clocking stations, turnstiles

- Some companies are introducing body temperature monitoring at the workplace entrance, with further accurate tests if indicates high temperature

- Procedures need to be in place if a worker or visitor has been identified as possibly infected. An isolation room needs to be made available

- In large workplaces such as airports several isolation rooms need to be allocated

- Front line staff need to be identified, trained and issued with the correct PPE to deal with any identified possible cases.

- There are specific guideline for health professionals and front line staff. Please refer to government guides for health professionals and non-health care settings in this guidance.

IDENTIFY AND ISOLATE SUSPECTED CASES

- In all workplaces where exposure to the COVID-19 may occur, prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical first step in protecting workers, visitors, and others at the worksite.

- Immediately isolate people suspected of having COVID-19. For example, move potentially infectious people to isolation rooms and close the doors. On an aircraft, move potentially infectious people to seats away from passengers and crew, if possible and without compromising aviation safety. In other worksites, move potentially infectious people to a location away from workers, customers, and other visitors.

- Take steps to limit spread of the person's infectious respiratory secretions including by providing them a facemask and asking them to wear it, if they can tolerate that.

- **Note: A surgical mask on a patient or other sick person should not be confused with PPE for a worker. The mask acts to contain potentially infectious respiratory secretions at the source (i.e., the person's nose and mouth).**

- If possible, isolate people suspected of having COVID-19 separately from those with confirmed cases of the virus to prevent further transmission, including in screening, triage, or healthcare facilities. **Note:** see guide for health professionals (on page 3)

- Restrict the number of personnel entering isolation areas, including the room of a patient with suspected/confirmed COVID-19.

- Protect workers in close contact* with the sick person by using additional engineering and administrative control, safe work practices and PPE.

****Close contact is defined as being about six (6) feet (approximately two (2) metres) from an infected person, or within the room or care area of an infected patient or first line responders for a prolonged period.** Close contact also includes instances where there is direct contact with infectious secretions. Close contact generally does not include brief interactions.

- Ensure that control measures are used and maintained properly and that safety procedures are followed.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) ON SITE Current Government guidance

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in the business or workplace they should be sent home and advised to follow the Stay at home guide **here:** https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance

If they need clinical advice, they should go online to NHS 111 or call 111 if they don't have internet access. In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection.

It is not necessary to close the business or workplace or send any staff home, unless government policy changes. Keep monitoring the government response page for the latest details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Anyone who has a new, continuous cough or a high temperature should be advised to quickly and directly return home and to remain there and initiate household isolation. If they have to use public transport, they should try to keep away from other people and catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue

CLEANING OF NON-HEALTH CARE SETTINGS

See government guidance **here:**

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

This guidance can be applied to any non-healthcare setting such as:

- workplaces
- offices
- waiting rooms
- hotel rooms
- student accommodation
- boarding schools

COVID-19 is mainly passed on by person-to-person spread between people who are in close contact with one another and by droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

It can also spread through contact with a surface or object that has the virus on it. Cleaning helps minimise the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The guidance describes the cleaning required, the appropriate disposal of materials, the cleaning of equipment and hard surfaces, and the personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Where a risk assessment has identified using PPE, use and dispose of all PPE according to the instructions and training provided by your employer or organisation. An outline of appropriate PPE is as follows:

- Disposable gloves and fluid repellent
- Surgical face mask or where identified by the assessment respirators, for example: Half masks (reusable) with P3 filter or FFP3 (disposable) or full face mask P3 filter
- Eye protection such as face visor or goggles
- Disposable plastic apron and should be worn
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before putting on and after taking off PPE.

Guidance from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the Rational use of personal protective equipment for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Respiratory Protection HSE: https://www.hse.gov.uk/respiratory-protective-equipment/

Union representatives need to be consulted on every part of the process, including when guidance is being put together. This is a legal requirement in regards union Health and Safety Representatives under the Safety Representatives Safety Committees Regulations 77.

The Guidance for employers and businesses can be found **here:**
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19

ACTION FOR REPS AND OFFICERS: Ask for a current up to date risk assessment and all procedures for protection of workers. In the changing climate we are in, with the virus spreading, this should be reviewed regularly. Ensure consultation is taking place including production of guidance and around risk assessments Challenge if this is not taking place.

SHOULD PEOPLE WEAR FACE MASKS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM INFECTION?

Face masks play a very important role in clinical settings, such as hospitals but there's very little evidence of widespread benefit from their use outside of these clinical settings. **(Not to be confused as part of Identified PPE as above)** Facemasks must be worn correctly, changed frequently, removed properly and disposed of safely in order to be effective.

Where selected as part of protective measures, the standard of face masks / Respiratory Protective equipment (RPE) must have appropriate filter and be face fitted. The HSE guidance on RPE recommends that for biological hazards, to use the highest efficiency filter possible to control exposure down to the highest level. That can be achieved by using either **FFP3 disposable mask** (min) or a **full/half mask with P3 filter**. **CE certification is required.** HSE guide RPE selection and face fitting: https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg53.htm

FFP3 is a minimum standard. The best way to protect ourselves from infections, including the COVID 19 virus is to follow hygiene protocols described elsewhere in this guide. For example wash our hands frequently with soap and water or use a sanitiser gel, as well as always carrying tissues and using them to catch coughs and sneezes, then putting the tissue in a bin.

[When and how to use masks - World Health Organization](#)

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

As of the 13 March 2020 guidance around returning from specified countries and areas, and information on the actions that these individuals should follow on returning to the UK and if they develop symptoms has been withdrawn. New measures for self – isolation are now in place see below:

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises British people against all non-essential travel worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented international border closures and other restrictions. All countries may restrict travel without notice.
FCO Guidance here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus

The situation in individual countries found **here** https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
Organisations should manage and offer appropriate support to any employees stranded abroad.

ADVICE FOR THE FREIGHT TRANSPORT INDUSTRY essential activity

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has led to unprecedented international border closures and other restrictions.

International and domestic freight transport (including by air, ship, road and rail, including roll-on/roll-off transports) is classified by UK government as an essential activity in the context of its travel advice. The advice against non-essential travel is not intended to apply to international and domestic freight transport.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

For the travel of accompanied goods vehicles between the UK and mainland Europe and Ireland the government is reminding ferry operators of the importance of enabling social distance measures during longer sea crossings in respect of sleeping accommodation, in particular. The government is reminding Eurotunnel in operating its Le Shuttle services of the importance of health and safety responsibilities and enabling social distance measures, both at the UK and French terminals, but also during crossings through the Channel Tunnel.

At the UK-end of journeys, domestic freight providers are also essential services. The government emphasises the health and safety responsibilities of all organisations connected with freight transport organisations running transport terminals, warehouses and distribution centres to provide access to drivers and crew to toilets, washing facilities and sufficient waiting space.

The government also recommends rail freight operators (both those operating services via the Channel Tunnel and also domestic intermodal services from ports) check specific information on cross-European trade and ensure adherence to health and safety responsibilities.

Full advice found **here:** https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-freight-transport/covid-19-advice-for-the-freight-transport-industry

PEOPLE WITH CONFIRMED OR POSSIBLE CORONAVIRUS (COVID – 19) INFECTION. CIRCUMSTANCES FOR <u>SELF ISOLATION/STAYING AT HOME</u>.

COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH POSSIBLE CORONAVIRUS INFECTION

 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

This guidance is intended for:

- People with symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus, and do not require hospital treatment, who must remain at home until they are well
- Those living in households with someone who shows symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus

THE MAIN MESSAGES ARE:

- If you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for **7 days** from when your symptoms started. (See ending isolation section for more information)
- If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill
- It is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

- For anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period. (See ending isolation section for more information
- If you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period
- if you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible
- if you have coronavirus symptoms:
  - Do **not** go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
  - You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home
  - Testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home
- Plan ahead and ask others for help to ensure that you can successfully stay at home and consider what can be done for vulnerable people in the household
- Ask your employer, friends and family to help you to get the things you need to stay at home
- Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser
- If you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, then use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999

England and Wales call 111   **Scotland:** call your GP or NHS 24 on 111 out of hours
Northern Ireland call 0300 200 7885   **Republic of Ireland:** GP, phone 112 or 999

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

New continuous cough and/or high temperature.
For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection.

HOME WORKING

Employers have the same health and safety responsibilities for home workers as for any other workers.

When someone is working from home temporarily, consider:

- How will you keep in touch with them?
- What work activity will they be doing?
- Can it be done safely?
- Control measures need to be put in place to protect them

LONE WORKING WITHOUT SUPERVISION

There will always be greater risks for lone workers with no direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong.

Keep in touch with lone workers, including those working from home, and ensure regular contact to make sure they are healthy and safe.

If contact is poor, workers may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned. This can affect stress levels and mental health.

WORKING WITH DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

There is no increased risk from display screen equipment (DSE) for those working at home temporarily. So employers do not need to do home workstation assessments.

You could provide workers with advice on completing their own basic assessment at home. A practical workstation checklist will help but employers do not have to provide this for those working temporarily at home. See portable checklist:
https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf

Other simple steps you can take to reduce the risks from display screen work:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises
- avoiding eye fatigue by changing focus or blinking from time to time

SPECIALISED DSE EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Employers should try to meet those needs where possible.

For some equipment (e.g. keyboards, mouse, riser) this could mean allowing workers to take this equipment home.

For other larger items (e.g. ergonomic chairs, height-adjustable desks) encourage workers to try other ways of creating a comfortable working environment (e.g. supporting cushions).

STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Home working can cause work-related stress and affect people's mental health. Being away from managers and colleagues could make it difficult to get proper support.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Put procedures in place so you can keep in direct contact with home workers so you can as early as possible. It is also important to have an emergency point of contact and to share this so people know how to get help if they need it.

HSE Guidance on home working can be found

Here: https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND PROTECTING OLDER AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF GUIDANCE

The guidance advises on social distancing measures we should all be taking to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

The group includes:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health conditions some examples are:
    - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases
    - chronic heart disease
    - chronic kidney disease
    - chronic liver disease
    - chronic neurological conditions
    - diabetes
    - problems with your spleen for e.g. sickle cell
    - weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- those who are pregnant
- Note: there are some clinical conditions which put people at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. If you are in this category, next week the NHS in England will directly contact you with advice the more stringent measures you should take in order to keep yourself and others safe. For now, you should rigorously follow the social distancing advice in full, outlined below.
- People falling into this group are those who may be at particular risk due to complex health problems such as:
    - People who have received an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
    - People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy

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- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia who are at any stage of treatment
- People with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets)
- People with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis)

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

They are:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
3. Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to employer guidance for more information
4. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

Everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as is pragmatic.

We strongly advise you to follow the above measures as much as you can and to significantly limit your face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible, particularly if you:

- are over 70
- have an underlying health condition
- are pregnant

See government guide for full information

Here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people

ACTION FOR REPS AND OFFICERS It is advised to negotiate firm policies on self- isolation that include clear instructions employees should refrain from work in line with GOV/PHE advice. Ensure there are management procedures in place to protect vulnerable people in line with government guidance and the Equality Act 2010

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Full guide: **here:** https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Staying at home

- Only go out for food, health reasons or work, where this absolutely cannot be done at home.
- Stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Full guide on staying at home **here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others**

FURTHER MEASURES ON SOCIAL DISTANCING

The government has announced further measures on social distancing as of 20 March 2020. The measures Unite feels are confusing and unclear in certain areas. For example the advice that "Everyone to stay at home unless they need to get essential supplies such as food and medicines." Will certainly confuse those going to work where their workplace remains open for business.

NEW MEASURES AND REASONS, SET OUT HERE:

To delay the spread of coronavirus, the government has instructed some businesses and venues including all pubs, bars and restaurants to close.

This follows expert advice that more needs to be done in order to tackle the spread of infection - following the call to action to isolate or socially distance.

The closures will help limit the spread of coronavirus by helping to stop non-essential contact and unnecessary travel, in line with the public guidance announced earlier this week.

The measures will be reviewed on a monthly basis, and are being implemented across the whole of the UK in agreement with the devolved administrations. If needed, the government will enforce these measures by law.

This will not affect supermarkets or retailers that supply fuel, medicines and other vital goods, which will continue to be open as normal for the public.

The following businesses and venues have been asked to close:

- Food and drink venues for consumption on-site, such as restaurants and cafes.
- Drinking establishments, including pubs, bars, and nightclubs.

- Entertainment venues, including cinemas, theatres, concert halls, and bingo halls.
- Museums and galleries.
- Spas and massage parlours.
- Casinos and betting shops.
- All indoor leisure and sports facilities, including gyms.
- This measure will not impact the relaxation of planning rules announced earlier this week which will allow pubs and restaurants to operate as hot food takeaways during the coronavirus outbreak, which will help to support people who are staying at home through this period.

The government has also urged the public to take further steps to protect themselves and the wider population from the coronavirus, including:

- Everyone to stay at home unless they need to get essential supplies such as food and medicines.
- All those able to work from home to do so, unless their work is essential.
- Only traveling if absolutely necessary - while public transport won't stop, this should only be used for essential travel - for example by key workers to travel to and from work.

The closures will not impact the running of public transport, and government continues to work closely with transport operators to ensure that people who need to get to work can continue to do so.

The government and rail industry agreed a plan that will see a gradual reduction in train services across the country to reflect lower passenger demand as people change their travel patterns to help reduce the spread of coronavirus, while keeping vital rail services running.

The decision to introduce further measures has been taken based on the latest advice from the world-leading health and scientific experts advising the government.

When infection rates come down, the government will remove measures as soon as it is safe to do so, guided by scientific advice.

The government is working urgently to further improve testing and monitoring, which will also help in relaxing the measures as soon as possible.

Full guidance can be seen **here: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-further-measures-on-social-distancing**

Unite is calling on the government to speed up the development and rolling out of anti-body testing for the virus. This will identify those that have had the virus and the extent of recovery from the virus in terms of numbers. This knowledge will facilitate faster economic and social recovery.

SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

The chancellor has set out a package of temporary, timely and targeted measures to support public services, people and businesses through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses

The measures will alleviate the pressure on workers and their families, as pending financial hardship will have a serious impact on stress levels and mental health.

Mental Health Considerations during COVID-19 Outbreak

The following principals were developed by the Mental Health Department at WHO as support for mental and psychological well-being during COVID-19 outbreak.

General population

1. COVID-19 has and is likely to affect people from many countries, in many geographical locations. Don't attach it to any ethnicity or nationality. Be empathetic to those who got affected, in and from any country, those with the disease have not done anything wrong.

2. Don't - refer to people with the disease as "COVID-19 cases", "victims" "COVID-19 families" or the "diseased". They are "people who have COVID-19", "people who are being treated for COVID-19", "people who are recovering from COVID-19" and after recovering from COVID-19 their life will go on with their jobs, families and loved ones.

3. Avoid watching, reading or listening to news that cause you to feel anxious or distressed; seek information mainly to take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones. Seek information updates at specific times during the day once or twice. The sudden and near-constant stream of news reports about an outbreak can cause anyone to feel worried. Get the facts. Gather information at regular intervals, from WHO website and local health authorities' platforms, in order to help you distinguish facts from rumours.

4. Protect yourself and be supportive to others. Assisting others in their time of need can benefit the person receiving support as well as the helper.

WHO document https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/Mp9PCwK05sRgNZfVFe-3?domain=who.int

Government guidance Schools, colleges, LA's

The full guidance can be found **here:**

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision

FURTHER READING

General Information for workers and their families around COVID-19 can be found **here:**
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

More Information for Officers and Reps on COVID-19 can be found **here:**
https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Public health matters what Officers and reps need to know about COVID – 19 found **here:**
https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus