

Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 (18.03.2020) this document will be added to on a regular basis. Please scroll to the end to find the latest additions.

- **Overview**
- **Property Management**
- **Service Providers/Contractors**
- **Asset Management considerations**

Overview

Question: What is COVID-19 and why is it of concern now?

Answer: Towards the end of December 2019, authorities in Wuhan, Hubei province, announced a cluster of cases of pneumonia. On 8 January, a new coronavirus "2019-novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)" (now referred to as COVID-19) was identified as the cause of the illness. As of 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus an international emergency. As of 11 March 2020, COVID-19 has been declared a Pandemic. Current details of confirmed cases and locations can be found on relevant authorities' websites (e.g., World Health Organization, Center for Disease Control, local government agencies, etc.)

Question: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Answer: Symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulty. People with underlying health conditions appear to be at higher risk for severe disease.

Question: Where can I find the latest updates and information on COVID-19?

Answer:

- Public Health England have a number of resources. Guidance for business and employers can be found [here](#).
- For international updates, please go to the World Health Organization website.
- The government [UK response plan](#)
- [Government advice – at risk areas](#)
- [NHS advice](#)

Question: How is coronavirus spread?

Answer: In general, coronaviruses spread from one person to another in the same way as other respiratory infections, including colds and flu - through infected respiratory droplets. The infected person expels these when they cough, sneeze, or talk. Others can get the disease via contact (direct or indirect) with these contaminated droplets.

Property Management

Question: There has been a suspected case of COVID-19 in the area demised to an occupier. What should I do?

Answer: According to the latest guidance published by Public Health England (25/02/2020) For contacts of a suspected case in the workplace, no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for COVID19 are awaited. There is no need to close the workplace or send other staff home at this point. Most possible cases turn out to be negative.

Therefore, until the outcome of test results is known there is no action that the workplace needs to take. However, prudent measures related to enhanced level cleaning and hygiene measures for the occupier would be recommended, specifically to localised areas the suspected case visited. This would include common areas and touchpoints.

Question: There has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the area demised to an occupier. What should I do?

Answer: According to the latest guidance published by Public Health England (25/02/2020)

- The management team of the office or workplace will be contacted by the PHE local Health Protection Team to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- A risk assessment of each setting will be undertaken by the Health Protection Team with the lead responsible person. Advice on the management of staff and members of the public will be based on this assessment. The Health Protection Team (HPT) will also be in contact with the case directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the case to provide them with appropriate advice.
- Advice on cleaning of communal areas such as offices or toilets will be given by the Health Protection Team (HPT).
- The site team will work with the HPT and immediately notify a member of the MS COVID-19 Taskforce so that we can help prepare correspondence with other occupiers and to you as client.
- Our cleaning supply chain has been preparing for the need to undertake deep clean and disinfection as directed by the Health Protection Team

Question: An occupier is asking for more specific advice on handling coronavirus in their building or demised areas. What should I tell them?

Answer: Clients may mandate a different set of measures or procedures to the property owner/managing agents own. If this happens, first compare procedures, and then:

- Where the client's requirements are more stringent it is recommended to adopt their measures where possible.
- Where the client's requirements are less stringent, discuss further and agree a standard to work to.
- Where the procedures conflict with each other, work together to deliver an agreed standard.

Question: If the building needs to close in order to carry out a disinfection, who makes that decision?

Answer: The decision to evacuate a building really should come from the PHE local Health Protection Team. This decision may need to happen very quickly so it's important to escalate this decision to the most appropriate person immediately if there is an imminent risk issue on site.

Service partners/contractors

Maintain communications with service partners and contractors, inquire about their business continuity plans, communicate client requirements or mandates, and request support with in-scope services (e.g., increased cleaning frequencies).

Question: What should we be telling our service partners/contractors about what they should be doing to prepare and respond?

Answer: It is good practice for suppliers to be reviewing their own plans for business continuity, communicating illness prevention practices with their employee teams, which may include additional cleaning and preventive measures.

Asset Management considerations

Observations from the Asset Management Committee meeting (11.03.20)

- An increase in requests for rent holidays, reductions and changes to payment terms (to monthly)
- From Asia, colleagues reporting impacts eg. Shortage in labour and materials for projects.
- Implementing Tax holidays in some jurisdictions.
- Reduced hours for shopping centres in Italy. *
- Increased cleaning.
- Events cancelled/postponed.
- Work closely with property management teams.

** At the time of the meeting, Italian centres were open for trading. Restrictions have now been placed on trading with only pharmaceutical and food outlets open.*

- Construction refurbishments & development & shop fitting deferred/delayed: materials availability, parts can't be delivered on time, worker travel restriction, - causing delays
- Tenants concerned about declining footfall & sales trading figures, notably F&B, cinemas, gyms, leisure uses.
- Collating feedback on retailer plans – reported that Primark will close store for 14 days if any staff are tested positive.
- Restrictions on personnel – no attendance to events, travel etc.
- On site staff – issues have surfaced on ability to work remotely due to outdated equipment onsite (ADSL).
- Footfall down links directly to turnover rents. Bicester Village reported footfall decline of 40%
- Comment that Business Continuity plans are not devised for long term use.
- Building insurance –check business interruption policies, some policies will cover closure and others won't and others will be limited and is dependent on government's decision.
- The supply chain will recover.
- Legal perspective: retailers with international interests instructing to look at exit strategies.
- Look at hardship policy and concessionary arrangements.