

## COVID-19 FAQ's (19.03.2020)

**Information from the Government is changing on a daily basis. When measures are issued or updated by the Government we will inform you but please understand that considerations need to be taken and decisions need to be made in relation to employee welfare and business needs.**

### What are the rules for self-isolation?

Workers who have symptoms of a high temperature (38°C or above) or a new continuous cough should self-isolate and stay away from work for 7 days from the day their symptoms started.

If they live with someone with the above symptoms, they should self-isolate and stay away from work for 14 days from the day their symptoms started.

If they have recently returned from Italy or Spain we may ask them to self-isolate.

### I have an underlying medical condition, what will happen?

The Government have cited the following as most at risk:

You are aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions).

You are under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):

- Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- Chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- Chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- Diabetes
- Problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- Being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)
- Those who are pregnant
- People who have received an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
- People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- 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)

If you have any of the conditions listed above, please speak to your local representatives who have been fully briefed on how to manage the current situation.

### I live with a person with an underlying health condition, what should happen?

The Government advice is, if you can, move any vulnerable individuals 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 and follow the prevention hygiene rules. However, you should continue to attend work as normal and highlight any serious concerns you have to your local representative.

### **What will happen if one of my colleagues has to self-isolate because they have symptoms?**

That person will self-isolate for the duration required but everybody else should continue working as normal unless advised otherwise. Offices will only be closed where we are advised to do so by Public Health England.

### **What will I get paid?**

**Workers self-isolating with/without symptoms** will receive SSP if you are eligible. You must report your absence as per normal procedures and provide a Covid-19 Self-Certificate Form to claim SSP.

**Please note new self-certificate form;** we have created our own self-certificate which combines the current Government self-certificate and additional details we require in these circumstances; it lasts for 7 days. You must complete the form and send it to [sicknotes@thestaffinggroup.co.uk](mailto:sicknotes@thestaffinggroup.co.uk). We will not accept any other form of self-certificate. Any self-certificates that are incomplete or incorrect will be sent back to you, so please ensure you complete it in full.

You will receive SSP after 3 waiting days (if eligible). Once the 7 days self-certificate has expired, you must provide a medically certified fit note to continue to receive SSP. We know it's difficult to obtain a fit note but at this time, the Government rules remain the same in relation to sick pay. Any SSP due to you will be paid at a later date once the fit note is received (or other acceptable documentation is recommended by the Government or this law is changed).

You can obtain the form from your local representative.

**Isolating due to care of children (or other family member)** – you will be unavailable for work in this instance so it will be unpaid or you can request holiday. You must complete a holiday form as per the normal rules.

### **What if I feel better and my symptoms clear before the end of the 7 day isolation period?**

You will need to isolate for the full 7 days and cannot return sooner.

### **Can I book holiday rather than receive SSP during self-isolation?**

Yes, although there is no requirement for you to do so and we will pay you SSP if you're eligible.

### **What should I do when I'm ready to return to work?**

Before returning to work, you must call your local representative and advise them that you are ready to do so. You will be asked to participate in a telephone return to work meeting.

### **I'm worried about Covid-19, what should I do?**

Covid-19 is a global health pandemic and we understand that you may have concerns. You should ensure that you follow the advice issued by the Government, NHS and World Health Organisation and the information given in this document.

### **Where can I obtain further advice?**

You are able to refer to the UK Government website, which is updated daily at 2pm or to the NHS website. We do advise all staff to keep themselves updated of any changes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19>