

Dear Colleagues,

COVID-19 Coronavirus

With information changing on a daily basis we are writing to you to provide an update on the steps we are taking. As your Lead Employer, St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, is actively engaged with colleagues at a regional and national level to ensure preparedness for response along with ensuring we are following the frequently updated national guidance being published in relation to COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

The safety of patients and staff remains our priority and we have put together some advice, information and FAQ's which is also accessible by visiting <http://www.sthk.nhs.uk/>. Our HR team are on hand to help and provide advice to you and we would ask that you forward your query to leademployer.casemanagement@sthk.nhs.uk please include 'Coronavirus' in the subject header. We are experiencing a high volume of calls and queries so would ask for your support and patience to enable us to address these.

Latest National Advice (17.03.2020)

If you have a new continuous cough, or high temperature (37.8 degrees or higher), you should immediately notify your host placement provider in line with local absence reporting procedures. You are to stay at home for 7 days if you live alone.

If you live with others, you must stay at home for 14 days along with members of your household.

Only contact 111 online service if you are unable to cope with symptoms at home, your conditions get worse, your symptoms do not get better after 7 days.

Only call NHS 111 if you can not access the online service.

If you are defined as falling within a vulnerable grouping please ensure that you notify your Host organisation and continue to follow the latest guidance published by NHS England and NHS Improvement <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/>

You may also seek advice from StHK's Health Work and Wellbeing department; however we who are currently receiving a high volume of calls and would recommend that you continue to adhere to your host local protocols and procedures in the first instance.

FAQ's

What is the single source of advice to follow?

The guidance provided by Public Health England is provided by clinical experts and should be the single source of advice followed:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

My child's school or nursery has been closed, I now have childcare issues – what do I do?

We recognise that closure of schools will present working parents/carers with childcare issues and we are keeping this matter under review.

The Lead Employer Special Leave policy offers annual leave or special leave that can be used to accommodate these circumstances. To review the policy, please click [here](#). In normal circumstances special leave is intended to provide a compassionate response to immediate needs and is intended to be short term.

Each application for special leave will have individual circumstances taken into consideration. Parents/Carers should take all necessary measures to identify alternative and suitable child care provision as soon as possible.

Special leave is paid leave. In accordance with the Lead Employer Special Leave Policy paid leave may be granted at management discretion.

Any leave requirements which go beyond this may need to consider alternative forms of leave such as statutory parental leave, annual leave or unpaid leave. Further advice can be sought from Lead Employer Employment Services Team -

<https://sharedservices.sthk.nhs.uk/lead-employer/key-service-contacts/>

I am ill and cannot work due to being unwell will I be paid?

If you are unwell and unable to work due to coronavirus, then the StHK sickness policy and procedures will apply. This will include normal provision for sick pay in line with your attendance record. You will not, however, need to provide a GP note in these circumstances.

How will my absence be recorded by my Host Organisation, if I have to self-isolate?

Self-isolation is not in itself a reason for absence. It is expected that some staff will be able to work whilst in self-isolation. Inform your local host placement organisation immediately who will report this through to StHK Lead Employer.

Please refer to the following links for further information

- [GOV.UK: coronavirus action plan](#)
- [GOV.UK: information on coronavirus and the situation in the UK](#)
- [NHS England: coronavirus information for health professionals](#)

Please note that the information in this e-mail is correct as at the date and time it is sent, however this is a rapidly changing situation and I would recommend you continue to monitor the national advice issued by Public Health England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Yours sincerely,
Lead Employer Team