

Update: 12.03.2020

**RE: Coronavirus / Covid 19 information and potential action relating to NEDCare services.**

We are writing to give you the latest advice regarding the current Covid 19 (Coronavirus) outbreak, the contingency measures we are taking, and the potential action we may take in the coming days and weeks to minimise risk to our clients and staff.

Our advice comes directly from the latest NHS, Public Health England and Government updates on measures that social care agencies should be taking. We will be reviewing these updates on a daily basis and will update you accordingly, following any changes to the official advice.

Further information is available to you through the national media, NHS 111 telephone services and online.

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We are advised that it remains very unlikely that people receiving care in the community will become infected. It is more likely in residential or hospital settings.

However, current health advice is also that the over 60's should class themselves as high risk and should consider how they can adjust their daily activities to reduce risks of potential infection from Covid-19. In addition, anyone with chest problems, long term conditions or chronic illnesses will also remain at high risk of complications from the virus. This includes many of the people that NEDCare supports.

Public Health England recommends that the best way to reduce any risk of infection for anyone is good hygiene and avoiding direct or close contact (within 2 metres) with any potentially infected person.

Whilst the information surrounding the health risks attached to this virus is being well-publicised at present, NEDCare wishes to reassure our clients, their families and our staff team that the following procedures and contingencies are in place should the virus affect our service.

## **CLIENTS**

What NEDCare will do:

- We will support our clients to respond proportionately to the current advice where possible. Whilst NEDCare provides social care in individual homes, we will also work closely with our healthcare colleagues and seek their advice should the virus become more widespread.
- If a client shows symptoms of coronavirus (cough, difficulty in breathing, fever) we will provide all possible support to ensure that they receive rapid medical attention.

However we may also need to reduce contact with this client to prevent the potential spread of infection. This will not be done without planning and ensuring that medical help and/or alternative support is in place.

- If a client is critically ill and requires an urgent medical attention or ambulance transfer to a hospital, we will inform the ambulance call handler of the potential links to COVID-19.
- Any member of staff supporting a person who is showing symptoms should recommend that the client call NHS 111 from their home, or support them to do so if they are unable to do this independently. Family and friends will be informed if consent for this is given. All possible support will be offered whilst also ensuring that all efforts are made to reduce the spread of infection.
- The NEDCare manager will be contacted ASAP so that a full risk assessment can be undertaken with an infection control specialist, to decide the next course of action.
- In order to protect our clients, the staff team will follow the guidance outlined to them as individuals (See 'staff team' section below) and will follow best practice infection control procedures. This is the primary method of reducing the spread of any infection. This may involve self-isolation of staff if needed.
- Masks:  
During normal day-to-day activities facemasks do not provide protection from respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19, and do not need to be worn by staff. Facemasks are only recommended to be worn by infected individuals when advised by a healthcare worker, to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people.
- If service delivery is compromised (i.e. if available staff numbers drop as a result of the virus) NEDCare will need to prioritise those clients who are most at risk. This may mean that services to those who are able to look after themselves for short periods of time or who have the support of family and neighbours locally will need to be suspended until we have enough staff to resume normal services. This risk will be assessed on a client-by-client basis. If infection of staff does occur, it is essential that they cease work in order to reduce risks of contagion.

## **CLIENT'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

- If family or friends have returned from or been in contact with other people from category 2 countries (see enclosed) then please let us know and avoid visiting your relative/ friend if they are vulnerable. We will update you on any subsequent areas listed by UK Govt in future weeks.)
- Please contact us via the usual office number 01647 279211 for advice if needed. The on-call mobile 07484 656722 should only be used for urgent emergency situations.

## THE STAFF TEAM

### At work:

The staff team are already trained in good infection control practice and will continue to follow usual principles This already includes:

- Regular and thorough handwashing.
- Use of protective gloves and aprons (where required) for personal care.
- Appropriate disposal of gloves and aprons as necessary.

If any member has returned from a Category 2 country in the last 14 days they will notify the senior team at NEDCare. Similarly, if they have come into close contact with anyone returning from these areas, they will take the same action. Our staff follow current advice given by the UK Govt which will be updated daily as advice changes.

### If they are well:

- Staff do not need to avoid contact with other people.
- They and their families do not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities.

### If they become unwell:

- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as we would with other flu viruses.
- Follow the UK Govt home isolation advice sheet (enclosed.)
- Call NHS 111 immediately in order to be assessed by an appropriate specialist in hospital, as quickly as possible.

If an outbreak is suspected or occurs and is linked to either clients or staff, NEDCare will seek guidance from the local Health Protection Team in the South West (details below):

#### **PHE South West Centre HPT (Devon)**

Public Health England, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5NE  
Telephone 0300 303 8162 (option 1, then option 1)  
Out of hours advice 0300 303 8162 (option 1)

Finally, to recap, we are advised that it remains very unlikely that people receiving care in the community will become infected.

By taking the sensible precautions as outlined above, and as will be updated in coming days, weeks and months, we aim to minimise any risk to individuals or disruption to services.

If you have any queries please do contact us during office hours on 01647 279211 for advice if needed. NOTE: The on-call mobile 07484 656722 should only be used for urgent emergency situations.)

With best wishes

The NEDCare Team