



BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

Guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19) related issues for our agency workers

The purpose of this document is threefold:

- to inform agency workers assigned by Mego Employment Ltd to our clients what our policy is with regard to the management of the risks associated with a highly infectious virus
- to provide detailed guidance on how we should adapt our working practices and personal conduct in the work place to minimise the risk of infection happening and/or spreading
- to answer frequently asked questions to help you make better decisions about protecting your personal health and the wellbeing of colleagues at work.

This guidance has been based on the latest guidance provided by Public Health England (PHE), HSE, ACAS and the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC).

What employers are being advised to do

In case coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads more widely in the UK and to help limit this spread, our employer clients have been advised to take the following steps to help protect the health and safety of their staff, agency workers and visitors:

- keep everyone (including agency workers) updated on actions being taken to reduce risks of exposure in the workplace
- make sure managers and employees know how to spot symptoms of coronavirus and are clear on any relevant processes, for example sickness reporting and sick pay, and procedures in case someone in the workplace develops the virus
- make sure there are clean places to wash hands with hot water and soap, and encourage everyone to wash their hands regularly
- provide hand sanitiser and tissues for staff, and encourage you to use them
- consider if any travel planned to affected areas is essential

- consider what other changes to their operational processes and procedures are needed, if any, to better protect their employees and agency workers commensurate with the level of risk
- review official guidance regularly as the Coronavirus outbreak progresses and revise their response/action plans accordingly

What you should do as an agency worker

Check that we at Mego have your up-to-date contact details (phone numbers and email addresses) and Next of Kin contact details on record

Learn how to identify Coronavirus

All agency workers should make themselves aware of the symptoms of the Coronavirus, by visiting NHS 111 online at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/urgent-emergency-care/nhs-111/>.

Symptoms of a Coronavirus infection are:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If you are displaying symptoms of the virus please contact the NHS by dialling 111 and they will advise.

If you have reason to believe that you have been in contact with a person or persons carrying the virus, then you should also contact the NHS on 111 and seek advice.

If NHS 111, PHE or a NHS clinician advises that you should self-isolate, then you should report this to your line manager at work **and** us at Mego by telephone at the earliest opportunity.

If you are required to self-isolate, then please give your line manager **and** us at Mego as many details as possible regarding the people that you have been in contact with over the last 14 days.

If you become unwell at work

If you become unwell in the workplace and have recently come back from an area affected by coronavirus, you should:

- get at least 2 metres (7 feet) away from other people
- go to a room or area behind a closed door, such as an office or meeting room
- avoid touching anything

- cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if you do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow
- use a separate toilet from others, if possible

You should then use your own mobile phone to call either:

- 111, for NHS advice
- 999, if you're seriously ill or injured or your life is at risk

You should tell the operator:

- your symptoms
- which country you've returned from in the last 14 days or how else you may have contracted the virus

If you believe that you may have been in contact with an infected person

- call 111 for NHS advice
- where PHE is managing a suspected outbreak in a school, for example, and your child is a pupil at that school, act on their guidance
- if you are told to self-isolate by NHS clinicians or PHE call your line manager **and** Mego with the minimum delay and tell them what you have been advised to do and, importantly, tell us who you have been in close contact with in your work place so we can act on this information
- if you feel unwell or suspect that you have been in contact with someone who may have Coronavirus (or they have been somewhere where someone has been diagnosed with Coronavirus) and have called 111 but have not been told to self-isolate by NHS clinicians but feel you still should self-isolate then call your line manager **and** Mego without delay and explain your concerns.

The guidance at present is that unless you have been told to self-isolate by 111, PHE or a NHS clinician you should carry on with your life as normal (which includes going to work).

To minimise the chance of becoming infected or of infecting others

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
- flush used tissues down the toilet or put in a bin straight away
- wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds every 2 hours at least. Soap and hot water is best but use the hand sanitiser gel provided if soap and water are not available. See [hand washing guidance](#)
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- do not shake hands or hug anyone
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

- avoid rubbing your eyes and touching parts of your face with your hands (unless they have been recently sanitised)

How sick pay will work for agency workers

Agency workers i.e. people we supply to our clients on assignments who are engaged on our standard PAYE Terms of Engagement/Contract for Services, have different entitlements to those of 'employees' in the legal sense. In the UK your status is that of a 'worker'.

If you have to go into self-isolation

The government has made it clear that if NHS 111, Public Health England (PHE) or a NHS clinician advises an agency worker to self-isolate, you'll be entitled to SSP as long as you meet the eligibility conditions (as defined in current legislation).

Therefore any worker meeting these conditions who becomes unwell or is told by 111, PHE or a NHS clinician to self-isolate should receive SSP. Furthermore, the Government has announced a temporary change to the regulations for those self-isolating which will require SSP to be paid from the 1st day off work rather than the 4th which the regulations presently provide for. Details of when this change will happen have yet to be announced but we expect it to be soon.

Any worker who reports to their client and/or to their Mego Consultant to say they are self-isolating will be asked why they have done this, when and who told them to self-isolate and will also be asked to name all possible contacts both in the work place and outside of work. These details will be recorded to help us and Public Health England track possible contacts who you could have infected if you have been infected.

Agency workers required to self-isolate may have difficulty in getting a fit-note signed-off by a GP after their self-certification period. In such situations we will be flexible and it is likely that we will require you to self-certificate for the full 2 week self-isolation period.

For more information on self-isolation click on this link:

- [self-isolating on GOV.UK](#)

If you are not sick but our client tells you not to come to work

You will most likely not continue to be paid as agency workers only get paid for the hours that they actually work. This is the key difference between being employed on a *contract of employment* and being engaged on a *contract for services* as most agency workers are. However, certain clients may make an

exception in order to retain your skills and offer to pay you whilst you are not at work.

If our employer client needs to close their workplace

Currently it's very unlikely that this will happen. But if this does happen you would most likely not continue to be paid as you only get paid for the hours you actually work. Again, it is possible that certain clients may offer to pay you whilst their work place is closed to retain your skills. Furthermore, we at Mego would do our best to find you alternative work until you can return to your original assignment.

If you need time off work to look after someone

Agency workers can take un-paid time off if they wish, for example:

- if you have children you need to look after or arrange childcare for because their school has closed
- to help your child or another dependant if they're sick, or need to go into isolation or hospital

You would not normally be paid for this absence and we would ask you to give us as much notice as possible in these situations.

If you do not want to come into work

Some people might feel they do not want to go to work if they're afraid of catching Coronavirus. We will always listen to any genuine concerns you may have and try to resolve them to protect your health and safety and that of our client's staff.

If you haven't been told to self-isolate but wish to do so, we will question you as to why you feel the need to self-isolate and suggest that you call 111 for advice. Subsequently, if 111, PHE or a NHS clinician does not tell you to self-isolate but you still do, then you probably would not be eligible for SSP as you would be expected to carry on with your life as normal which would include going to work.

Agency workers can choose not to work for whatever reason but if we or our client feel that your actions are unreasonable or unwarranted then we may choose to replace you on your assignment.

Paid holiday entitlement

If you have accrued paid holiday entitlement, this could be used to cover certain periods of absence but you should speak with your Mego Consultant first to find out how many days you have accrued and not forget that you need to complete a Holiday Request Form which needs to be authorised by our client.

The future

This is a rapidly developing situation and things are likely to get worse before they get better so this guidance will need to be updated as events unfold. We will act immediately to implement new laws and introduce new procedures and guidelines as required so it is incumbent on us all to manage the risks in the work place pro-actively and with a sense of urgency where this is appropriate. But we also need to act proportionately and not over or under react to events as they play out.

There are bound to be occasions where it is difficult to know how best to react or what to do. Therefore, if you are unsure what to do please just call us on 01803 840844.

Chris Leonard

MD Mego Employment Ltd

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