Coronavirus Q&As for managers – 06/03/2020

1) If an employee has told me they think they may have Coronavirus, what should I do?

Find out if they meet any of the Public Health England PHE criteria – available here – and whether they have been diagnosed. They need to follow the PHE and NHS 111 guidance.

If they have not travelled to any of the areas identified by PHE and have not been diagnosed with Coronavirus, but do feel too unwell to work, please key this into MSS and follow the normal sickness absence process.

If they are advised to self-quarantine and are not unwell, please select ‘authorised paid leave’ in MSS to key the absence. If an employee has been advised to self-quarantine, they are not feeling unwell and their job is adaptable to working at home then please ask them to do this.

If they are diagnosed with Coronavirus, please key this absence into MSS using the code ‘Pandemic flu’, call the GSI line on 0844 701 6515 to report it, and call to raise a case with Croner Manager Advice on 01865 713101 (option 3), 24/7, 365 days per year.

2) If an employee has contacted NHS 111 after the two-week self-quarantine period and is allowed back to work, what should I do?

Ask your employee to confirm the time of the call and advice in writing (electronically) and allow them back to work as normal, updating the case with Croner. If they are a homeworker and you keyed them as having ‘Authorised paid leave’ you need to end that absence in MSS.

3) If an employee’s symptoms did not improve and NHS 111 referred them for testing, which confirmed a case of Coronavirus, what should I do?

Your employee must revert to normal sickness absence leave and will be given notification that they cannot attend work after attending an isolation unit at their local medical centre. They must send this into you (electronically) for recording in MSS and you must call Croner on 01865 713101 (option 3). Croner will immediately inform the steering group that we have a confirmed coronavirus case.

You must also call the GSI line on 0844 701 6515 to report it as a diagnosed case of Coronavirus.

For those individuals who are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), we will adhere to the government guidance on pay. As you know, if an employee is only entitled to SSP then they will normally receive no pay for the first three days of sickness absence. This has been updated following the government announcement to pay the first three days for individuals diagnosed with Coronavirus – you can read an article about this here.

Arrange to send employees home who have come into contact with the area/equipment that this employee has come into contact with, and arrange a deep clean of the area/equipment that your employee used. This guidance is being developed and will be issued very soon.

Notify your teams who worked closely with the team member that someone (do not say not who, this is for data protection reasons) has tested positive for Coronavirus.

Refer your teams to the company guidance on this page for how to keep themselves safe. If anyone is concerned, advise them to contact NHS 111 for advice. Team members sent home are to be paid, and a case opened for each person with Croner by calling 01865 713101 (option 3).
If any members of the team who are sent home start to have any symptoms, they must call 111 and you commence the process again.

5) If an employee’s sickness absence is prolonged and they are paid SSP. What can I do to help them?

Please contact your HRBP to discuss the individual’s case because we can consider an advance to be paid back over a 12-month period.

6) How can I arrange a deep clean following an employee’s diagnosis for Coronavirus?

Ask your current cleaning team to undertake a thorough clean using the guidance we are due to publish very shortly.

A risk-assessment must be completed, recorded and communicated before work begins to identify and implement the correct control measure to protect the employees and others who may be affected, from the hazards. Form to follow shortly.

7) If an employee refuses to carry out a deep clean, what do I do?

As long as the employee is competent to undertake the deep clean and you have provided the correct PPE and process to follow, you would treat this as refusal to undertake a reasonable instruction and log a case with Croner (call 01865 713101 - option 3) following their advice.

8) Are there any additional precautions I need to take for a deep clean?

Other than making sure your teams wear the PPE provided, including gloves where currently appropriate, washing your hands as we have advised, then you will be taking appropriate measures to remain safe. If an employee becomes ill with symptoms similar to those of Coronavirus, advise them to contact NHS 111 immediately.

9) How should we dispose of waste, including tissues where there are suspected or confirmed cases of Coronavirus?

All waste that has been in contact with a diagnosed employee, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and marked for storage until the result is available. The bag should be stored in a secure place. If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste.

Should the individual test positive, you will be instructed by the Government Health Protection Team what to do with the waste.

10) I have an employee returning from a Coronavirus affected area. What should I do?

If the employee works in a Prisons account, please refer to the specific Sector Guidance that has been issued.

If the employee does not work in a Prisons account, follow the current Public Health England Guidance for returning travellers.
11) An employee has gone home with suspected Coronavirus. Do I close the location?

No. The Government guidance is that there is no need to do this. Please make sure that the employee knows that they need to contact the Public Health Authorities at NHS 111 and follow up their absence in line with our standard policies.

12) An employee has gone home with suspected Coronavirus. What do I tell other people who work here?

Please do not confirm the name of the person or details that could make them easily identifiable. Communicate quickly and frequently with your team sharing that a person has gone home but it is not a confirmed case of Coronavirus. Confirm that you will monitor the situation closely and will keep people informed of any developments.

Take the opportunity to reinforce the general advice on good personal hygiene (Catch It/Kill It/Bin It - Wash Your Hands) to help us all protect each other from viruses.

13) An employee has notified me of a confirmed case of Coronavirus, what do I do?

Please call the GSI Line 0844 701 6515. Please tell the call handler that you are reporting a Confirmed Case of Coronavirus.

14) Due to Coronavirus related absence my client is experiencing a significant level of service disruption. What can I do?

Consult with your operational line management and, if necessary, raise a GSI. Call the GSI Line 0844 701 6515.

15) Can Medigold test people for Coronavirus?

No. Follow the PHE (Public Health England) (or MoJ) guidance for reporting and testing.

16) Should we providing hand-sanitiser, tissues etc. where we work?

Washing your hands with soap and hot water for 20 seconds, according to government guidance, is considered the best way. If for any reason you can't do this, a hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol is the next best.

17) As part of their jobs, my team members go into people's homes. Should they wear a mask?

No. But they should use hand sanitiser after each visit and, where possible, maintain a distance of 2m between themselves and the customer.
**Additional information for Prisons**

18) Our employee works in a prison (or an Approved Premises), they have travelled back from the Wuhan and Hubei Province and have NO flu-like symptoms. What do I do?

If the employee has travelled from Wuhan or Hubei Province to the UK in the last 14 days they should immediately:
- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as they would with flu
- Call NHS 111 to inform them of their recent travel to the area.

They must follow this advice even if they do not have symptoms of the virus.

Home working should be put in place where possible if suitable. If not, record the absence in MSS and raise a case with Croner on 01865 713101 (option 3).

19) Our employee works in a prison (or an Approved Premises), they have travelled back from other areas in China or other high-risk countries and have NO flu-like symptoms. What do I do?

The employee can return to work as per normal.

However, if they have travelled to the UK from mainland China, Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau in the last 14 days and are experiencing a cough, or fever, or shortness of breath, they must stay indoors and call NHS 111, even if symptoms are mild, to inform them of their recent travel to the area.

Record any absence in MSS and raise a case with Croner on 01865 713101 (option 3).

20) Our employee works in a prison (or an Approved Premises), they have been in contact with someone known or suspected to be carrying the Coronavirus and have NO flu-like symptoms. What do I do?

The employee must refrain from attending the workplace and self-isolate for 14 days (or an advised period) from returning to the UK or from the date of known contact with the person with suspected or confirmed coronavirus.

The employee should also report this to NHS 111.

Home working should be put in place where possible if suitable, if not, record the absence in MSS and raise a case with Croner on 01865 713101 (option 3).

21) Our employee works in a prison (or an Approved Premises), they have flu-like illness but
- Have NOT been to China or travelled outside of the UK
- Have NOT had any contact with a person with suspected or confirmed Coronavirus
What do I do?

The employee should not attend work until their flu-like symptoms have ended and they are well.

Follow normal sickness absence process.