

Guidance for those providing services to someone who is unable or unwilling to self-isolate

This information is correct at time of issue [25/03/2020]

This advice is intended for those providing residential services to someone who has the symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) but is unable or unwilling to follow self-isolation instructions.

This may include service users with learning difficulties, dementia, or multiple complex needs such as substance addiction and mental ill health. Some service users may be prepared to remain onsite but not self-isolate from other residents, while other service users may decide to leave the site.

You know your service and service users best – in particular, you are best placed to judge which measures below are likely to be practical and which may do more harm than good.

Keep your service users up-to-date and, where possible, enable them to make informed choices

- Your service users may not have access to the same range of information as you. Clear, up-to-date verbal briefings, leaflets and/or posters can help inform them of the national situation, what this means for them, and how best they can protect themselves and others. Easy read versions are also available (See resources at the end of this guidance for leaflets/posters.)
- Where possible, provide a dedicated bathroom for the symptomatic person or group of symptomatic people
- If this is not possible, give service users sharing bathroom and/or kitchen facilities with the symptomatic person priority access to sanitisers and cleaning products, and up-to-date information about how to use them.

Ensure regular cleaning of shared spaces that the service user continues to enter

- Encourage frequent handwashing for 20 seconds with soap and water for all who use shared spaces. Provide support with handwashing for those who need it.
- Arrange regular cleaning of shared spaces, especially hard surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Make essential shared spaces as easy to clean as possible. This may involve temporary removal of items (eg kettles from kitchens) to ensure surfaces are quick and easy to wipe down.
- Ensure all shared spaces are well-ventilated, preferably by an open window.
- Stay up to date on cleaning guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>).

Limit access to shared spaces where possible

- For non-essential shared spaces, close these or limit access. If a shared space is a thoroughway, remove or cover seating/resources to discourage service users from congregating.
- In larger buildings, consider if it is possible to restrict access between different areas, so you can reduce the amount of mixing that service users do.

Limit social contacts

- Reduce the amount of face to face contact with support or healthcare workers through the provision of personal (or frequently cleaned) phones.
 - Ensure staff and volunteers who fall into vulnerable groups (see guidance below for the definitions of vulnerable groups) are able to work elsewhere and are fully informed.

Consider the following:

- 1) Could the service user be persuaded to self-isolate?

If appropriate, discuss with the service user why they are leaving their room / the premises, and whether their needs can be met onsite. Consider whether service users can be offered incentives – such as food or laundry services – to comply. For service users with alcohol or drug dependency, we are aware of this issue and are working as a system on solutions. In the meantime, please contact your local drugs and alcohol service if you need to discuss this.

- 2) Could any other residents with underlying health conditions or those over 70 years old be temporarily re-located?

Please see guidance for vulnerable groups at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

Some service users may fall into the “extremely vulnerable” category, who require additional shielding measures. Please note that at time of writing this includes those with severe COPD, which is more common in homeless populations. Please see the guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

- 3) Should you close part or all of a site to new entries?

Please discuss with your commissioner and the London Coronavirus Response Cell (0300 303 0450, LCRC@phe.gov.uk or phe.lcrc@nhs.net) if you are considering this step, which should be weighed against the likely consequences of clients not having access to your services. Contact your local public health team if you require additional public health input on this.

Use of emergency powers

Under public health legislation, PHE has powers to test and isolate individuals in limited circumstances. However, these are very much a last resort. If you believe you have a case where these powers might need to be invoked, please contact Public Health England to discuss (London Coronavirus Response Cell 0300 303 0450, LCRC@phe.gov.uk or phe.lcrc@nhs.net). In general, it is accepted that we can only do our best to support individuals to follow guidance and to take measures to protect those around them where this is not possible.

Resources

Easy read guidance from PHE

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874281/COVID-19_easy_read.pdf and MenCap <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus>

PHE cleaning guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

PHE guidance for hostels: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-services-for-people-experiencing-rough-sleeping>

PHE guidance for care homes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-residential-care-provision>

PHE stay at home guidance for everyone: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

PHE stay at home guidance if someone has the symptoms of coronavirus:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Doctors of the World have translated the latest NHS Guidance into 26 languages:

<https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/>

Groundswell have produced specific advice for rough sleepers and those in hostels and temporary accommodation: <https://groundswell.org.uk/>

Feedback and suggestions

For feedback or suggestions specific to this document, please contact

katherine.korner@islington.gov.uk. Please do not send queries or requests for support to this address.