



COVID-19 - COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE 20/03/2019

As Boris Johnson announces further measures in the country's plans to attempt to control the spread of COVID-19, I am writing with a brief update on where we are at this time.

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Coronavirus Email

We are receiving a large volume of enquiries through the dedicated inbox, responses are being dealt with as quickly as possible. When emailing, please ensure you include your employee number/site name and line manager.

Nursery & School Closures

Schools will close except for looking after the children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. The government shall release a list of 'key workers' imminently. As soon as the classifications are released, we shall write to you all again. We realise that whatever the decision is here, this is going to have a major impact on a number of our staff.

Dependents Leave/Sick Pay

Line Managers have been provided with flow charts to assist with guidance. Further FAQ's shall be posted on the group website later on today/tomorrow morning.

Pregnant & Vulnerable People

Staff who are pregnant, staff over the age of 70 or who have an underlying health condition (as designated in Government guidance as being at increased risk of illness from COVID-19) we strongly advise you follow the government guidelines if you fall within one of these vulnerable groupings. Any absence should follow the absence policy of notification. This is likely to happen naturally given the general rule on home working now in place. Relevant Government guidance can be found here.



Annual Leave

It's important that you take your annual leave as planned, even if you are working remotely. We want to make sure our staff are well-rested and have a good work-life balance, especially during the challenging circumstances we find ourselves in. We do not intend to amend the current annual leave policy in terms of ability to carry over. If we require you to attend work during your period of annual leave, this shall be discussed locally with you.

Online Advice & Guidance

Our Wrkit platform is a great source of information. From dealing with anxiety in such situations to budgeting to staying fit at home or completing online courses on a variety of subjects. There is many hints and tips around your wellbeing – a critical factor at this difficult time. If you are not registered on the platform, you can join by going to <https://axis.group-login.com>.

Communication Strategy

We are continuing to hold daily conference calls on this matter – our aim is to only update when there is a significant piece of advice. We are all currently navigating a situation that is uncharted territory at the moment and as such no set way of doing things. As mentioned above, we are in the process of updating the FAQ's section on our website, and this shall be available shortly. Please keep checking back for updates.

Once again we would like to thank you all for your continued efforts during this very challenging time.

Please see the next page for FAQ's on Coronavirus...



CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 - COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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Axis Group Integrated Services Limited

361-373 City Road, London, EC1 V1LR

T. 020 7520 2100 F. 020 7520 2163 E. info@axis-groupservices.co.uk

Registered Office: Ground Floor Suite, River House, Maidstone Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 5RH

Registered in England No: 05993870

axis-groupservices.co.uk



What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

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.

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.

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China.

The [NHS website](#) has more information about how coronavirus is spread and answers [common questions about the virus](#).

How many cases have there been in the UK?

As of 9am on 19 March 2020, 64,621 people have been tested in the UK, of which 61,352 were confirmed negative and 3,269 were confirmed positive. As of 1pm 144 patients in the UK who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) have died.

I have cold/flu like symptoms. Could this be Coronavirus?

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- [a cough](#)
- a high temperature
- [shortness of breath](#)

But these symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as [cold](#) and [flu](#).

It's very unlikely to be coronavirus if:

- you have not been in close contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus
- you have not been to a country or area with a high risk of coronavirus in the last 14 days – see our [coronavirus advice for travellers](#)



If you think you might have coronavirus, use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

Use the 111 coronavirus service

Information:

Getting help in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland

- Scotland: call your GP surgery or call 111 if your surgery is not open
- Wales: call 111
- Northern Ireland: call 111

What is the best way to slow the spread of Coronavirus?

Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds and whenever you:

- get home or into work
- blow your nose, sneeze or cough
- eat or handle food
- It's important to use soap and water or a hand sanitiser.

Will wearing a face mask prevent me from catching the virus?

Face masks play a very important role in places like hospitals, but there is very little evidence of widespread benefit for members of the public.

Is there a vaccine for Coronavirus?

There is currently no vaccine for coronavirus (COVID-19). The virus is so new and different that it needs its own vaccine.

Simple hygiene measures like washing your hands with soap and water often, and avoiding people who are unwell, can help stop viruses like coronavirus spreading.



Can I be tested if I think I have coronavirus?

Tests for coronavirus are only done if there's a high chance you could have the illness.

This may be because:

- you have been in close contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus
- in the last 14 days you have travelled to a country or area with a high coronavirus risk – see our [coronavirus advice for travellers](#)

In these cases, you can use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

Use the 111 coronavirus service

Information:

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Do I need to avoid public transport or crowded places?

Most people can continue to go to work, school and other public places.

You only need to stay away from public places (self-isolate) if advised to by the NHS 111 online coronavirus service or a medical professional.

I think I may have come into contact with someone who has coronavirus. What should I do?

Health professionals are working to contact anyone who has been in close contact with people who have coronavirus.

If you think you've been in close contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

In the event that you are advised to self-isolate follow the guidance and do not under any circumstances return to site. Inform your line manager who in turn will notify the site.

If I am advised to self-isolate but don't feel unwell can I still go to work

In the event that you are advised to self-isolate it is extremely important that you follow the guidance. Under no circumstances should you attend the workplace until you have tested negative or been advised that you no longer need to self-isolate.

Will I be paid if I am advised not to attend the workplace

The government has issued guidance to employers in relation to payment of Statutory sick pay and other similar employee benefits. As your employer we will work to ensure that the financial impact of any guidance to self-isolate is minimised to the maximum extent possible.

What happens if I want to self-isolate?

If you are not intending to work through self-isolation, then you should follow the same procedure as when you are sick – as sickness rules shall apply in the same way.

I've recently returned from holiday from a country that has cases of Coronavirus, what should I do?

For information about what to do if you've recently travelled to a country or area with a high coronavirus risk, see the official [coronavirus advice for travellers](#).

I'm due to travel abroad, where can I get the most up to date advice?

If you're planning to travel abroad and are concerned about coronavirus, check the [country by country travel advice on GOV.UK](#).

One of my co-workers has just returned from holiday in a country with reported cases of Coronavirus. Should they be told to stay away from work?

Any employee who has travelled in the last 14 days to an area which has reported cases of Coronavirus should follow the advice to travellers. The advice varies for different circumstances and in some cases the current advice is that only those who are experiencing symptoms may be required to self-isolate. We will continue to monitor the advice as this may change as we move through the stages of the governments action plan.

What will happen if the schools and nurseries are closed and I cannot access childcare?

Please contact HREnquiries@axis-groupservices.co.uk for access to the Parental Leave Policy applicable to the Axis division in which you work.

I have responsibilities as a carer, what should I do if the support framework breaks down?

The Company recognises an employee's statutory right to time for Emergency and Dependant leave and will not unreasonably refuse this time off.

Examples of dependant leave are:

- A child or dependent who is sick, injured or assaulted
- An adult for whom an employee cares where no other arrangements can reasonably be made for a serious incident involving a child at school
- A serious illness involving a dependent
- A child or dependent whose usual care arrangements are unexpectedly disrupted

Dependent care leave will not be granted to deal with predictable domestic arrangements that could be accommodated using annual (for example regular childcare and childcare during the school holidays).

Examples of Emergency leave are:

- A road accident or other similar accident involving the employee
- The breakdown or theft of the employee's car
- A burglary at the employee's home or a violent crime or involving the employee
- Fire or flooding at the employee's home



This list is not exhaustive.

In determining whether request for leave should be granted the following factors should be taken into consideration

- The nature and extent of the emergency
- The availability of others to deal with the emergency
- The likely impact of the emergency on the employee

This leave is intended to cover genuine emergencies. If an employee knows in advance that they are going to need time off for a domestic issue (for example in the case of delivery of goods to the employee's home) they should ask for leave in the normal way.

If the Company has concerns over the levels/nature of emergency and dependent leave being taken this will be investigated via the Company disciplinary policy and procedure.