

## **Coronavirus - Top 10 Tips for employers**

### **1. Keep up to date with Government and public health advice**

- It is important for employers to keep on top of the fast-evolving situation and ensure employees are aware of the latest advice.

[www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public)

### **2. Protect your employees**

- Employers have health and safety obligations to keep employees informed about health risks that may arise in carrying out their duties and to ensure working practices do not create undue risks to employees
- Ensure your workplace is hygienic ensuring soap and hot water available
- What will you need to do if your employees are working from home?

<https://www.hrdept.co.uk/northampton-south/services/elearning>

### **3. Know your obligations regarding sick pay**

- Depending on the situation various rules apply so it is important to understand what should be paid to employees who are absent for reasons relating to coronavirus.
- Be aware of what contractual requirements are also in place

<https://www.hrdept.co.uk/services/coronavirus/>

<https://www.hrdept.co.uk/services/coronavirus-news/>

### **4. Develop a contingency plan**

To prepare for high levels of absence employers should:

- Consider which employees can work from home
- Ensure you have regular communications methods in place, video conferencing, online chat forums etc
- Ensure IT systems will be able to cope with many remote workers
- Consider back up plans to cover staff unable to work
- Update emergency contact details for all staff
- Is there a new process for reporting sickness/employees who are self-isolating?
- How are working hours being monitored – don't forget the Working Time Regulations still apply as well as breaks
- What services do you need to stop providing if you have less staff able to work?
- What are your key services that your clients still need to support them during this difficult time?
- Do you know the skills of your employees so you can transfer activities around if the need arises?
- What training do you need to provide to support these changes and plan for the future?

### **5. Review your policies**

There are many policies that will be affected by the changes business are having to make

- Absence/sickness
- Dependant leave

- Flexible working/home working
- Travel

#### **6. Manage absence effectively**

- Make staff feel comfortable to let you know if they are unwell and unable to work
- Ensure your sickness policies confirm how this might be managed differently to normal circumstances
- Decide/communicate what payments will be for sickness/absence
- What is the impact for staff with dependants who are now trying to home school as well?
- How will vulnerable staff be treated differently?

#### **7. Ensure good communication is two way**

- Communication is so important to ensure employees understand what needs to be done to prevent the spread of infection whilst in the workplace, the latest government announcements etc.
- Consider circulating regular FAQ's helping them where to find the latest information and to ensure they have understood the contact updates and changes
- This will help feelings of uncertainty and anxiety.
- Ensure managers are trained on how to deal with new/different measures
- What is the process for staff to ask questions?

#### **8. Ensure all staff are treated equally**

- Remind staff of the behaviour that is expected of them
- No jokes relating to Coronavirus or treating employees of certain nationalities differently
- Identify any staff who may have had pre-existing health conditions and whether any other reasonable adjustments need to be made

#### **9. Employees refusing to come to work/self-isolate**

- Employees may be concerned about going to work even if there are no reported cases in the immediate vicinity and they have been advised to self-isolate or are displaying any symptoms. It is important to listen to employees' concerns.
- You should consider what alternatives you can put in place, are they able to work from home, take holiday, unpaid leave – check the latest advice before agreeing to this

#### **10. If a workplace has to close**

- If an employer needs to close temporarily, for example if they decide to undertake a deep clean, following an employee having been tested positive for coronavirus, they should have a plan in place
- Short time working
- Furloughed workers/Lay Offs/Redundancies

Please seek advice as the government are releasing new information on a regular basis and there are still legal processes that need to be adhered to.