

Covid-19 Policy

Introduction

The current coronavirus outbreak (Covid-19) is a new a reasonably virulent strain of this virus and on 12 March 2020 was declared a global pandemic.

Like flu most deaths are in people aged over 65 with underlying health conditions. For most people catching Covid-19 means a mild illness. What makes Covid19 stand out is that there is currently neither a vaccine nor any specific, proven, antiviral medication; most treatment will therefore be towards managing symptoms and providing support to patients with complications. This has major implications for the families we work with.

In writing this policy BDCPS have taken on board published advice from the Government, including Public Health, and ACAS as to the national approach to this virus.

Prevention

The best way to avoid catching Covid-19 is to wash your hands thoroughly and regularly, using soap and water. When in operation at all services/venues the session leader should ensure there is a sufficient supply of handwashing products. Handwashing must be undertaken regularly. Before and after any care task, eating and/or moving between support of different young people. Thorough hand washing should also be done at other intervals as required.

If we are out and about and no soap and water is available then staff must utilise the appropriate hand sanitizing gel where this is available, this should be alcohol based at 60% but any smokers should be aware that such products are highly flammable. If staff are unable to source hand gel they must notify senior management.

Staff are encouraged not to touch their face as much as possible.

Staff must also encourage our young people and visitors to also maintain good hand hygiene.

As part of our safety checks leaders must ensure there is a regular clean of our service's venues by making the relevant enquiries/add to venue risk assessments, paying particular attention to door handles with antibacterial wipes and other regularly touched surfaces. Office staff must remember to thoroughly clean keyboards especially where ICT equipment is shared, although this is to be discouraged. We will attempt to maintain a supply of antibacterial spray and wipes in the office.

Do Not Travel to areas described as high risk by Her Majesty's Government. This advice is updated regularly and available on the internet or from your manager. If in any doubt please contact senior management.

If you chose to travel to one of these areas after they have been declared high risk you will not be eligible for additional pay during your two-week quarantine period. You may be able to take a further 2 weeks holiday if you have sufficient accrued holiday time.

Self-Isolation/Limiting Non-Essential Contact

If you may have been exposed at home or abroad it is essential that you follow medical advice. You should find this advice by going to the following website <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>.

When we are operating services we do not want staff to come to work who should be self-isolating or limiting non-essential contact. BDCPS is a flexible employer and is committed to adapting to work from home arrangements. If you are office based you may be eligible to work from home. We will expect those for whom flexible working is agreed to continue working unless they are too ill. If a member of staff is too ill they should follow the sickness procedures. The senior team will consider the resources that are needed to enable flexible working and staff should discuss any concerns with senior managers. Please discuss any requests for flexible working with the senior management team. Flexible working may also be imposed in line with Government guidance and risk assessments.

If staff are showing symptoms in order to be paid for this absence we would ask that they follow our usual Sickness policy and procedures. Payment will be for a maximum of 14 days at the discretion of senior management. Any payments beyond this will also be at the direction of senior management, subject to normal sickness rules. Please contact the senior management team to advise them of the outcome if you receive a test. If results are negative and staff are advised to return to work, they should do so, providing they do not have any symptoms. Please speak to the senior management team.

If you are infected

Staff

If staff become infected with coronavirus or display any of the symptoms you must follow medical advice. As set out above, for most people this will be a mild virus with a temperature, aches and pains and a cough. It is likely for most people that this will not be a lengthy illness. It is essential you do not return to work until you are symptom free and have complied with the advised isolation periods. Staff should also let senior management know of any support that would be helpful to you and your family and they will try to support you. Permanent staff may be paid for up to 14 days for this absence. Bank staff may be paid for any sessions within 14 days which have not been cancelled with notice. You must keep your senior manager updated and informed of your current status to receive this. Any payment beyond this is at the discretion of senior management. Other sick pay rules apply.

Families

Please advise us if you have anyone in your home who is showing symptoms or has been diagnosed with coronavirus. Unfortunately, due to the risk of spreading the infection BDCPS will be unable to provide care. However, BDCPS will assemble a team of staff who will try to assist you in other ways such as shopping where possible, collecting medications, walking dogs etc.

If Staff have to care for someone who is affected:

If staff have a dependent that needs your care due to illness or changes to normal provision, staff are entitled to have time off. This form of leave is usually unpaid. However, BDCPS in the current circumstances may pay you for this for a period of up to 14 days if agreed by senior management. Any payment beyond this must also be by agreement with senior management.

BDCPS is a flexible employer and is committed to adapting to work from home arrangements. If you are office based you may be eligible to work from home. We will expect those for whom flexible working is agreed to continue working unless they are too ill. If a member of staff is too ill they should follow the sickness procedures. Please discuss flexible working with the senior management team.

If staff are working in the office and have to care for a child due to school closure they may bring your child to work with them providing this is assessed as safe and they can still complete their duties with their child present. If you cannot, you should speak to the senior management team.

Any staff who also work directly with families (e.g. direct payment workers), where BDCPS has been the introduction to the family, should not undertake any work 14 days prior to a BDCPS session if the family are in isolation, as this will result in the staff member also having to self-isolate for 14 days. Staff will be paid for any sessions they are booked for which do not take place, if less than 14 days notice of cancellation is given.

Cancelling Services and Events

As stated above BDCPS provides services for young people with health conditions which makes them very vulnerable to the most serious consequences of coronavirus. The senior team will therefore undertake dynamic risk assessments as to whether sessions and/or events should take place. Considerations will take account of the latest government advice and statistics, known coronavirus cases within our contact circle, the nature of the venue and other public contact, the concerns of our families and our staff team but most importantly the health needs of the young people we would be working with. The senior team will endeavour to give as much notice as possible to families, staff, venue providers and partners.

We fully intend to reinstate our activities as soon as it is considered safe to do so. With this in mind we will credit families with any payments that have been made for cancelled activities

and carry these forwards for when our activities start again. If anyone requires a refund this can be arranged by contacting our offices.

In the event of cancellation of services, we will negotiate with current funders as to the best possible way to manage the continuation of funding to sustain our services

Communication

We know communication is important and we aim to keep in regular contact with our staff and families. They should check emails and social media regularly. If these methods of communication do not suit any individuals they should contact our office to advise the best way to relay information. Part of our support package to parent/carers will include an option for those in isolation to receive telephone calls. We will aim to spread some positivity during what we know will be difficult times for many.

In the event of our office team working remotely BDCPS (divert calls?) Our office team will monitor post received into the office regularly

<https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869827/Coronavirus_action_plan_-_a_guide_to_what_you_can_expect_across_the_UK.pdf

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