

The information contained within the guidance is correct as of the 17th March 2020 and remains in force until any further changes are communicated.

Covid-19 Guidance

Pembrokeshire County Council adopt the advice and guidance published by the Government and Public Health Wales. As this advice and guidance changes daily based on risk, colleagues can find the latest information following the links highlighted below:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

The information published is comprehensive and covers items such as:

- Information about the virus
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- How COVID-19 is spread
- How long the virus can survive
- Preventing the spread of infection
- All travel overseas
- Specific actions for social and community care staff visiting patients at home or providing care to customers
- Closure of the office or workplace or residential setting and other actions if colleagues, members of the public or customers are undergoing COVID-19 testing and they have been in the office, workplace or residential setting.

In addition to this advice, we have developed this guidance document which focuses on working practices for all staff and the FAQs that are coming through to us.

Working practices for Managers and Colleagues

As information and government advice may change over time, we must do all we can to continue to deliver services whilst ensuring the health and safety of our colleagues and customers.

We may ask colleagues to adapt their working practices. This may include the following:

- a temporary change of role
- undertaking additional training to be able to carry out a temporary role
- looking at who attends meetings should we need to move to skype meetings
- working from an alternative location
- altering working hours or patterns

iTrent has been updated with an absence type **COVID-19**; cases of **self-isolation** need to be recorded in 'other absence' and a reason has been added **COVID-19**. It is important we accurately record for business planning purposes and government reporting. We are being asked for daily updates and iTrent is our only mechanism by which to do this. There are instructions on MSS on how to record accurately if you are unsure.

I have a holiday coming up do I need to update you on travel plans?

The current Foreign and Commonwealth statement advises against all but essential travel to some countries, cities and regions. You must check the travel advice to the country you are travelling to.

We would ask that you consider, for your own health reasons, whether your travel is necessary. Check general advice on travel at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus> and <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> for your specific destination and please let your manager know of the countries you intend to visit so that we can manage your return appropriately.

If you would like to cancel any pre-booked annual leave, please speak to your manager.

I have just got back from an overseas holiday.

If you return from an area which does not require automatic self-isolation, and you have no symptoms, you should attend work as normal. You need to set up an email alert via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus#latest-health-advice> to ensure you are advised as to appropriate measure to take on your return.

If you do have symptoms on your return including a new cough, fever or difficulty breathing, you should self-isolate for 14 days and follow our normal sickness reporting procedures. You will be treated as being on sickness absence.

Do not attend your GP we will not require a Medical Certificate for the first 14 days.

111 Advice

I and / or my family have underlying medical conditions. I do not want to risk exposing them to COVID-19. What can I do?

We know that we have staff working whilst undergoing cancer treatment, and or have underlying health conditions that has left them with a very vulnerable immune system, in these circumstances, advise your manager of the situation and if you are in a position to work remotely then this is to be encouraged.

This advice would also be relevant for pregnant employees.

Where you remain symptom free – you will be logged on iTrent as 'other absence' self isolation COVID-19.

If I have to self-isolate, will I get paid, and what are the procedures / arrangements for dealing with this?

We will treat this as 'other absence' self isolation and continue normal pay; it will not be recorded as sickness absence. You can record self isolation on your ESS iTrent account to ensure that your absence is accurately recorded.

Managers or staff members need to log on to their MSS/ESS iTrent accounts and log 'other absence'; COVID-19 self isolation.

Staff who have the ability to work from home and are required to self-isolate but are not unwell, are required to work from home, but we need to still log periods of self-isolation for required government reporting.

Staff in self isolation must let their line manager know as soon as possible if they develop symptoms and cannot work.

I have not travelled anywhere, but I have flu like symptoms

If you are sick or unfit for work, you should remain at home and focus on recovery, your absence will be treated as sick leave, in the current circumstances we will not be requiring a GP medical certificate for the first 14 days sickness absence. If you have a fever and new persistent cough then the latest advice is 14 days self isolation.

What is the situation with regard to travelling – are we imposing a ban of business travel for example?

Many meetings now offer the opportunity to skype in, and this is to be encouraged. We would ask staff to question the need to travel in the current circumstance and only attend essential regional meetings.

What happens if colleagues need to either cancel leave or book additional leave to deal with circumstances that arise due to Coronavirus?

Managers will work with staff on a case by case basis to work out what flexibility is required. For example, managers may ask staff to cancel their holidays so that they can come to work. In this instance we would expect that to be done in collaboration with the staff member.

Any leave over the statutory 28 days (incl. bank holidays) can be carried over into 2021 if necessary.

Another example maybe where a staff member wants to book more holiday than they are entitled to do deal with the impact of COVID-19. Normal leave rules apply and if operationally not feasible then your leave may be declined.

What happens should I become ill with COVID-19?

If you develop symptoms at any time, you should self isolate, follow the [111 Advice](#) and keep us updated as to your condition.

If it is confirmed that you have contracted coronavirus, your time off work will be treated in the same way as any other sickness absence. You must comply with our normal rules on sickness notification.

Usual sickness reporting procedures should be followed. Managers need to log as COVID-19 on reasons for absence.

What happens if I am asked not to come to work, my workplace is shut down and I cannot work from home?

If you are not sick, but we have asked you not to come to work, then you will continue to receive your normal pay.

We will - as part of the Authority's Business Continuity Planning - ask you to work from an alternative location or take on a temporary redeployment into an essential / priority service.

What happens if I need time off work to look after someone or if my child's school closes?

You are entitled to time off work to care for a 'dependent', ordinarily this time is unpaid and of short duration, however, due to the exceptional situation we will continue 'normal pay' and ask that employees are as flexible as possible in working remotely.

What happens if I do not want to come to work to avoid infection?

If you cannot work remotely and your particular service is essential to local authority service delivery then *business still continues as normal as is practically possible*.

You will need to use social *distancing*, *ideas include:*

- *Stay in your functional work group area. No leaving your work area. Maintain 2m distance from other workgroups.*
- *No meetings with people from different groups*
- *Minimise meetings*
- *Only hold face-to-face meetings that are necessary. Minimise attendance to only those that are required.*
- *Do your best to limit meetings to less than 20 people. Try to maintain six feet of separation from others by moving to larger conference rooms ("Social Distancing").*
- *Defer all non-essential training or offsite meetings*
- *Defer unnecessary meetings from outside visitors, suppliers, etc.*
- *Encourage employees to practice social distancing in and out of work*
- *No hand shaking*
- *Maintain 2 m distance in all work areas*

I am a casual / agency employee so don't usually get sick pay, if I have to self-isolate will I get paid?

Yes, to ensure that you are not at detriment, we are asking your managers to determine BUT FOR Covid-19 would you have continued working and we have suggested that in the affirmative, to pay an average of your salary for the previous 12 weeks would be reasonable in the circumstances. Your manager must continue to submit timesheets with the average hours worked, and they need to log on MSS iTrent 'other absence'; COVID-19 self-isolation. We will need this to be accurately reported to ensure that budgets are accounted for.

I am working all hours to manage this COVID-19 emergency, but the flexi-scheme says that I lose all additional hours over 10 in credit.

We do not want anyone to lose out and are thankful for all the hard work staff are putting into this emergency.

You are to log additional hours worked, down the line you can either use as TOIL, but if not operationally possible we will arrange for overtime payments.

What happens if we must close services?

Each service and area of the business has updated its business continuity plan, and emergency procedure and communication will be provided by your manager via the central communications team.

We do not wish to cause any worry in sending this guidance. We are monitoring any developments to the situation and will provide updates where necessary.

Phones

Not everyone has a work mobile or soft phone, in the circumstances all staff can use their personal mobiles and any expense will be reimbursed.

Please divert office phones to your mobile phone when working remotely.

Display Screens

The new SMART office screens are too fragile to be moved – staff cannot remove them for remote working.

We are trying to locate some spare old screens and any requests will be coordinated through the IT Helpdesk.