*NB This template need to be tailored to the specific circumstances of each organisation. It is intended as a framework for discussion and planning, with suggestions for areas you may need to consider. There may be other areas that are specific to your type of work.*

*You will also need to check reliable health and government sources for any further updates as information is changing rapidly*

# COVID19: a Guide for Third-Sector Managers

## Macc Introduction

*The World Health Organisation (WHO) has characterised Covid-19 (coronavirus) as a pandemic. This Director-General of WHO stated that “This is not just a public health crisis, it is a crisis that will touch every sector – so every sector and every individual must be involved in the fight.”. We can all ‘do our bit’ and this policy is provided to help your organisation think through staffing, volunteers, hygiene and how you deal with practical situations that are likely to arise due to Covid-19.*

*You are likely to need clear policy on key areas like:*

* *Preventative action to reduce and manage risks*
* *Action in the event of a staff member or volunteer showing symptoms*
* *Dealing with the knock-on effect of the crisis (e.g. school closures)*
* *Contractual issues (sick pay, flexible working, holiday leave)*

*As a starting point, you should:*

* Check what relevant policies you have in place. You may have a Business Continuity Policy that you can draw on, but the chances are it doesn’t quite fit the current crisis. You may find that developing a more tailored action plan is helpful for the current situation.
* Check the latest [*Government guidance*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19)
* Talk to your Chair and agree the process for drafting and signing off the necessary plan as swiftly as possible. Waiting for a Board meeting would probably not be appropriate.

*Your plan needs to be simple, practical, brief and to the point, not least because you may need to update it repeatedly. Hints for each section (links, check-lists, suggested wording) are set out below.*

*During the Covid-19 pandemic, your organisation*

 *will need to ensure that it is meeting its duty of care to staff, volunteers, visitors and service users.*

# COVID19: a Guide for Third-Sector Managers

## Introduction

During the Covid-19 situation, Name of organisation will need to ensure that we are meeting our duty of care to our staff, volunteers, visitors and service users.

During this time, Name of organisation aims to:

* Encourage staff and volunteers to carry on as normal, if they are well
* Take additional precautions to protect them from exposure to infections
* Lessen the risk of spreading the virus to others

We also aim to:

* Keep core business, activities and services going where it is practical to do so
* Operate within our usual policies, procedures and guidance
* Recognise that we may need to be temporarily flexible with our normal policies and procedures help staff and volunteers manage during the Covid-19 situation

#### Additional Hygiene

##### This is where you say what you will do in addition to your normal cleaning and hygiene routines.

##### Staff will be reminded and encouraged to follow [Public Health England (PHE)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19#preventing-spread-of-infection) general precautions:

* Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze: 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.
* 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

##### Action by Management

* *State what your organisation will provide and do to contribute to safe hygiene. This should cover:*
* *How you will clean your office and / or any other venues you deliver from, e.g.*
* What additional cleaning measures you will take
* Handwashing facilities and guidance
* Provision of soap, sanitiser, tissues, bins, etc.
* Cleaning of contact points like handles, keyboards, phones, switches, desks
* Encouraging staff to clean their own work areas as well (provide antibacterial wipes)
* Emptying of waste bins daily

#### Visitors to our office/premises/site/building [amend as appropriate]

*Your guidance should cover how you will keep staff and visitors safe from infection –what actions or changes you will make.*

 *The following text MUST be amended appropriately to reflect what YOUR organisation is actually going to do. We have provided the following as examples to help you think through the situation:*

* In public-facing areas **Name of organisation** will provide antibacterial sanitiser, disposable tissues and covered bins for public use
* Notices will be posted to encourage the public to use these items
* Where possible some separation between staff and the public will be encouraged, e.g. by use of physical barriers.
* We may have to ask visitors not to come to our office and to cancel events or meetings during the Covid-19 situation, except where it is absolutely necessary.

Where visitors do need to visit **name of organisation’s** office/site/venue, visitors will be:

* Asked if they have any symptoms before being allowed into **name of organisation’s** premises and if they do they will be refused entry
* Asked to sanitise their hands before entering **name of organisation’s** premises
* Visitors will be restricted to meeting rooms where at all possible
* We will use other ways to deliver our activities and services wherever possible and appropriate, e.g. use of website, video conferencing, email

**Face to face meetings**

Travel should be avoided unless absolutely essential, especially if the journey requires using public transport.

Face to face meetings should be avoided wherever possible. Use of telephone / video conferencing / email facilities will be encouraged.

Where face to face meetings are unavoidable, **name of organisation’s**  designated meeting rooms should be used which will have sanitiser pumps /tissues / waste bins provided and will be cleaned daily. ***[adapt to suit your organisation; you may not have separate meeting rooms available]***

## Staff who may be at risk

## Some staff may be more at risk of developing Covid-19 related health complications. For example:

* Pregnant workers
* Those with a compromised immune system

Name of the organisation will move such staff to work in lower-risk work sites and locations. If this is not possible, we may ask staff to work from home until it is safe for them to return to the workplace.

## Recognising symptoms

[Government guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19#preventing-spread-of-infection) on Covid-19 tells you the most significant symptoms to look out for:

* Persistent cough
* Difficulty in breathing
* Fever

Name of organisation will ensure staff can spot these symptoms and know what to do.

#### In the Workplace

If an employee feels ill with symptoms that match Covid-19, they should stop working and do the following:

* Keep at least 2 metres (7 feet) away from other people, where possible on their own in a closed room, with the window open
* Follow the personal hygiene guidance (cover coughs with tissues or sleeve and bin tissues) and avoid touching anything
* Use their own mobile to access 111 online coronavirus service at <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/> and follow advice there on what to do next
* Only call 111 if you cannot get help online
* Use their own mobile to inform their line manager or other manager to say they are ill and are currently self-isolating at work
* Update their manager/ other manager on any NHS advice given

#### Outside the Workplace

Similar advice applies. Employees should inform their manager and stay at home until they are fully recovered and their GP has confirmed they are no longer infectious.

**Volunteers**

Volunteers who develop symptoms whilst volunteering should:

* Keep at least 2 metres (7 feet) away from other people, where possible on their own in a closed room, with the window open
* Follow the personal hygiene guidance (cover coughs with tissues or sleeve and bin tissues) and avoid touching anything
* Use their own mobile to access 111 online Covid-19 service at [**https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19**](https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19)and follow advice there on what to do next
* Only call 111 if you cannot get help online
* Use their own mobile to inform their Volunteer Supervisor to say they are ill and are currently self-isolating at their volunteering place
* Follow NHS advice
* Update their Volunteer Supervisor on any NHS advice given
* The Volunteer Supervisor will facilitate the volunteer to self-isolate at home and will take any local action needed

If symptoms develop when not volunteering, follow NHS 111 advice

#### Entitlement to Sick Pay

*You will need to think about what your organisation can offer in terms of sick pay. Look at what your current policy says and any temporary flexibility you can provide. For example:*

* *Can you be discretionary about staff who are not ill but need to self-isolate for other reasons?*
* *Can you be flexible about medical evidence you would normally ask for, e.g. no need to see a sick note as people can’t get to GPS?*
* *Tell staff what sick pay they are entitled to, statutory and whatever your organisation offer*
* *What you will do if staff refuse to attend work but there is no clear health or safety reason for doing so; could this be a breach of their contract with you? Prepare to deal with such situations on a case by case basis; this is new ground for everyone*

*Your guidance should cover:*

*Current* [*Government advice on self-certification*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19#certifying-absence-from-work)

*Current Government advice on Statutory Sick Pay*

*Your own policy on payment of contractual sick pay and any exercise of discretion on medical evidence where self-isolation has been prescribed*

## Response to Knock-on Effects

In general employees have no right to refuse to attend work during a health crisis unless there is a clear risk, and refusal to do so may put them in breach of their employment contract. Fear of contracting the virus does not, in general, constitute a valid reason for absence.

However, we will consider staff concerns and problems on a case by case basis, with working from home or use of annual or unpaid leave possible solutions.

If we ask you not to come into work, then we may ask you to work from home but you will receive your normal pay.

#### Public Transport Problems

Employees struggling to get in to work because of public transport failure will be encouraged to ***[choose which options apply]…*** seek other ways to get in or work from home or vary their start and end times or take annual or unpaid leave.

Employees will not / may not be paid if they fail to turn up for work and should discuss options with their line manager as soon as possible

#### Member of Household Infected

We have a duty of care to our workforce and staff and volunteers will be advised to remain at home in line with government guidance. However, we may wish to discuss the possibility of the employee working from home if they are well enough to do so. Under these circumstances the employee will receive their full pay as if they had been working normally.

***If employees are unable to work from home, you will need to consider:***

* ***The reason they are unable to work from home (e.g. job is not possible, they are caring for family who are ill/self-isolating)***
* ***What your organisation can afford to pay (over and above your normal sick pay policy) and how flexible you are able to be with that***
* ***What you think is morally and ethically right to do (and can afford)***
* ***Consider and keep an eye on any relevant government advice and/or support available***

#### School Closure or Other Childcare Issue

If your child becomes infected, the provisions in the previous section apply.

We recognise it may be difficult to arrange alternate care arrangements at this time. Talk to your line manager, flexible arrangements that involve a blend of home working on reduced hours and child care can be agreed. To prevent hardship staff will receive their normal full pay. ***[You will need to agree this first with your board if you want to offer it]***

## Other Contractual Issues

#### Working Flexibly

To compensate for the absence of staff, we may need to ask you to work flexibly to help maintain a service, for example by:

* working additional hours
* working flexibly
* taking on a different role (with training)
* working from home or other location
* cancelling planned annual leave

**In such cases, you will be paid for any additional hours or responsibilities. *[Check if this is your policy to do so and if not, do you have flexibility to do so]***

#### Planned Annual Leave

If your holiday plans are disrupted by the crisis, you should inform your line manager as soon as possible. We will consider sympathetically any request to postpone leave, subject to the need to maintain a service. Normal restrictions on carrying leave over from one year to the next will still apply.