

Updated coronavirus policy

Introduction

Bramley Elderly Action is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees, volunteer, members and the general public. This policy describes the updated measures that we have put in place protect people from the risks of coronavirus outbreak and the duties that fall upon all of us.

Our initial response to the pandemic was to 'keep calm, minimise risk and continue to provide support where we can. Ten weeks into the lockdown, our response is now 'to minimise risk, move things forward and help create a better normal'.

This updated policy will provide guidance as to how we are going to minimise risk at this point in time. If we are to move forward from lockdown in the coming weeks and months, it is essential that we can say with conviction that we have done everything that can reasonably be minimised risk to the max. This will help people to make an informed decision / risk assessment. We all have a responsibility to minimise risk and to make informed decisions. This policy will be updated as required. It relates to BEA's current service delivery. Any additional services delivered will be risk assessed in line with amended policy and in response to government guidelines.

Scope

This policy applies to all BEA employees, volunteers and users of our services / activities.

Infection control

All staff, volunteers and service users must follow government guidelines on infection control whilst at work and in their daily lives. This includes:

- regularly cleaning their hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- when coughing and sneezing, covering mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue, throwing this tissue away immediately and washing their hands
- avoiding close contact with anyone who has a fever and cough.
- Maintaining social distancing advice
- The use of PPE (gloves, face masks, visors)
- Not taking part in activities or attending work outside of home if tested positive, or if you have been in known contact with someone who has tested positive

Notices promoting infection control best practice will be displayed throughout the workplace. Bramley Elderly Action will ensure that adequate stocks of soap and hand sanitiser solutions are available in the workplace. All staff and volunteers are responsible for maintaining high levels of hygiene, and for passing on the latest Public Health information to volunteers and members.

As all of the buildings we use have hand-washing facilities, we will not be issuing hand sanitisers for staff, volunteer or members. All staff and visitors to our buildings must wash hands on entry and exit, and must wash hands regularly during their time in the building.

Government guidance states that hand-washing is still the best way to prevent the spread of the virus so we will prioritise this ahead of supplying hand santisers.

Unless critical, we are temporarily suspending staff and volunteer visits to older people's homes apart from business critical welfare visits and socially distanced deliveries. We need to be extra vigilant when contacting older people that have long-term health conditions.

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Any deliveries or socially distanced visits made to members in line with our current services must be agreed in advance with your line manager and fall within agreed risk assessment. PPE is available to all staff and volunteers and must be used as directed. Social distancing rules must be observed.

PPE (gloves, face masks) are provided for welfare visits and deliveries. This must be used as agreed. Wearing gloves is mandatory. Face masks or visors should be worn in our buildings if/when there are groups of more than one person in a confined space.

Where visits or deliveries involve members of the public who are symptomatic with COVID-19 please refer to line manager for risk assessment. Shopping service deliveries to symptomatic people must only be carried out with PPE, social distancing. Transfer of payment will be made by bank transfer or held on account to reduce risk of cross infection.

Staff must log any information provided by our members regarding their health situation in relation to COVID-19.

Staff working with volunteers must share the guidance we are following regarding observance of social distancing, infection control and hygiene. Volunteers must not visit members inside their home. As ambassadors of the organisation, we ask our volunteers to respect the guidelines we are following, and encourage our members to do the same.

Personal and Business travel

Following the development of Coronavirus we have decided that we should all avoid non-essential travel to help manage the risk of exposure. Non-essential travel outside your normal journey to work. We encourage you to hold virtual / telephone meetings where possible and think creatively about how best to minimise travel while ensuring minimal disruption to the service we provide. This should not impact business critical activity.

We ask you to use your discretion to define business-critical but as a general guide, the following activities are business critical:

- providing essential support to members (e.g. an agreed welfare visit)
- time critical activity that generates the income required to fund our service
- key external meetings that support the above which cannot take place virtually / by telephone

If in doubt, please check with your line manager

Management will put in place a plan to ensure there is cover for business-critical activity. This may involve staff undertaking duties that they do not normally undertake.

We understand that you may well have travel or holiday plans in the near future that will take you to areas identified as high risk. We would ask you to consider whether travelling to those areas is the best course of action at the moment, not least because you may find it difficult to return home. This would potentially lead to a period of unpaid absence from work. If you do intend to travel to a high-risk area soon, please inform your line manager immediately.

Please keep up to date with the government guidance on high risk areas and self-isolation.

Currently, travel within the UK is unrestricted so business travel in this country will continue as normal although we will review that pending further advice from the government. Again, if you have any specific concerns in this regard, please speak to your line manager.

Staff are encouraged to take annual leave and are allowed to do so by booking in advance with line manager. Staff are invited to take individual days, short breaks, and standard leave of up to 10 days. Requests for a longer leave period should be put in writing to your line manager and will be considered. We continue to aim to support requests for holiday wherever possible in line with the needs of our service users. We will follow any Government guidance on the carry forward of annual leave.

If you contract the virus

You should take medical advice as to the length of your absence and the measures required to prevent the spread of the virus. Please keep us updated as to your availability to work. You will be granted 'special medical leave' and receive full pay. Statutory Sick Pay may form part of this payment. Again, we will review evidential and sick pay requirements in line with any changes the government may make in this regard.

Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes.

People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus.

If those in isolation develop symptoms, they can book a test at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119. If they test positive, they must continue to stay at home for 7 days or until their symptoms have passed. If they test negative, they must complete the 14-day isolation period. Members of their household will not have to stay at home unless the person identified becomes symptomatic, at which point they must also self-isolate for 14 days to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus. Anyone with a new, continuous cough, a high temperature or a change in their sense of smell or taste is asked to immediately report these symptoms and book a test at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

If you become ill at work and think it might be coronavirus, it is important to self-isolate immediately wherever you are and notify your manager. If possible, please arrange for someone to collect you by private transport.

Staff should not work, come into work, or have any contact with the people we work with if they have any symptoms of COVID-19. These include a high temperature, new persistent dry cough, loss of taste/smell. Staff experiencing these symptoms should self-isolate and inform their line manager straight away.

Self-isolation

If you have been advised to self-isolate by your GP, another medical professional or via the 111 Helpline/online service, or you are following advice from Public Health England, NHS National Services Scotland or Public Health Wales, this absence will **not** count as sick leave and our normal sickness absence procedure will **not** apply. You will be granted 'special medical leave' and receive full pay. Statutory Sick Pay may form part of this payment. We will be reviewing this regularly in order to take into account any updated guidance from the Government. If you are considering self-isolating, please check the latest government guidance on their website as this may change as the situation develops.

If it is that you are self-isolating in accordance with the above and are not ill, we can consider as an alternative whether it is possible for you to work from home. If not, we may be able to agree a period of paid annual leave as a further alternative.

Homeworking

Given the current situation, a period of homeworking is necessary. There may be certain roles which are carried out from within the work environment. We are ensuring that staff are working from home where they can. Where staff cannot work from home due to other responsibilities, please discuss with your line manager. In some circumstances it may be possible to work from one of our offices, pending risk assessment. Staff are not allowed to use the offices for work, or visit the offices, unless agreed in advance with your line manager and the building manager.

Staff must comply with health and safety advice that has been provided regarding home working.

Staff may request equipment and tools necessary to enable safe and satisfactory home-working such as an office chair or computer headphones.

Staff may claim for agreed expenses relating to home-working such as:

- Mobile phone call costs
- Contribution to wifi / broadband use
- Travel expenses required to deliver work

Please use the digital expense forms provided to you and provide a receipt.

Emergency dependant leave

If you are unable to attend work due to the need to arrange care for a dependant (for example, if your child's school or nursery is closed), we will agree with you a period of homeworking – depending on whether that fits in with your role and the needs of the dependant.

What do I do if schools are closed and I need to provide childcare?

If school / nursery closures mean that you cannot carry out your duties, please speak to your line manager to arrange alternate working arrangements while you handle childcare responsibilities.

Emergency or other leave

Emergency or other leave for staff as outlined in the organisation's staff handbook can be requested. Please refer to your staff handbook and discuss with your line manager.

Sending you home or not requiring you to attend work

There may be circumstances where it is necessary to send you home from work or request that you do not attend your workplace (for example if we are concerned that you may have been exposed to the virus). If this is necessary, full pay will be granted for any period of leave.

If you become unwell during this time or are advised to self-isolate in accordance with the "self-isolation" section referred to above, you should follow government guidance on the next steps and follow our usual absence reporting procedure. It is critical that staff do not attend work or come into contact with others if they have developed symptoms of COVID-19. You must report this to your line manager straight away. The organisation has a duty of care to disclose this information to staff, volunteers or members you have had contact with.

Temporary closure of the service

As the situation develops, it may be that the charity is no longer able to operate, even with employees working from home. If we are forced to close part of the business temporarily, it may be necessary to agree a period of short time working. Please rest assured that we will do all that is possible to avoid this. However, if that becomes necessary we will discuss with you further in that regard at the relevant time.

Buildings

Our community buildings remain closed apart from essential services and activities.

Use of those buildings by staff is only by prior arrangement with line manager and building manager.

Members of the public using the buildings for essential services will be required to follow our safety guidelines and agreed risk assessment.

All staff and members of the public must wash their hands on entry and exit.

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 must not enter the buildings.

This policy will be reviewed in line with Government advice. Our financial circumstances will be reviewed by the Board in line with the next Board meeting (June 2020).

Compliance with this policy will help the organisation to sign off our compliance with the Governments 5 Steps to Safer Working Together (see below)

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Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

FIVE STEPS TO SAFER WORKING TOGETHER

- ✓ We have carried out a **COVID-19 risk assessment** and shared the results with the people who work here
- ✓ We have **cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures** in line with guidance
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **help people work from home**
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **maintain a 2m distance** in the workplace
- ✓ Where people cannot be 2m apart, we have done everything practical to **manage transmission risk**

Employer _____

Date