



# COVID 19 POLICY

FEBRUARY 2021: VERSION 1

## ABSTRACT

Peterlee Town Council provides this COVID 19 Policy for employees to use as a guide for any COVID 19 related issues, queries and processes.

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CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER

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Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided  
and in greyscale

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## Policy Brief & Purpose

This policy includes the measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. You are kindly requested to follow all these rules diligently, to sustain a healthy and safe workplace in this unique environment. It's important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions. We assure you that we will always treat your private health and personal data with high confidentiality and sensitivity.

This coronavirus (COVID-19) policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines. If so, we will update you as soon as possible by email.

## Scope

This COVID 19 policy applies to all employees of Peterlee Town Council.

## Policy Elements

Outlined is the required actions employees should take to protect themselves and their co-workers from a potential coronavirus infection. more information can be found at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-and-support)

## Sick Leave Arrangements:

- If you have cold symptoms, such as cough/sneezing/fever, or feel poorly, you must contact your line manager, book a COVID test and stay at home until the results have been confirmed, where possible work from home or request sick leave.
- If you have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, you can return to the office only after your self-isolation is finished and you have fully recovered, a copy of the self-isolation confirmation must be sent to your line manager, which will be sent to you from the NHS either by text or email.
- You are entitled to sick pay during any absence which is set out in the NJC national Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service.

## Work From Home Requests:

- If you are feeling ill, but you are able to work, you can request to work from home.

- If you've been in close contact with someone infected by COVID-19, with high chances of being infected yourself, contact 111/119 and self-isolate, where possible work from home. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.
- If you're a parent and you have to stay at home with your children, request work from home. Follow up with your manager to make work arrangements and set expectations.
- If you need to provide care to a family member infected by COVID-19, you will also need to contact 111/119 and self-isolate for the number of days stated on the isolation note. If during this time you develop symptoms, you must take a test and if positive self-isolate from the date of the symptoms starting. If the test is negative you continue to self-isolate from the first isolation note given.
- If you are absent due to a positive test and you have COVID 19 and still feel unwell at the end date of self-isolating, contact your line manager and request sick leave until you feel well enough to return to work, or if you are able, work from home.
- If you are identified as a contact and asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, including by the NHS COVID-19 app you must follow the instructions given to you.
- Failure to comply with self-isolation may result in a fine, starting from £1,000. Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that anyone under 18 self-isolates if they test positive for COVID-19 and are contacted by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate.
- You must follow government guidance at all times and keep up to date with the regular changes that are made.

## Social Distancing

To reduce the risk of catching or spreading coronavirus, you should minimise time spent with people you do not live with, and when around other people ensure that you are two metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble. Social distancing is essential to stop the spread of the virus, as it is more likely to spread when people are close together. An infected person can pass on the virus through talking, breathing, coughing or sneezing even if they do not have any symptoms.

When with people you do not live with, you should also avoid physical contact; being close and face-to-face; and shouting or singing close to them.

Where you cannot stay 2 metres apart you should stay more than 1 metre apart and take additional steps to stay safe. For example:

- Wear a face covering.
- On public transport and in many indoor spaces, you must wear a face covering by law, unless you are exempt.
- Go outdoors, where it is safer and there is more space if indoors, make sure rooms have a flow of fresh air by keeping windows and doors open.
- You do not need to be socially distanced from anyone in your household, meaning the people you live with.
- You also do not need to be socially distanced from anyone in your support bubble, if you are in one, but maintaining social distance will help reduce transmission.

## Hands. Face. Space.

Approximately 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and could be spreading it without realising it.

It is critical that everybody observes the following key behaviours:

- HANDS - Wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds.
- FACE - Wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- SPACE - Stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors).

## Traveling/Commuting Measures:

- All work trips and events – both domestic and international – will be cancelled/postponed until further notice.
- In-person meetings should be done virtually where possible, especially with non-company parties (e.g. candidate interviews and partners).
- If you normally commute to the office by public transportation and do not have other alternatives, you can request to work from home as a precaution.

- If you are planning to travel voluntarily to a high-risk country with increased COVID-19 cases, we'll ask you to work from home for 14 calendar days. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.

## General Hygiene Rules:

- Wash your hands after using the toilet, before eating, and if you cough/sneeze into your hands (follow the [20-second hand-washing rule](#)). You can also use the sanitizers you'll find around the office and in the corridors.
- Cough/sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow. If you use a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize your hands immediately.
- Open the windows regularly to ensure open ventilation.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands to prevent from getting infected.
- If you find yourself coughing/sneezing on a regular basis, avoid close physical contact with your co-workers and take extra precautionary measures (such as requesting sick leave).
- If moving from office to office, to the kitchen areas, print room or any other areas you must wear a face mask as you may not be 2 metres away from another colleague in the corridors.

## Summary: what you can and cannot do during the national lockdown

You must stay at home. The single most important action we can all take is to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

You should follow this guidance immediately. **This is the law.**

You must not leave or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may leave the home to:

- Shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- Go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home.
- Exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person (in which case you should stay 2m apart). Exercise should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.
- Meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one.
- Seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- Attend education or childcare - for those eligible

If you do leave home for a permitted reason, you should always stay local - unless it is necessary to go further, for example to go to work. Stay local means stay in the village, town, or part of the city where you live.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you are advised to only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. We recommend that you do not attend work.

**If you do not follow the rules/law you are putting yourself, friends and family at greater risk of contracting and passing on Covid-19 and should you come to work you put your colleagues at risk. Please think of others!**

**If you are found to have broken the law in this respect, under the council's code of conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action.**

# Frequently asked questions and answers

## Q1. How can I protect myself?

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth.
- Keep your distance – 2 metres apart from others.
- Avoid crowds.
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces.
- Avoid indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors as much as possible.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Monitor Your Health Daily
- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.

## Q2. What do I do if I am sick?

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Isolate yourself from other members of your family to prevent spread to them and the people that they may have contact with, like grandparents.
- Even if you don't feel sick, you can spread COVID-19 to others.
- Get care immediately if you are having emergency warning signs, like trouble breathing, pain or pressure in chest.

## Q3. How do I get a test?

- You can ring 111/119 and request a test if you have symptoms.
- You must self-isolate until you get the test results

**Q4. What are the most common symptoms of COVID 19 to watch for?**

- Fever
- Cough
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea/vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

**Q5. What is contact tracing?**

- Contact tracing has been used for decades by state and local health departments to slow or stop the spread of infectious diseases.
- Contact tracing slows the spread of COVID-19 by letting people know they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and should monitor their health for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Helping people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 get tested.
- Asking people to self-isolate if they have COVID-19 or self-quarantine if they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19

During contact tracing, the health department staff **will not ask you for:**

- Money
- Social Security number
- Bank account information
- Salary information
- Credit card numbers

Any queries regarding this Policy please contact either Ian Morris, Town Clerk, [ian.morris@petelree.gov.uk](mailto:ian.morris@petelree.gov.uk) or Janet Hugill, Corporate Services Manager, [Janet.hugill@peterlee.gov.uk](mailto:Janet.hugill@peterlee.gov.uk) or telephone 0191 5862491.

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