

## **Information Sheet 1 – Coronavirus/Covid-19 (13 March 2020)**

### **1. What is the coronavirus?**

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. This strain, covid-19, is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in January 2020.

### **2. What are the symptoms?**

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has covid-19 infection:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

If you are worried about symptoms affecting you or someone you support, call NHS 111 or go to [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | NHS inform](#).

The latest advice and developments across Scotland can be found here [Coronavirus in Scotland - gov.scot](#)

### **3. What's the best way to prevent the spread of Covid-19?**

1. Wash your hands often with soap ([or soap substitutes](#)) and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. This is particularly important after taking public transport.
2. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
3. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin. For colleagues working in our care services, if you have not already done so, please [download a 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' poster](#) and display as appropriate.
4. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
6. Politely adopt social distancing by keeping a 2m (6ft) space between you and other people. You should not shake hands or make close contact where possible.
7. If you have concerns that you may have been at risk of spreading the infection, you should consult the NHS Inform website (link above) for initial guidance and seek medical advice when appropriate.
8. There remains specific guidance for people who have travelled to, or have been in contact with, one of the high risk areas/countries – category 1 and 2. Further information can be found here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | NHS inform](#). Depending on the circumstances you find yourself in, we will support you to self-isolate based on public health advice.

9. Current public health advice states that where you have developed a cough or fever in the last 7 days, you should self-isolate yourself for 7 days from the day the symptoms developed to reduce the risk of coronavirus spreading. During this period you can work from home (see section 6 below). While in self-isolation you should monitor your symptoms and call NHS 111 or your GP if you develop any of the following symptoms – fever, cough, or shortness of breath. You should not attend your GP practice in person but should telephone for advice from home.

#### 4. What is Eildon doing to help to prevent the spread of Covid-19?

1. **Business Continuity** - We have in place a robust business continuity plan to ensure we identify risks and take action to enable our operations to continue where we experience major incidents of this type. The Executive Team will review this plan on a regular basis to take account of public health advice, and make any adjustments needed to minimise the impact to Eildon, staff and customers. Where possible and practical, we will continue to provide services to our customers but will assess any risks to individuals in doing so.
2. **Information:** This information leaflet will be shared with our Board, staff and customers. We will continue to review any further action we need to take and provide appropriate updates based on public health advice. **We will review and update this information leaflet and reissue as appropriate.**
3. **Handwashing facilities:** Hand sanitiser, tissues and additional cleaning products have been distributed across our locations for use by staff and visitors. GOV.UK has published clear and printable [instructions on handwashing techniques](#).
4. **Cleaning regimes:** Viruses can live on hard surfaces for up to eight hours. We have increased our cleaning regimes in the Weaving Shed and across all care developments.
5. **PPE** – We will ensure that all customer facing staff, who will come into contact with customers during this critical period, are issued with an appropriate supply of disposable PPE and will provide training (where required) on safe use of PPE.
6. **Face to Face Meetings – From Monday 16 March until Friday 1 May 2020**, we are advising staff not to arrange external meetings in any of our locations, or to attend external meetings or events. Where these meetings are essential, arrangements should be made to conduct the meeting by phone, facetime, Skype or other digital routes. IT colleagues will be able to assist.
7. **Contractors and others working on our behalf** – We will pass a copy of this information leaflet to our contractors and others who provide a service on our behalf. We will also seek confirmation from these organisations that they have adopted the best practices set out in this information leaflets when working with our customers and staff.

#### 5. Supporting Customers

1. **Restricting Face to face contact with customers** – We have a significant number of customers who would be considered as “at risk” due to age or long-term health conditions should they come into contact with Covid-19. As such we want to minimise the risk of spreading the disease. From **Monday 16 March until Friday 1 May 2020** we ask that staff consider if there is an alternative way to engage with customers such as contact through telephone, email, or facetime, or delay the meeting until the public health position is clearer.
2. **Safe Face to Face contact with customers - by staff working in our Care Services, Care and Repair, and HIT Teams** – for these teams day to day contact with customers will continue during this period. To protect yourself and our customers, we ask that you adopt the following practices:

- **Good Hygiene** - Maintain “Catch it, Bin it, Kill it” practice, safe hand washing regime and adopt social distancing, where appropriate.
  - **PPE** – Your line manager will ensure a risk assessment has been undertaken which is appropriate to your role and the activities you will undertake. We will supply appropriate PPE aligned to the risk assessment. Any PPE identified must be worn as you enter a customer’s home. Use and disposal of PPE must be undertaken, in accordance with the instructions and training provided. In most cases, disposable gloves and a disposable plastic apron will be adequate. Additional PPE such as fluid repellent surgical face mask and disposable eye protection (such as face visor or goggles) will be issued and should be worn where identified as part of the risk assessment process.
  - **Delivering Personal Care** – All staff receive mandatory training to prevent the risk of infection spreading. Local managers will ensure each staff member receives refresher training on our procedures. We will continue to liaise with the Care Inspectorate, and Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership to ensure we notify them on any incidents and impact Covid-19 is having on our care services, and to receive and act on further information.
3. **Safe Face to Face contact with customers - by staff working in our Housing and Property Services** – where possible we should continue to provide services to customers where we are unable to do so through other methods, or where there is an critical need to meet. This includes home visits relating to arrears, allocations and voids, and serious tenancy issues. In planning any visits, you should follow the public health advice set out sections 3-4 above.

## 6. Supporting Staff

1. There is no need for staff to avoid the workplace if you are symptomless.
2. We have established business continuity procedures to support staff who may be required to work from home where they have to self-isolate but are fit to work, or where impacted by school closures. Where this applies, you must seek agreement from your line manager to work from home, and ensure appropriate communication is in place to inform colleagues of your whereabouts.
3. Staff issued with mobile devices should take them (and all charging devices!) home each night to ensure you are able to work remotely should the need arise.
4. If you are sick due to Covid-19, our normal sickness absence procedures will apply <C:\Users\AmandaM\Eldon Housing Association\Governance - Policies, Procedures & Key Documents\Sickness Absence & Attendance Mgmt Policy 2013.pdf>. We will require a sick note if you are absent for more than 7 calendar days. If you experience a problem in accessing a sick note due to pressures on your GP practice, please let HR know asap.
5. Where you are required to take leave to care for someone affected by Covid-19, there are a range of options available to support staff, including use of annual leave, flexi leave, TOIL (where appropriate to the role); compressed hours and/or unpaid leave. On 11 March, the UK Government included in the Budget statement measures whereby employers with less than 250 employees can claim a refund for Covid-19 related Statutory Sick Pay costs (up to two weeks per employee) which will avoid staff having to take unpaid leave where they have not other access to paid leave. Where this applies, colleagues in HR will be able to advise.
6. Where there is an increase in staff absence due to sick leave relating to Covid-19, the Leadership Group will review workloads across teams and the impact on colleagues to consider redeploying staff to other teams and reviewing priorities.

7. Please ensure emergency contact details are up to date – where there have been any recent changes, please let HR know asap.
8. If you have any concerns about yourself or a colleague, please discuss this with your line manager or a colleague in HR.
9. Staff can seek advice from the UK Government's [COVID-19: guidance for employees, employers and businesses - GOV.UK](#)

Should you have any questions around the Covid-19 which are not covered in the above section, please raise with a member of the Executive Team, or a colleague in HR.