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**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC – WORKPLACE POLICY UPDATE**  
(updated 23 December 2020)

**Scope**

This is an update to reflect recent the latest government guidance. It replaces parts of the Workplace Policy version 1 (16 April 2020) and version 2 (1 July 2020).

Colleagues should still refer to version 2 for the parts that are not affected by this update. In time, we shall have a fully updated version 3 that covers all the new and old parts.

**Principles**

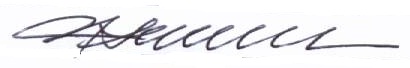
Alexandra Surgery:

1. aims to enable patients to continue to receive essential health care during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic;
2. is committed to making safety of patients and staff the priority in everything we do;
3. expect patients, their carers as well as our colleagues to observe precautions, cooperate with the team, and comply with legal requirements to safeguard against spread of infection.

**Timescale**

This new policy takes effect immediately as it is based on rules published by the government.

It is likely to be revised from time to time in line with changes in official guidance, hence an expiry date has not been set.



Dr N Sivananthan

23.12.2020

**Staff exposure to Coronavirus**

*COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care settings*, published on 17 December gives clear guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings

Staff without symptoms

* If you are providing direct care to a patient with COVID-19 and are wearing the correct PPE (in accordance with the current IPC guidance), you will not be considered as a contact for the purposes of contact tracing. You will also not be required to self-isolate for 10 days.
* Nevertheless, staff who come into contact with COVID-19 cases – whether or not you are protected by using PPE or other barriers – should remain alert that there is possibility of contracting infection. You should self-isolate immediately if you develop relevant symptoms.
* If contact tracing notified you are a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the community (outside the place of work), you should inform your line manager and self-isolate for 10 days.
* Staff who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) in the community or at work should follow the stay at home guidance i.e. self isolate for at least 10 days. The isolation period includes the day your test was taken (if you do not have symptoms) and the next 10 full days.

Staff with symptoms

* If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 while you are at home, you should not go to work, and notify your line manager immediately
* If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at work, you should immediately put on a surgical face mask, inform your line manager and return home
* You should follow the stay at home guidance i.e. self isolate for at least 10 days. The isolation period includes the day their symptoms started and the next 10 full days.
* You should comply with all requests for testing. The guidance states “If a member of staff develops symptoms, he/she should be tested for SARS-CoV-2. Testing is most sensitive within 3 days of symptoms developing.”

Impact on our service – guidance for the management

* If a health worker is considered to be a contact, the recommendation for him/her to self-isolate may have implications for continuous provision of the service.
* The employer will need to escalate this for a risk- assessment to a Tier 1 contact tracer at the local Health Protection Team (HPT). Advice about whether a risk assessment is needed may also be sought from the HPT.

Routine testing

The SOP for GP, section 5.2, announced:

* Lateral Flow antigen testing kits will be distributed to general practices in January 2021. Staff can be tested at the surgery and receive results in as little as 30 minutes.
* The NHS will require all staff in patient facing work to test themselves twice a week. Results both negative and positive must be submitted to Public Health England. This is a statutory requirement (that means refusal will be breaking the law).

**Telephone First**

In line with *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for General Practice in the Context of Coronavirus (COVID-19), Version 4*, published on 22 December:

www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/managing-coronavirus-covid-19-in-general-practice-sop/

* Telephone triage will continue.
* For people who are clinically at risk, or are unable to consult remotely, we are ready to bring them into the surgery. Safeguarding patients is more important than keeping the surgery sealed.

In case of doubt, reference should be made to the quoted guidance for consideration.