

**No 42**

**COVID-19 (Coronavirus)**

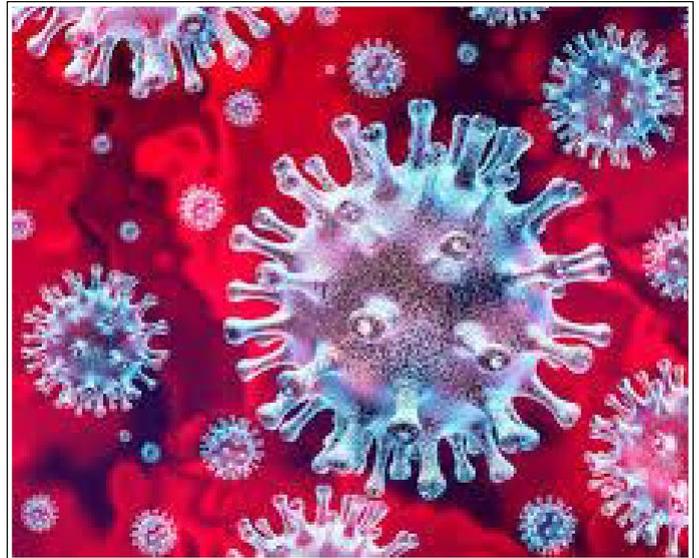
**WHAT IS COVID-19?**

Coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world.

COVID 19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020

The incubation period of COVID 19 is between 2 to 14 days.

This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not been infected.



**HOW IS IT SPREAD?**

Spread of COVID 19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres or less)

with an infected person It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes containing the virus are most likely to be the main means of transmission.

There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID 19:

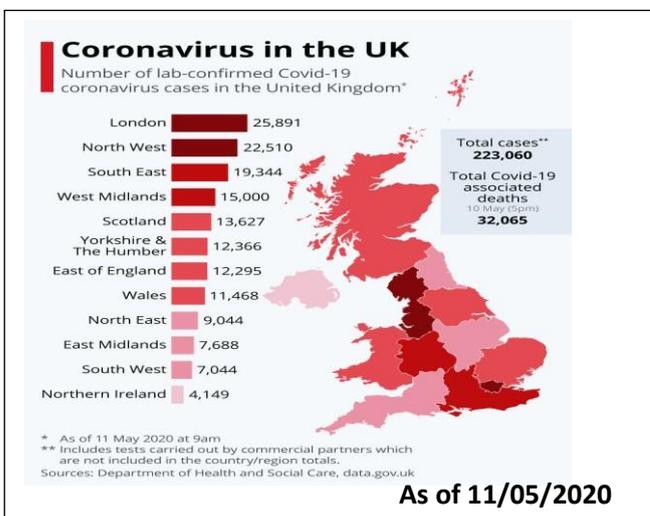
- infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face)

**SIGNS & SYMPTOMS**

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID 19 Infection:

- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- fever
- Aches and pains

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.



**PREVENTING THE SPREAD**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID 19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

Public Health England (PHE) recommends that the following general cold and flu precautions are taken to help prevent people from catching and spreading COVID 19:

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
- 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

If you have had close contact with someone with symptoms then will be asked to self isolate at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case

- they will be actively followed up by the government Health Protection Team
- if they develop new symptoms or their existing symptoms worsen within their 14 day observation period they should call NHS 111 for reassessment
- if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be tested for COVID 19
- if they are unwell at any time within their 14 day observation period and they test positive for COVID 19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated for the infection
- Staff who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions and can continue to attend work.

**HYGIENE**

- Ensure soap and fresh water is readily available and kept topped up at all times.
- Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are unavailable
- Regularly clean the hand washing facilities and check soap and sanitiser levels
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.
- Ensure that all door handles, kettles, microwaves and toasters are cleaned after every use – where this is not possible, remove them from site. Bring pre-prepared meals wherever possible.



**HANDLING PACKAGES AND POST**

Employees should continue to follow existing risk assessments and safe systems of work. There is no perceived increase in risk for handling post or freight from specified areas.

**RUBBISH DISPOSAL**

All waste including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. If there has been a suspected case then the plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and marked for storage until the result is available. If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste.

Should the individual test positive, you will be instructed what to do with the waste.

**ON SITE**General

- Ensure all team members on site are always aware of the 2m distance rule and adhere to this.
- Reduce interaction with non-essential members of the on-site team and members of the public.
- Stagger break times to ensure reduced interaction and therefore risk.

Mobile Teams

- Where possible, single occupancy of cab area will take place
- Where this is not possible 2 operatives can travel in the van cab as long as:
  - The same two operatives are always together, minimising spread
  - Van interior is regularly cleaned and windows are left open to allow air flow
  - Middle seat to remain empty, therefore allowing a distance between occupants
  - Use of face coverings whilst inside the van
- Be mindful of touching your face at all times
- Upon leaving/entering the van, ensure hands are thoroughly washed using soap and water or where not possible hand sanitizer is used.
- It is likely that employees will be coming across more discarded surgical type waste (i.e. disposable masks, gloves) The vast majority will have likely been used as a precautionary measure, but ALL should be treated with caution.
- Never pick up litter with bare hands, use litter pickers, even when emptying bins gloves must be worn
- Clean tools regularly, and the tool storage areas, whether this be a van or a storage unit.
- Ensure you have the correct PPE and plenty of spares allowing the cleaning of one whilst having another in use. Carry hand sanitizer at all times.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

We will be issuing additional documentation regarding specific controls you will be required to adhere to in order to minimize the spread of the Covid-19 virus during your work activities.

This may include:

- Safe Working Policy
- Risk Assessments
- Toolbox Talks
- Government Guidance Documents
- Safety Posters