



Yowsun Care Covid-19 Policy

This policy has been written to cover the operational procedures necessary for this domiciliary care organisation to protect its service users and staff from the risks presented by coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

It includes:

- information provision
- travel requirements
- infection control and prevention procedures
- self-isolating service users
- business continuity procedures
- pandemic recovery planning.

What is Coronavirus?

COVID-19 (coronavirus) is an infectious disease which causes respiratory flu-like symptoms ranging from very mild to very severe. The infection originated in China at the end of 2019 and has since spread to other countries initiating a global public health emergency. Risk levels in the UK have been raised from low to moderate but there are fears that the outbreak may become a pandemic.

How is Coronavirus Spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus.

It is understood that the virus moves from person to person in droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. In addition, the virus can survive for a certain amount of time out of the body on surfaces.

People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in the droplets or touch infected surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

What Are the Symptoms?

The most common symptoms are fever, tiredness, and dry cough.

COVID-19 is particularly dangerous for people with weakened immune systems, for older people, and for those with long-term conditions such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

Information

Yowsun Care will keep up to date with the latest public health and government information about the risk of coronavirus in the UK. The infection control lead for the organisation will maintain close links with local health protection teams and will be responsible for circulating essential information to staff and, where necessary, to service users and their families. They will also update the organisation's management team.

The organisation will comply fully with official advice, including Guidance for social or community care and residential settings on COVID-19, published by Public Health England (PHE).

Travel Restrictions

At present, there is a risk for people travelling to and from any country where there is a coronavirus outbreak.

Latest travel advice can be found on the GOV.UK web platform at www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public#information-about-the-virus

This organisation requires staff to comply with any advice given and to inform their line manager wherever the guidance may apply to them. People are being advised to stay indoors and avoid contact with other people (self-quarantine or self-isolation) if they have travelled recently to the UK from specified countries.

Infection Control and Prevention Procedures

Yowsun Care believes that general adherence to high standards of infection prevention and control is the best way to prevent the person-to-person spread of pathogens such as coronavirus and maximise the safety of staff, service users and their families. To achieve this the organisations' infection control policies and procedures will be implemented in full, especially those related to effective hand hygiene, sanitisation and environmental cleaning.

Care managers and supervisory staff should make sure that people:

- cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not their hands) when they cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately

- wash their hands with soap and water often and use hand sanitiser gel (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available

- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

- avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands

- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Staff should comply fully with hand sanitisation policies and procedures. Managers will ensure that policies are supported by the provision of appropriate resources such as hand sanitiser gels that contain at least 60% alcohol for home care staff.

The advice should be passed on to service users.

During normal day-to-day activities, PHE guidance states that facemasks do not provide protection from respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19, and need not be worn by staff in health or social care settings.

The infection control lead for the organisation will liaise with the local health protection team if any member of staff is suspected to be infected with coronavirus or comes into contact with someone suspected to be infected with the coronavirus. In such cases, the individual who is unwell should call NHS 111 from their mobile, or 999 if an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk). A staff member should call on their behalf if the person affected is not able to comply.

Yowsun Care will comply fully with all existing infection control and prevention guidance, including the Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice for Health and Adult Social Care on the Prevention and Control of Infections and Related Guidance.

Self-isolating Service Users

People returning from some areas of the world who are being told to self-isolate may include service users or others in a service user's household or in close contact with them.

If a person is in self-isolation PHE advice is that domiciliary care organisations should ascertain if they are asymptomatic or symptomatic prior to a visit. If they are self-isolating and a visit is deemed necessary, then a full risk assessment should be undertaken with managers and a local infection control specialist to decide the best course of action.

If the person is asymptomatic, PHE state that there is no reason to change the organisations normal approach to care – people who are self-isolating and have no symptoms do not pose a risk to others. If the person is symptomatic staff should avoid any further physical contact with them and ask them to call NHS 111 – in such cases managers should be informed immediately.

If the person is critically ill and requires an urgent medical attention an ambulance should be called and the ambulance call handler informed of the potential links to COVID-19.

If after assessment a service user has a positive test for COVI-19 then a contact tracing exercise will be undertaken by the local health protection team. In such cases, the organisation will be advised on any further actions depending on staff exposure to the person concerned.

PHE advises that if during a telephone consultation to assess a person's suitability for a domiciliary visit it is thought that COVID-19 is possible then a face-to-face assessment must be avoided. Instead, NHS 111 should be called to arrange for a clinical assessment.

Ways of working policy

In addition to our Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy, we have specific ways of working in place for our carers for a range of different scenarios. These measures have been put in place to protect both our customers and carers, and ultimately to ensure that we can continue to provide high-quality care during these unprecedented times.

1. If a customer has symptoms of COVID-19 and the carer does not have symptoms, the carer must adhere to the following:

As for all customers, wash your hands upon arrival, as our instructions state, for a minimum of 20 seconds.

As V5 PPE guidelines state – wear a fluid repellent surgical mask, face shield, disposable gloves and disposable apron to reduce the risk of you contracting the infection.

Ask the customer to wear a mouth and nose covering to reduce the risk of transfer of the virus from the customer to you. If the customer refuses to do so, please take advice from your line manager.

When your tasks are completed, discard all PPE into a tied bag, then into another tied bag, and place outside for 72 hours. After this time period has elapsed, you can then dispose of into a general rubbish bin.

Wash your hands as instructed as the final action before leaving the property, for a minimum of 20 seconds.

Your uniform must be changed at the earliest convenience and washed at 60°C.

Ensure your line manager is informed of the customer's health so that they can be monitored.

2. If the customer does not have symptoms but the household they live in is isolating, the following applies:

The customer must remain at a safe distance from other members of the household – a minimum of 2 metres.

If the customer cannot be fully isolated from infected family members, the customer must be cared for in the same manner as in Point 1.

Wear disposable gloves, a disposable apron and face mask.

3. If a carer has symptoms of COVID-19, report to your line manager immediately. You should also:

Self-isolate for at least seven days and until the symptoms have passed/recovery is evident.

All care calls for the carer must cease until your recovery is evident and you have self-isolated for 10 days.

You should keep your line manager fully up to date.

4. If a carer has no symptoms but lives in a household where someone does have symptoms:

The carer must self-isolate for 14 days. If you show no symptoms after the 14 days, you may stop self-isolating and return to work.

If the carer shows symptoms at any time within the 14 days, you must continue to self-isolate for seven days after the symptoms first display. This might be more or less time than the original 14 days.

Wear disposable gloves, a disposable apron and face mask.

5. If a carer has no symptoms but lives in a household where someone else is in self-isolation for 14 days because they had been in contact with someone who has showed symptoms:

The carer does not need to self-isolate unless any other member of the household starts to display symptoms. If this happens, follow the advice in Point 4.

6. If both the carer and customer have no symptoms:

Follow normal hand washing protocols and wash hands when arriving and leaving the property.

PPE – wear disposable gloves, disposable aprons and a face mask.

Business Continuity Procedures and Pandemic Recovery Planning

In addition to the organisation's general business continuity and recovery planning policies, the organisation recognises the need to have a separate pandemic recovery plan and procedure. This is because a general continuity recovery plan focuses on a short-term recovery programme. Should the UK face a coronavirus pandemic, the effects could last months.

The following procedure sets out contingency measures to be introduced in the event of a coronavirus pandemic.

A communications strategy will be developed to ensure that staff, service users and their families are provided with up-to-date and accurate information on the status of the pandemic and on the organisation's response.

Information will be provided to staff via e-mail and through team meetings – as well as other important information, employees will be briefed on the symptoms of the virus and who to contact should they believe they, or a colleague, have the virus.

The organisation's leave and absence policies will be continuously reviewed as the status of the pandemic changes, for instance, it may become necessary to cancel leave in case of serious short-staffing.

Staff will be informed of any additional measures to limit the spread of disease in a pandemic situation – this might include:

- avoiding unnecessary travel
- cancellation of face-to-face meetings
- plans to reduce the impact of absentees
- working from home where possible for managers and office staff
- systems to lessen the impact of supply chain disruption.

Essential services will be prioritised.

Advice will be provided for vulnerable service users on steps to take to protect themselves.

Care plans will be reviewed to identify service users most at risk in case of service disruption.

As a contingency measure, staff will be cross-trained in various functions to ensure that adequate cover is provided in different roles should sickness rates rise.

The management of the organisation will link with any local resilience forums relevant to health and social care provision.

Line managers and supervisors will be responsible for ensuring that staff understand the organisation's pandemic recovery plan policy and procedure. Staff should familiarise themselves with the procedure and should speak to their line manager if they have any questions or concerns.

The procedure aims to ensure that the organisation will be able to continue to provide care to its service users during any disruption caused by a pandemic.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be continuously monitored and updated to take account of any changes to the official advice provided about coronavirus. It will also be reviewed if the situation worsens and a pandemic is declared.

All business continuity plans will be developed with reference to the latest Department of Health and Social Care action plan.

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