



## Preparing your Business (Version 1. 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020)

The States of Guernsey Committee *for* Economic Development recommend that all Guernsey based businesses adopt robust and flexible business continuity management arrangements, which will help ensure that the impact of disruptions caused by [Coronavirus \('COVID-19'\)](#) will be minimised.

To assist, the States of Guernsey have produced the following guidance specifically regarding COVID-19, developed using UK Cabinet Office Information. It identifies important and specific preparations and planning to prepare, as the local situation develops. The guidance below is aimed at all businesses.

### 1. Plan and Prepare Phase

- 1. Identify a Team Lead** Identify a coordinator and/or team with you company to allocate defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning. The planning process should include input from a wide range of stakeholders such as Health and Safety Representatives).
- 2. Assess Business Needs** As a general approach to reducing the spread of the infection across the Island's, assess your business needs for continued 'face-to-face' contact with your customers and suppliers, consider plans to modify the frequency and/or type of face-to-face contact. Consider technological solutions for meetings such as Video or Tele-conferencing.  
  
Whilst there is currently no intention to restrict domestic travel, the States of Guernsey is likely to advise against non-essential travel, and this should be taken into account in planning. For foreign travel, ensure that you are aware of the current advice on which areas are affected by the Coronavirus and make sure you take the appropriate action (see Section 21 below).
- 3. Consider demand** Plan for a likely increase in demand for employees welfare services, if they are available.
- 4. Identify Requirements** Identify employees and key customers with special requirements, and incorporate these requirements into your Business preparedness plan.
- 5. Consider Contact** Consider your customers' needs and decide whether to review your business model and arrangements to continue to meet customer needs. Consider alternative methods of supplying or direct contact.

### 2. Established Policies in place during a Coronavirus ('COVID-19') Outbreak

- 6. Staff Sickness Policy** Guided by [advice issued by the States of Guernsey](#), establish policies for sick-leave absences including policies on when a previously ill person is no longer infectious and can return to work after illness – this will be when they are no longer showing symptoms and feel better, and confirm these policies formally within your company.



- 7. Flexible Working** Establish policies for flexible working, such as working from home and flexible working hours or staggered shifts.
- 8. Reduce Further Spread** Guided by advice from the States of Guernsey, establish policies for reducing spread of Coronavirus at the worksite (I.E. [Promoting Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette](#), ('[Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](#)') and asking those with symptoms to [Self-Isolate](#)).
- 9. Manage Workforce** [Guided by advice from the States of Guernsey](#), establish the current policies for employees who are suspected to be ill, or become ill at the worksite such as implementing an infection control response and sick leave policies.
- 10. Manage Business Activities** Set up authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating the company's response plan, altering business operations such as reducing operations as necessary in affected areas, and transferring business knowledge to key employees. This should include nominating deputies for key employees in advance, in case of absence.

### 3. Communicating with your Workforce

- 11. Disseminate Information** Disseminate easily-accessible information about [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) to your workforce which is appropriate to the stage of alert (ie. Signs and Symptoms, modes of transmission when this information is available), personal and family protection and response strategies (i.e.. [Hand hygiene](#), coughing/sneezing etiquette, contingency plans). This should be based on the information already available on the [States of Guernsey website](#).
- 12. Communicate the Plan** Ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Disseminate information to employees about your preparedness and response plan for your business, including their role in this plan.
- 13. Develop ongoing communications** Develop platforms such as hotlines and, dedicated websites for communicating status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers.
- 14. Keep updated** Ensure that [States of Guernsey](#), [UK Government Public Health](#) and [WHO](#) websites are the sources for timely and accurate information (domestic and international), but please remember that the [States of Guernsey](#) advice may differ from these sources.

### 4. Information about the Coronavirus ('COVID-19')

- 15. Coronavirus COVID-19** A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020. The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 to 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not been infected.



### 16. Signs and Symptoms of COVID 19

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection; cough, difficulty in breathing, fever. Generally, these infections 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.

### 17. How COVID-19 is Spread

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes containing the virus are most likely to be the main means of transmission. There are two main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- Infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within two metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs;
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face).

There is currently little evidence that people who are without symptoms are infectious to others.

### 18. Preventing Spread of Infection

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Public Health England (PHE) recommends that the following general cold and flu precautions are taken to help prevent people from catching and spreading COVID-19;

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. See [Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](#);
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away;
- Wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available. See [hand washing guidance](#);
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces;
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

### 19. How long can the virus survive?

How long any respiratory virus survives will depend on a number of factors, for example;

- What surface the virus is on;
- Whether it is exposed to sunlight;
- Differences in temperature and humidity;
- Exposure to cleaning products.

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours. We know that

similar viruses are transferred to and by people's hands. Therefore, regular hand hygiene and cleaning of frequently touched surfaces will help to reduce the risk of infection.

See [hand washing guidance](#).

## 5. What to do if you, or an employee falls ill?

### 20. What to do if an employee or a member of the public becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19?

If the person has not been to specified areas in the last 14 days (see here), then normal practice should continue.

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace and has travelled to an affected country, the unwell person should be removed to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people. If possible find a room or area where they can be isolated behind a closed door, such as a staff office.

If it is possible to open a window, do so for ventilation.

The individual who is unwell should call Public Health Services on **01481 756938** or **01481 756969** from their mobile, or **999** if an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk) and explain which country they have returned from in the last 14 days, and outline their current symptoms.

Whilst they wait for advice from Public Health Services on **01481 756938** or **01481 756969** or for an ambulance to arrive, they should remain at least two metres from other people. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in a bag or pocket then throw the tissue in the bin. If they don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available.

### 21. Returning from travel overseas from affected areas

People who have returned from Group A countries in the last 14 days should avoid attending work. They should call Public Health Services on **01481 756938** or **01481 756969** for advice, and self-isolate.

People who have returned from Group B countries in the last 14 days should attend work as normal. They should follow the guidance shown in Subsection 5 of this document which details how to prevent the spread of infection.

If they experience symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath, no matter how mild), then they should stay indoors and contact Public Health Services on **01481-725241**, or, if you are feeling very unwell, phone **999** telling the operator of your symptoms and travel history.

They should call Public Health Services on **01481 756938** or **01481 756969** for advice, and self-isolate.

**22. Suspected COVID-19 in your workplace?**

For contacts of a suspected case in the workplace, no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for COVID19 are awaited.

In particular, there is no need to close the workplace or send other staff home at this point. Most possible cases turn out to be negative.

Therefore, until the outcome of test results is known there is no action that the workplace needs to take.

**23. What to do if a member of staff or the public with confirmed COVID-19 has recently been in your workplace**

Closure of the workplace is not recommended.

The management team of the office or workplace will be contacted by the Public Health Services to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken. A risk assessment of each setting will be undertaken by the Public Health Services with the lead responsible person. Advice on the management of staff and members of the public will be based on this assessment.

The Public Health Services will also be in contact with the case directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts, and will be in touch with any contacts of the case to provide them with appropriate advice. Advice on cleaning of communal areas such as offices or toilets will be given by the Public Health Services, and is outlined later in this document.

**24. When individuals in the workplace have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19**

If a confirmed case is identified in your workplace, the Public Health Services team will provide the relevant staff with advice. These staff include;

- Any employee in close face-to-face or touching contact;
- Talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the employee was symptomatic;
- Anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids;
- A close friendship groups or workgroups;
- Any employee living in the same household as a confirmed case.

Contacts are not considered cases, and if they are well they are very unlikely to have spread the infection to others;

- Those who have had close contact will be asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case, and follow the [home isolation advice sheet](#);
- They will be actively followed up by the Public Health Services team;
- If they develop new symptoms, or their existing symptoms worsen within their 14-day observation period, they should call Public Health Services on **01481 756938** or **01481 756969** for reassessment;
- If they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be tested for COVID-19;



- If they are unwell at any time within their 14-day observation period and they test positive for COVID-19, they will become a confirmed case and will be treated for the infection.

Staff who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions and can continue to attend work.

### 25. Certifying Absence from work

We strongly suggest that employers use their discretion around the need for medical evidence for a period of absence where an employee is advised to self-isolate due to suspected COVID-19, in accordance with the public health advice being issued by the States of Guernsey. Please refer [here for the States of Guernsey sickness benefit information](#).

### 26. Advice for Staff returning from overseas travel

Currently, there are minimal cases outside the listed areas and therefore the likelihood of an individual coming into contact with a confirmed case is extremely low. However, please continue to review the [advice posted on the States of Guernsey website](#).

These staff can continue to attend work unless they have been informed that they have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

If individuals are aware that they have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should contact Public Health Services on **01481 756938** or **01481 756969** for further advice.

### 27. Handling Post, Packages or food

Employees should continue to follow existing risk assessments and safe systems of work. There is no perceived increase in risk for handling post or freight from specified areas.

### 28. Cleaning offices and public spaces

Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the person has come into contact with must be cleaned including:

- All surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids;
- All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones.

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.

If a person becomes ill in a shared space, these should be cleaned using disposable cloths and household detergents, according to current recommended workplace legislation and practice.

### 29. Rubbish disposal

All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. 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. If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste.



Should the individual test positive, you will be instructed what to do with the waste.

### 6. Additional Support for your Business

- 30. Business Support** It is not uncommon to experience problems with operating a business in Guernsey. The States of Guernsey works in close collaboration with all business in all sectors and Officers stand ready to support where they can.

This is an emerging situation and will be continually reviewed and should you receive intelligence in relation to any shortage of supplies or operational difficulties, then it will be important to let us know, and officers will look to support where possible. Please contact [Chris.Morris@gov.gg](mailto:Chris.Morris@gov.gg) (tel **07839 777604**) or [Gareth.Jones@gov.gg](mailto:Gareth.Jones@gov.gg) (tel **07839 700142**)

- 31. Things not to worry about** Your Business Continuity plan will not need to take into consideration the critical infrastructure and the normal Government service functions of the Island such as ensuring continued supply of water, electricity, waste services or operation of Ports, or Airports as these functions are delivered by the States of Guernsey and are subject to States of Guernsey Business Continuity Planning.