

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This document is not designed to override government guidance but to support and reaffirm it. It will aim to answer some wider concerns relevant to our business as well as provide some reassurance that we're taking the health and wellbeing of our people very seriously.

Official government information and advice on COVID-19 can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

FAQs: (click the  to jump to a section)

-  What is Coronavirus and what are the symptoms?
-  What can I do to reduce my chances of catching or spreading germs?
-  What's the difference between social distancing and self-isolating?
-  What does adopting good hygiene standards mean for me?
-  What does self-isolation mean?
-  I'm confused between self-isolating for 7 days or 14 days, which is right?
-  When should I be self-isolating?
-  What can I do to get myself better?
-  What do I do when self-isolation has ended?
-  Can I travel abroad?
-  What will happen about pay if I need to be off work?
-  Can I continue going to meetings and events?
-  Can I travel to different Sewell Group/ Sewell on the go sites as normal?
-  What about plans for working from home?
-  What happens if my child's school or nursery closes?
-  I'm worrying about how Coronavirus is affecting my mental health, what can I do?
-  What if I hear about someone with Coronavirus?
-  What can I say to our external contacts if I'm asked about our business plans for Coronavirus?
-  What do I need to be aware of disclosing from a brand point of view?
-  Will being at home risk my job?
-  Will I be made to work from home, even if I want to stay in the office?
-  I don't understand what pay I am entitled to, can someone help me?
-  Non-work related advice

What is Coronavirus and what are the symptoms?

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus.

The most common symptoms are a recent onset of:

- a high temperature (above 38.5°C), feeling hot to touch on your chest or back and/or
- a new, continuous and persistent (repeated) cough. These symptoms can also lead to shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

If at any time you feel unwell and show the above symptoms, the government advice is that you should be self-isolating. If you feel your symptoms cannot be managed at home, or they get worse, use the NHS 111 online or phone service.

For clarity please see the symptoms below and the comparisons between cold and flu:

Symptoms	Coronavirus Symptoms range from mild to severe	Flu Abrupt onset of symptoms	Cold Gradual onset of symptoms
 Fever or chills	Common	Common	Rare
 Cough	Common (usually dry)	Common (usually dry)	Mild
 Fatigue/tiredness	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
 Headaches	Sometimes	Common	Rare
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No
 Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Sometimes	Common
 Diarrhoea	Rare	Sometimes in children	No
 Sneezing	No	No	Common

What can I do to reduce my chances of catching or spreading germs?

Coronaviruses are mainly spread through cough droplets and surfaces or items where those droplets land. It's very unlikely to spread through things like packages and/or food. To try and avoid catching or spreading COVID-19:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
 - always wash your hands when you get home or into work
 - use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
 - cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
 - put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
 - try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- and **do not** touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

What's the difference between social distancing and self-isolating?

Self isolating means you are experiencing symptoms or suspect you have been into contact with someone who has and are effectively quarantining yourself in your own home to avoid the spread of germs.

Social distancing should be practiced by everyone in the current crisis and means reducing social interaction to help reduce the transmission of Coronavirus. Steps include:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
3. Work from home, where possible.
4. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

What does adopting good hygiene standards mean for me?

Good hygiene standards at work and at home will also support the prevention and limited spread of COVID-19. Whilst the media reports a lot of conflicting information the best approach to keeping work spaces and your home clean is to use general household cleaning products and disposable cloths.

Having a regular regime for cleaning frequently touched/used areas such as surfaces, counter tops, door handles, telephones, desks etc. will help to boost safeguards against catching the virus.

Please be aware that there are no formal PPE requirements for cleaning areas that you suspect are contaminated (unless stated on cleaning products), but the use of nitrile or disposable gloves, and disposable cloths would be the best option.

Do not eat or drink while cleaning, wash your hands on completion of any cleaning and do not touch your face, mouth or eyes while cleaning.

What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation is when you are advised by a medical professional to stay at home for a period of either seven or 14 days to support your own health and wellbeing and avoid spreading the virus to others.

If you know you have been exposed to Coronavirus, the recommended self-isolation period for you and anyone sharing your house is 14 days. If you are already experiencing symptoms the recommendation is to self-isolate for seven days from the day that the symptoms first appeared.

During self-isolation;

- try to keep at least 2 metres (3 steps) from other people in your home, particularly older people or those with long-term health conditions
- ask friends, family and delivery services to deliver things like food shopping and medicines – but avoid contact with them
- sleep alone if possible
- regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- try to stay away from or limit contact with older people and those with long-term health conditions
- drink plenty of water and take everyday painkillers in line with government guidelines if required, to help with your symptoms
- do not have visitors (ask people to leave deliveries outside), and
- do not leave the house, for example to go for a walk, to school or public places.
- do not use public transport or taxis
- if possible do not go out to buy food or other essentials
- do not have visitors in your home

I'm confused between self-isolating for 7 days or 14 days, which is right?

If you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for **7 days** from when your symptoms started.

If you live with others and you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, then you must stay at home for 7 days, but all other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

When should I be self-isolating?

If you know you have been exposed to Coronavirus, the recommended self-isolation period for you and anyone sharing your house is 14 days. If you are already experiencing symptoms the recommendation is to self-isolate for seven days from the day that the symptoms first appeared.

You need to stay at home for seven days if you have either:

- a high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

You do not need to contact NHS 111 to tell them you're staying at home and testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home.

Please contact your Line Manager to inform them you are self-isolating.

If you have been self-isolating for seven days and your symptoms are not improving, are getting worse or you cannot cope with them at home, please contact the 111 Coronavirus service.

What can I do to help get myself better?

Drink water to keep yourself hydrated; you should drink enough during the day so your urine (pee) is a pale clear colour. You can use over-the-counter medications, such as paracetamol, to help with some of your symptoms. Use these according to the instructions on the packet or label and do not exceed the recommended dose.

What do I do when self-isolation has ended?

Self-isolation - If you have been symptomatic, then you may end your self-isolation after 7 days. The 7-day period starts from the day when you first became ill

Household isolation - If living with others, then all household members who remain well may end household-isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for coronavirus; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.

After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine. If any other family members become unwell during the 14-day household-isolation period, they should follow the same advice - that is, after 7 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they can also return to their normal routine.

Should a household member develop coronavirus symptoms late in the 14-day household-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) **the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days.** The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on, and it is not necessary to restart 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.

At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation.

If any ill person in the household has not had any signs of improvement and have not already sought medical advice, they should contact NHS 111 online. If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

The cough may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus infection having cleared. A persistent cough alone does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days.

At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation.

If any ill person in the household has not had any signs of improvement and have not already sought medical advice, they should contact NHS 111 online. If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

The cough may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus infection having cleared. A persistent cough alone does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days.

Can I travel abroad?

Travelling abroad has become limited by various governments, airlines and travel agents. We are not in a position to advise on this and ask that you take note of any issued public guidance on travelling. You can also seek further information from the GOV.UK website's foreign travel advice and guidelines here: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

What will happen about pay if I need to be off work?

We recognise that time off related to COVID-19 will not have factored into anyone's plans for 2020 and we hope that our people remain healthy and unaffected. However, if the situation arises where people are required to take time off sick for self-isolation please first check your terms and conditions of employment for sick pay information.

The government has announced that where people are eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) the 4 waiting day period will be lifted temporarily, allowing SSP to be paid from day 1.

SSP is paid on a weekly basis at a rate of £94.25 (£95.85 from 1 April 2020). Eligibility is based on government guidelines which state people are eligible for SSP based on weekly earnings being over £118 per week (£120 from 1 April 2020).

If you have any specific questions or concerns on pay please speak to your Business Unit leader.

Can I continue going to meetings and events?

No. Large scale gatherings are subject to the government's most recent restrictions that limit gatherings to two people. Please speak to a line manager if someone is asking you to attend an event.

There may be reason to hold team meetings on construction or retail sites but we suggest these are kept brief and that all social distancing guidelines are followed.

Can I travel to different Sewell Group/Sewell on the go sites as normal?

No. All unnecessary travel has been advised against.

Our offices are now closed and you should only be travelling to retail sites if you are working at one or going to pick up some shopping.

The only travel that you should be doing during working hours is your usual commute.

What about plans for working from home?

All of our people who can work from home should now be doing so.

If you need any help or support with setting up your equipment you can contact the IT team as usual by emailing: **ict.support@sewell-group.co.uk**

What happens if my child's school or nursery closes?

We are aware that schools and nurseries will close from Friday 20th March.

We understand there will be potential for childcare to be an issue across our team and have done our best to prepare for this. If you are experiencing issues and have not shared these with a line manager or business unit leader then please do this immediately.

Our retail team will be classed as keyworkers so should maintain access to current childcare options – either schools or nurseries. If you need evidence from us to prove your right to this access then please speak to your team leader or line manager.

I'm worrying about how Coronavirus is affecting my mental health, what can I do?

We know that staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you or other household members may feel low. It can be particularly challenging if you don't have much space or access to a garden.

It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, such as the Every Mind Matters website.

Think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have not minded staying at home for a week have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films. If you feel well enough you can take part in light exercise within your home or garden.

Many people find it helpful to remind themselves why what they are doing is so important. Hopefully, none of your family will suffer more than flu-like symptoms. But some people are badly affected by coronavirus, and particularly the elderly and those with certain medical conditions. By staying home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

We understand that the current media coverage and health concerns communicated around COVID-19 can cause undue stress and worry. This naturally affects the mental health and wellbeing of our people.

We would like to make sure that all of our people feel comfortable that they can contact their business unit leaders with their concerns, as well as the People, Communications and SEC teams in Professional Services (PST).

We have a number of mental health first aiders across the business available for our people to contact;

- Allison O'Sullivan, Retail, Allison.o'sullivan@sewellonthego.co.uk, 07525 873262
- Becky Oughtibridge, PST, becky.oughtibridge@sewell-group.co.uk, 07879 993262
- Carl Sarel, Construction, carl.sarel@sewell-group.co.uk, 07967 189567
- Emma Kordhaku, Retail, emma.kordhaku@sewellonthego.co.uk, 07525 873252
- Graham Lawson, Construction, graham.lawson@sewell-group.co.uk, 07968 122690
- Jo Battye, Retail, jo.battye@sewellonthego.co.uk, 07967 236893
- Kate Barbour, Retail, kate.barbour@sewellonthego.co.uk, 07525 873230
- Richard Barnes, PST, richard.barnes@sewell-group.co.uk, 07890 549343
- Zac Botham, Retail, zac.botham@sewellonthego.co.uk, 07725 964029

As a reminder, we also have a dedicated and confidential support line in place for all of our people and their family to take advantage of. This can be utilised by calling **0800 107 6147** or visiting www.colleaguesupport.co.uk (using code **72135** as username and password). This line is 100% confidential, staffed entirely by externals, fully trained to provide specialist support, 24/7, 365 days a year.

What if I hear about someone with Coronavirus?

On receiving a report of either a suspected or confirmed case of Coronavirus **in our teams** or on **our premises** please follow this procedure:

1. **Call your line manager** and share as much detail as possible.
 - Please do not email as it reduces our ability to take quick preventative measures.
2. **Email as much detail as possible** to: talktous@sewell-group.co.uk
 - Please include a mobile number so we can contact you for more information.
 - We will use information collected from you to determine our next steps on a case by case basis.

What can I say to our external contacts if I'm asked about our business plans for Coronavirus?

For now the message is "business as usual". We will circulate some template responses as our plans evolve in response to government guidelines. You will also find our standard response posted across all of our websites. If you are contacted by a journalist, the usual response applies, ask them to contact our marketing and communications team on **01482 701251** or communications@sewell-group.co.uk

What do I need to be aware of disclosing from a brand point of view?

We appreciate that Coronavirus has been and will continue to be a common topic of conversation over the coming weeks. We would like to ask for your continued discretion in sharing business information and respecting our people's privacy outside of the business. This will help to ensure that we are not associated with any external conversations in a negative manner and that we respect our team's right to their health being treated as confidential.

Our usual brand management processes will be applicable to anything Coronavirus related, as such we'd ask you to report any issues or crises through the usual channels. If you are unsure of what to say to anyone, then please say nothing and instead raise a question with your line manager or email talktous@sewell-group.co.uk

Will being at home risk my job?

Employees should take time off work if they're ill.

By law, medical evidence is not required for the first 7 days of sickness (employees can self-certify). After 7 days, it is for the employer to determine what evidence they require, if any, from the employee.

In the current circumstances we respect the need for employees to stay at home where they are following government advice to do so and will offer some flexibility in the evidence we require from you.

If you are worried about evidencing your absence you get an isolation note from NHS 111 online or from the NHS website.

Will I be made to work from home, even if I want to stay in the office?

Currently government guidance states that you should work from home where you can and we have encouraged our employees to follow this advice.

Our offices will be temporarily closed from Tuesday 24th March 2020. If you are usually office based you will need to work from home from this date. Please view our working from home wellbeing guidelines at www.sewell-group.co.uk/covid-19

I don't understand what pay I am entitled to, can someone help me?

Your first point of contact should be your contract, followed closely by your business unit leader.

If you are still worried there are lots of government resources available to see what other benefits you are entitled to that may help. You can view these here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses>

Non-work related advice

I've heard I shouldn't take Ibuprofen use to treat symptoms of Coronavirus/COVID19. Is this true?

The Government have advised that until they have more information on the matter to take paracetamol to treat the symptoms of Coronavirus, unless your doctor has told you paracetamol is not suitable for you. For more information go to [Ibuprofen use and COVID19/ Coronavirus](#)

Do you know what will happen with schools and exams?

The exam regulator, Ofqual, and exam boards will work with teachers to provide grades to students whose exams have been cancelled this summer, following our actions to slow the spread of coronavirus.

University representatives have confirmed that they expect universities to be flexible and do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education.

This year's summer exam series, including A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications, and all primary assessments, have been cancelled as we fight to stop the spread of coronavirus. You can read more about this here: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced?utm_source=96f31727-1fb9-408b-a7fa-d91d4ceaeb6b&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

I have a question which isn't answered here, who can I talk to?

If you have a question that we've not answered, please speak to your line manager or get in touch with us confidentially on talktous@sewell-group.co.uk.