



COMMUNITY SUPPORT COVID-19 POLICY

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This policy has been written to cover the operational procedures necessary for JRH Support's community support service to protect its service users, staff and carers from the risks presented by COVID-19 infection.

How is COVID-19 spread?

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

The virus is highly infectious and 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 up to 72 hours 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 main symptoms are a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Infection control and prevention procedures

General adherence to high standards of infection prevention and control is the best way to prevent the person-to-person spread of COVID-19 and maximise the safety of staff, service users and visitors. To achieve this our infection control policies and procedures will be implemented in full, especially those related to effective hand hygiene, sanitisation and environmental cleaning.

Area Managers 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 regularly for 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer gel (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and services

Environmental cleaning should be increased whilst the pandemic continues and there is a risk of transmission. Regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces with a suitable disinfectant and cleanser should be encouraged with all service users.

Staying home and social distancing

In the first phase of the outbreak when peak infection rates were approaching, people were told by the Government that for the time being they should stay at home to prevent the spread of the virus. This meant that people needed to

comply with the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020.

People were only expected to go outside:

- To shop for necessities, such as food and medicine
- To carry out one form of exercise a day, alone or with household members
- For medical or care needs, for example to help a vulnerable person
- When travelling to and from work, but only where work cannot be done from home.

During this period, key workers were still free to travel to and from work. This social care workers.

People staying home were not to have visitors, even from friends or family. They could go out only for short periods and go straight home afterwards. Whilst out, they had to observe “social distancing” rules, i.e. keeping a safe distance of at least two metres (about three steps) from others. Public venues such as pubs, theatres, restaurants, cafes and non-essential shops had been closed.

Vulnerable people, including those aged 70 and over, had been advised to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. People were asked not to visit their elderly relatives for the time being. This has been considered the safest way to ensure that they do not pass on the virus.

During this period, our supported living service had ensured that all public health messages relating to staying home and social distancing had been passed on to staff, service users and relatives. Service users were staying in to keep safe and all non-essential trips outside had stopped. Staff and service users observed physical distancing wherever possible when not providing direct personal care.

Changes in guidance in June and July 2020

Our community support service was aware that the coronavirus Regulations were amended with changes in the guidance taking effect from the beginning of June with a further easing of restrictions from July 2020. Our community support service kept in step with these changes in government policy in line with its own risk assessments with service user and staff safety being always of paramount importance.

Changes from 22nd September 2020

A number of changes in law were made on 22nd September 2020 that affect our community support service, particularly regarding the wearing of face masks and meeting people safely.

Changes from 12/10/2020

As from this date all staff must wear disposable face masks when supporting a service user in their property. Masks must be replaced for each service user supported.

Staff health and self-isolation

Government strategy is to ask people to self-isolate in their homes where they have symptoms of COVID-19 infection or think that they might have the virus. This policy will continue for the foreseeable future and our supported living service will continue to implement it where it is required.

Staff who are unwell with suspected COVID-19 or who have come into contact with an infected individual or who share a household with someone who is unwell should not come to work but must comply with the latest government advice about self-isolating themselves in their home.

The guidance states that:

- People who have symptoms of infection and live alone should self-isolate by staying at home and not leaving their house for seven days from when the symptoms started
- Those who live with others and one person has symptoms should self-isolate as a household for 14 days from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

All of JRH Support's support staff are essential workers so are entitled to free testing for COVID-19 if they have symptoms. Current Government guidance on testing can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

All staff who are self-isolating must inform their line-manager as soon as possible that they will not be in to work.

'High-risk' individuals

JRH Support is fully aware that there is published guidance for England and Wales on the protection of people who have conditions that make them 'high-risk' [Click here](#).

High-risk individuals are subject to special 'shielding' arrangements. These are due to be eased from July, though everyone affected will be expected to take stringent precautions and not expose themselves to risk.

Service users and self-isolation

Where a service user develops the symptoms of COVID-19, they should isolate in their bedroom in the same way as if they had influenza. Staff should:

- Minimise the risk of transmission through safe working procedures and implementation of infection control policies
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids
- Use new PPE for each episode of care
- Treat waste as infectious and dispose of it according to the hazardous waste policies.

If more than one person in a property becomes infected Area Managers and the Service Manager should identify ways to utilise all available human resources to ensure service users are supported and infection is kept to a minimum.

Where required, the service will seek additional advice from the local public health protection teams.

Our community support service is following all official guidance on the use of PPE and we have good supplies of all required PPE.

Safeguarding

Our community support service will continue to apply all measures to keep people safe in line with its current policies and local authority safeguarding authority procedures. It will continue to alert the local authority to any safeguarding issue and notify CQC in line with its current notification requirements and procedures.

The service will continue to exercise its duty of candour where it has made mistakes that have caused serious harm to service users.

Mental capacity and deprivation of liberty

Our community support service is aware of the implications of the current situation for service users who lack mental capacity to understand the decisions that are being taken or to act in line with them. The service will do everything it can to ensure that it applies “best interests” principles in communicating with people without capacity and in taking the decisions that are required, including where it is evident that people are being deprived of their liberty.