**CORONAVIRUS –03.04.20 (1545)**

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| **Frequently Asked Questions** |

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| 1 | What are the symptoms of Coronavirus? | Common symptoms are   * high temperature or fever * cough * shortness of breath   Full and most up to date information is available at [NHS Inform](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19). |
| 2 | How can I avoid catching infections like coronavirus? | You can reduce your risk of getting and spreading respiratory infections by   * avoiding direct hand contact with your eyes, nose and mouth. * maintaining good hand hygiene - washing hands with soap and water (for a minimum of 20 seconds) or where access to soap and water is not readily available - alcohol hand sanitiser: * after coughing or sneezing * after going to the toilet * before eating and drinking * avoiding direct contact with people that have a respiratory illness and avoiding using their personal items such as their mobile phone. * covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with disposable tissues and disposing of them in the nearest waste bin after use * consider alternatives to face-to-face meetings where possible, i.e. telephone meetings, Skype meetings. * avoid shaking hands with colleagues   Please discuss confidentially concerns regarding any underlying health issues with your line manager or, if they are not available, your designated manager.  Full and most up to date information is available at [NHS Inform.](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19) |
| 3 | What does self-isolation mean? | Full and most up to date information is available at [NHS Inform](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19). |
| 4 | I am worried about an underlying health issue or protecting someone in my household.  Should I isolate, and will I get paid? | You should speak to your line manager and self-isolate. The Special Leave Policy has been amended as follows to support employees who are not sick, cannot leave home and cannot work from home:   * All employees with a long-term condition, covered by the government’s shielding programme, and have been told to isolate, will be granted special leave with full pay * All employees who share a household with someone covered by the governments shielding programme, where that person begins to show symptoms of coronavirus, will be granted special leave with full pay to allow them to isolate. * All employees self-isolating on medical advice will be granted special leave with full pay. * All employees who live a household with someone who is self-isolating on medical advice and choses to self-isolate themselves will be granted special leave with full pay. * Pregnant mothers will be granted special leave with full day until the start of maternity arrangements for pay. * Employees with emergency caring responsibilities will be granted special leave with full pay while they need to carry out such responsibilities. * Employees who are not key workers, cannot work from home and cannot secure a volunteer position will be granted special leave with full pay. |
| 5 | Can I still travel for work? | Only key workers and volunteer key workers may travel for work.  Alternatives to travel are advised where appropriate i.e. telephone meetings, Skype. |
| 6 | Can I still go on my planned holiday? | Information on any travel restrictions can be found on the [foreign and commonwealth office](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) website. |
| 7 | I have caring responsibilities, what should I do? | This should be discussed with your line manager in the first instance.    We will be as flexible as possible including allowing staff to work alternative work patterns to enable caring responsibilities to be met. We would trust staff will also reciprocate a flexible approach to work due to exceptional circumstances we are all facing.  Employees with emergency caring responsibilities will be granted special leave with full pay while they need to carry out such responsibilities. |
| 8 | How can I support the delivery of critical services in the event of severe staff shortage | To keep priority services running over the coming weeks and months we need more staff to register their ability to assist.  Please advise your line manager of any additional skills or experience that may be required to support the delivery of our critical services.  Click on the following link for more information re volunteering and to determine if you should register.  <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20012/staff_information/857/staff_news/5> |
| 9 | If staff are working from home, is there any restriction on ICT? | Network access has been prioritised for key workers and critical services. You should follow the advice provided by ICT Services at the Employment section of the Coronavirus [HR Website](https://www.highland.gov.uk/peopleandtransformation/info/28/hr_topics/50/covid-19). |
| 10 | How will I be kept informed if I am absent from work from any reason? | Staff are required to remain in contact with their line manager on a regular basis.  It is very important that you can be contacted so please ensure your line manager has up-to-date contact details for you. Staff are advised to ensure My View information is up to date. |
| 11 | Who do I contact if my line manager is absent? | Where possible, please agree reporting protocols with your line manager **in advance** of his/her absence.  In the event of your manager not being available, you should contact an appropriate member of your team or a senior manager in your service. |
| 12 | Guidance on transferring phones | All customer facing staff working from home should remember to transfer their work number to home number.  All other staff should advise contact by email or skype.  Please contact line managers if there are any issues. |
| 13 | I have been employed by the Highland Council for less than 26 weeks. Will I be entitled to sick pay? | Yes, if you are absent with Covid-19. |
| 14 | What are the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for those key workers e.g. physiotherapists who require to be in close proximity to their patients/customers/clients? | Key workers in this situation should discuss the risk assessments for such work activities with their Line Managers. The risk assessments should identify any PPE required for the work activity.  The Highland Council risk assessment, COSHH and Waste Disposal information has been provided to ECOs for distribution to Line Managers to assist with control measures to be implemented. Key workers should approach Line Managers to discuss implications of these documents for their work activities. |
| 15 | I work under NHSH terms and conditions is there further information which I should be aware of? | NHS Scotland have issued a [letter](file:///N:\COVID-19\DL2020%205%20%20Coronavirus%20COVID-19%20Arrangements%20for%20NHS%20Scotland%20Staff.pdf) which outlines practical advice and info for health staff on AFC terms and conditions of service e.g. annual leave/sickness.   This should be read along with advice issued to all Council staff.   The NHSH guidance would also apply to commissioned health staff. |
| 16 | I have annual leave booked over the coming weeks, can I cancel it? | If you are not a key worker you should take your leave as usual. If you have booked leave to travel but can no longer do so you should take your holidays anyway. This allows you to take a break and flattens out the demand on critical ICT resources.  If you are key workers should try to limit the holidays that you take over the next 3 months while still ensuring your health safety and wellbeing. Please discuss further with your line manager. |
| 17 | I am an essential worker. What should I do if stopped by the police while going to or from my work? | You should display your Council ID and lanyard and explain what your job is. The police have information about who is essential and know that we have ID badges and lanyards. |
| 18 | Does flexi-time still apply? | Yes, flexi-time still applies and must be managed depending on amended work patterns. |
| 19 | I am currently not working my full contracted hours. Will I require to make up these hours at a later date. | There is not an expectation that these hours will need to be made up at a later date. |

Further information and useful links –

* Highland Council dedicated staff mail box [corona.staff@highland.gov.uk](mailto:corona.staff@highland.gov.uk)
* Highland Council staff helpline for urgent queries: 01349 886610
* Schools - Reporting of absence on SEEMiS

<https://highlandcouncil1.sharepoint.com/sites/MISPortal/SitePages/StaffAbsence.aspx>

* NHS Inform (Scotland)

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

* Public Health Scotland

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/>

* Scottish Government – COVID-19 information

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

* UK Government

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

* World Health Organisation –

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19>

If you plan to travel to any of these countries or location, please find advice on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus)website.

NHS Covid-19 Helpline: 0800 028 2816 - The helpline is open Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 10.00pm; Saturday and Sunday, 9.00am to 5.00pm. This helpline should be used if you require medical advice and have no symptoms. **If you have symptoms and require advice, please contact NHS 24 (111).**