

# Coronavirus Policy



BrighterLife Care

## Introduction

At what is a very worrying time for us all, we understand that keeping our employees, service users and families safe is our highest priority. We have therefore outlined below the procedures to be followed by employees, service users and parents/carers for the protection of everyone involved. These procedures will remain in place whilst the Coronavirus Pandemic remains a threat to our health and society, and until the UK government advises on any relaxation of protective measures.

Please support us in implementing these measures in the interests of safety for all children, young people, adults, and families we provide care for, employees and their families.

## Purpose

To ensure that the organisation remains up to date and is able to respond in the event of a member of staff, Service User or contact, contracting the virus (SARS coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2)) which results in the disease COVID-19

To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that the organisation is registered to provide:

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Registration and Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

## Scope

The following roles may be affected by this policy:

- All staff
- Senior Management

The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:

- All Service Users

The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:

- Family
- External health and social care professionals



## Objectives

- To ensure that safe, effective procedures are in place with staff and Service Users having information in an accessible format.
- As the spread of the virus is resulting in response requirements changing daily, BrighterLife Care will ensure that it stays up to date with reliable sources of information and has the flexibility to respond when required.
- We recognise that the outbreak of a new strain of Coronavirus SARS coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) which results in the disease COVID-19 is a fast-moving situation. The WHO has stated that it is now characterised as a pandemic. As care providers, ensuring robust infection control and business continuity plans form part of preparing business at for any events that can cause disruption to the normal business.
- We will ensure that staff are aware and understand the importance of pandemic preparedness. We understand that business continuity planning involves all aspects of the business and to be effective we must work together to ensure that a safe and effective service can be maintained.
- We understand that we have a responsibility for ensuring that staff follow good infection control and prevention techniques and that we support Service Users with this too. BrighterLife Care will ensure that staff have access to reliable information to reduce anxiety and dispel any myths and inaccurate information that may cause worry or distress to staff, Service Users or the wider public.

## Procedure

### Coronavirus Policy

BrighterLife Care recognises that the WHO has declared COVID-19 can be characterised as a Pandemic on 11 March 2020. We will ensure that we review the Coronavirus (Pandemic) Policy and Procedure documents and will complete all checks to ensure that we are prepared to the best of our ability and that robust COVID continuity plans are in place.

### Reducing the Risk of Contracting or Spreading the Virus

We will ensure that staff follow the WHO and NHS advice to reduce the risk of contracting the virus and the risk of spreading it. The following procedures must be followed.

- if you have symptoms of coronavirus infection (COVID-19), however mild, do not leave your home for 7 days from when your symptoms started. (See ending isolation section below for more information)
- this action will help protect others in your community while you are infectious
- plan ahead and ask others for help to ensure that you can successfully stay at home
- ask your employer, friends and family to help you get the things you need to stay at home
- stay at least 2 metres (about 3 steps) away from other people in your home if possible
- sleep alone, if possible
- wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser
- stay away from vulnerable individuals, such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions, as much as possible



- you do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact NHS 111 online. If you have no internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999

### **Handwashing**

Staff should wash their hands:

- Before leaving home
- On arrival at work
- After using the toilet
- After touching pets
- After breaks and sporting activities
- Before food preparation
- After using public transport
- Before eating any food, including snacks
- Before leaving work
- On arrival at home
- Before leaving work
- On arrival at home

### **Confidentiality**

Staff will follow confidentiality and GDPR policies and procedures to ensure that the details of staff involved in caring for Service Users with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is kept confidential. Staff must also respect each other's confidentiality and take care not to inadvertently share information when using social media.

Where staff are suspected or confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, their personal details should be treated as confidential, as they would be for any other Service User.

### **Safe Staffing**

In the event of an outbreak of COVID-19, where staff are moved from sessions to support work on COVID-19, assessments should be made on the ability to continue to deliver safe and effective care in the services affected. Steps should be taken to mitigate any risks resulting from staff moving sessions/ arranged support. We will as part of pandemic preparedness assess whether any staff need additional training, support or require a DBS check. We will use any safe staffing calculating tools to assess the level of need within the business.

### **Reducing the Risk of Stigmatization**

Stigma occurs when people negatively associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a specific population. In the case of COVID-19, there are an increasing number of reports of public stigmatization against people from areas affected by the



epidemic, this means that people are being labelled, stereotyped, separated, and/or experience loss of status and discrimination because of a potential negative affiliation with the disease. We will ensure that staff understand the importance of preventing and addressing social stigma by making sure facts are available to staff and Service Users

### **Identifying Possible Cases of the Virus**

Whether an individual has travelled to a high-risk area is no longer an indicator of whether a person is at risk of coronavirus. If a person has the following symptoms

- A temperature of 37.8 degrees
- A new cough

Then they must stay at home and self-isolate for 7 days from the onset of the symptoms. Unless the individual feels very unwell, they do not need to contact 111.

### **Actions if a Service User Meets the Criteria and Displays Symptoms**

If a Service User complains of symptoms and has either travelled from an infected area or has been in contact with others, staff must make sure;

- The Service User is safe and withdraw from the location
- They immediately wash their hands and avoid touching the face, nose, mouth or eyes
- They contact 111 for advice or 999 if an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk)
- They contact the Manager as soon as possible and advise of the situation. This must be a high priority
- They do not attend any other Service Users, visit their GP or travel in the community until advice is sought
- Whilst they wait for advice from NHS 111 or an ambulance to arrive, staff should remain at least 2 metres from other people. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in a bag then throw the tissue in the bin. If they do not have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow
- If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available. This will apply only to the period of time while waiting for transport to hospital.
- We will ask all families to follow the **COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance** should a service user, parent or any other member of their household display symptoms or discover that they have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus. **Please cancel support as soon as possible and contact the test and trace service to request a test as soon as possible.**
- **NHS Test & Trace:** [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) Telephone: 119
- ***Service users will not be able to access BrighterLife Care Services for the duration of the recommended isolation period or until a negative test result is received. As per our fees policy, full fees will still apply during this absence.***
- If you are not comfortable with having your child/ adult tested or if they are displaying only minor symptoms that would normally be associated with a cough and cold, we will still request that your child / adult is kept at home for **10**



days for the protection of everyone else who accesses BLC services and the safety of employees.

*Again, as per our fees policy, full fees will still apply during this absence.*

- In the event of any confirmed or suspected case of coronavirus I must fulfil my obligations as a care provider to follow current Government procedures and to support the governments test and trace system. This may require passing your details onto relevant organisations.

#### **Action if a Member of Staff Reports Symptoms**

- We will contact the Local Authority and the local health protection team for advice. Public Health England will provide advice to the person infected and will carry out all contact tracing
- Advice will be given to the member of staff if they need to self-isolate and what action will need to take place for any Service Users that they may have had contact with
- If a member of staff reports that there are concerns about their child, close family, friends who they have had close contact with, the local health protection team must be contacted for advice
- We will ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that records are held in line with Data Protection Act requirements
- In the event of someone who is symptomatic, closure of business is not recommended. We will contact Public Health England (PHE) local Health Protection Team to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on actions that should be taken
- Staff must follow the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure and ensure that the government guidance is followed which states that if an employee or worker needs to self-isolate, they should receive any Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) due to them. We will ensure that staff are made aware of the requirements for 'fit notes' if staff are required to self-isolate for 7 days.

#### **Your Home as Workplace - Cleaning Where There are Confirmed Cases of COVID-19**

The local Health Protection Team will provide advice on cleaning. Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the person has come into contact with must be cleaned including:

- All surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids
- All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones
- Clothing and linen used by the person should be set aside pending assessment of the person by a healthcare professional

#### **Cleaning Where There are Confirmed Cases of COVID -19**

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.



## Raising Concerns

We have effective procedures in place to allow staff to raise any concerns in relation to equipment, policies and processes for managing COVID-19 at the earliest opportunity. All staff must be aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure and be able to raise concerns without any fear and receive timely feedback on their concerns.

## Definitions

**Pandemic** - A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease COVID-19 was characterised as a Pandemic on 11th March 2020

**World Health Organisation** - The World Health Organisation (WHO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations that is concerned with world public health

**COVID-19** - Novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China. The virus was named severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease it causes is called COVID- 19

**Outbreak** - A disease outbreak is the occurrence of disease cases in excess of normal expectancy. The number of cases varies according to the disease-causing agent, and the size and type of previous and existing exposure to the agent

**Social Stigma** - Social stigma in the context of health is the negative association between a person or group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. In an outbreak, this may mean people are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated against, treated separately, and/or experience loss of status because of a perceived link with a disease. Such treatment can negatively affect those with the disease, as well as their caregivers, family, friends and communities. People who do not have the disease but share other characteristics with this group may also suffer from stigma. The current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours against people of certain ethnic backgrounds as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus

**The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020** - The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 were put in place with immediate effect on 25th February to impose restrictions on any individual considered by health professionals to be at risk of spreading the virus

The regulations apply to any individuals seeking to leave supported isolation before the current quarantine period of 14 days is complete. It will also apply to future cases during the current coronavirus incident where an individual who may be infected or contaminated could present a risk to public health.

## Key Facts – Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- The current understanding is that the virus does not survive on surfaces for longer than 72 hours. Regular cleaning of frequently touched hard surfaces and hands will therefore help to reduce the risk of infection.



- Washing your hands often, with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if handwashing facilities are not available - this is particularly important after taking public transport
- We will make sure you have the facts about the new coronavirus or the disease COVID-19 from a reliable source. Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care are 2 examples.
- We will have an up to date business COVID continuity plan in place.
- It's important that Service Users are made aware of how they can help limit the spread of COVID-19 and that they understand the signs and symptoms of the disease
- We will need to work closely with the Local Authority, health providers, suppliers and other agencies to ensure that there is continuity and consistency of care

## **Further Information & Key Facts**

### **Key facts – people effected by the service**

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- A coronavirus is a type of virus. Coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. This new virus is called SARS coronavirus 2. The disease it causes is called COVID-19.
- Whilst the roll out of Vaccines are increasing and those who receive our services are taking this opportunity, it is essential that service users and families continue to; Washing your hands soap and water will help prevent the spread of the disease. Try not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Its ok to feel worried or anxious. BrighterLife care will expect all families/ service users to complete an assessing needs questionnaire to make sure you will get the care that you need.
- We will work with families in whatever way we can to support and reassure them through this difficult period.
- We encourage parents to share any concerns and speak to us in confidence if required. It is understandable that parents may feel worried about the safety of their child / adult and family and may be dealing with these anxieties on top of work and financial pressures.
- We will do whatever we can to reassure all service users and help them to feel at ease. It is understandable that they may be a little unsettled if they have been at home with their parents for a number of weeks and some may need extra support to settle back into routine.
- We will take time to listen to children and talk to them about any worries they might have using words that they will understand.



- Communication - With social distancing measures in place, it may not always be possible to chat with parents face- to-face. All employees will therefore try to use digital methods for communication as much as possible to keep parents informed. We will also use these digital methods to keep parents informed of any other important information or any changes to services.

### **Hours, Fees and Attendance**

- Hours of care for all service users will resume as per the conditions agreed in our Service contract.
- If you would prefer to keep your child / adults at home in the present circumstances, or require less hours of care at this time than agreed in our contract, please let us know as soon as possible. Full fees will be charged for hours of attendance and for non-attendance where no alternative arrangement has been previously agreed. *A retainer fee may be required in order to and reserve your child's/ adults place and to ensure the sustainability of my business.*
- Should you require additional hours of care, please discuss this with us as we may be able to assist so long as we continue to adhere to Government Guidelines.
- Any services received during the Coronavirus pandemic will incur a PPE charge of 3% based on hours supported. For further information regarding PPE charges please request a copy of our **PPE information Sheet**

Please be aware that your place is at risk if payments are not kept up to date. If you have any concerns regarding payment or the terms of our service contract, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me.

**Failure to follow government advice, official health guidelines, or refusing to support us with implementing the protective measures outlined in this policy will be taken very seriously and may result in the immediate termination of our service contract.**

We will continue to keep up to date with the latest government and health advice and where necessary update procedures and notify families of any changes.

If you have any questions regarding coronavirus management procedures, please do not hesitate to discuss them with us.

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