



## CORONAVIRUS Q&A

### General

#### **What is the current situation on Coronavirus in the UK?**

For the UK in general, Public Health England (PHE) states that this is a rapidly evolving situation. They are monitoring it carefully. The current risk to the UK population is moderate, according to PHE.

#### **What are the symptoms?**

PHE England states on their website: "Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease."

#### **How does it spread?**

According to Public Health England, because it's a new illness, it is not known exactly how it spreads from person to person. But, similar viruses spread by cough droplets or sneeze droplets. These droplets fall on people in the vicinity. They can be directly inhaled or picked up on the hands and transferred when someone touches their face.

#### **What guidance are you providing to colleagues?**

We take your health and safety very seriously. Please use the guidance in this Q&A and from Public Health England. We are doing so in line with guidance from Public Health England. With all mail handling and other roles, we are recommending;

- Good hand hygiene is maintained to minimise the risk of any infection.
- Disposable gloves are made available to anyone on request through their line manager
- Carry disposable tissues. Dispose of the tissue carefully - "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it"
- We already provide antiseptic wipes for handheld shared items including PDAs, finger scanners and also multi-use keyboards.

Other tips include:

- Always wash hands before eating
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Do not share snacks from packets or bowls that others are dipping their fingers into.
- Regularly clean, not just hands, but commonly used surfaces and devices you touch or handle

**Will you provide masks?**

In line with Public Health England's current guidance, we are not providing masks. Public Health England currently states that while face masks play a very important role in clinical settings like hospitals, there's very little evidence of widespread benefit from their use outside these settings.

**What happens if Coronavirus is declared a pandemic?**

We are taking precautions to minimise the risk of any infection to our colleagues. We continue to consult with Public Health England. We are following all their guidance. We will continue to do so in order to ensure the wellbeing of our colleagues.

**Colleague Precautions****What precautionary actions are you taking to ensure the health and safety of colleagues?**

We take the wellbeing of our employees very seriously. In line with guidance from the UK's Chief Medical Officer, Public Health England and the NHS, we are advising colleagues that good hand hygiene is the first and most important line of defence. As well as recommending regular washing with soap and water, disposable gloves are available to our people on request through line managers. This already forms part of our good hygiene practice (full list of recommendations above).

**Travel Arrangements and Self-isolation****What is your advice for colleagues who return from affected areas overseas?**

If a colleague has returned from an affected area overseas, we are advising that they speak to their line manager before returning to work. In some cases, it may be that they are advised to self-isolate for two weeks before returning to work following a call to NHS111 or their GP.

**What happens if an employee needs to self-isolate?**

If a colleague has been advised to self-isolate as a precautionary measure after calling NHS111, other colleagues in the workplace should continue with business as usual. Colleagues should maintain good hand hygiene and use antibacterial wipes where necessary. Should anyone have concerns they should contact NHS111.

**What are you saying to colleagues who are ill following travel to an impacted destination?**

Anyone who has recently returned from China and developed a fever, cough or difficulty breathing within the first 14 days should self-isolate and stay at home, call their GP or NHS 111 and report their recent travel.

**Confirmed Infections****Royal Mail**

**What does self-isolation mean for people who don't have symptoms?**

Public Health England advise that just like when you have the flu, individuals should remain at home and should not go to work or public areas. Where possible, individuals should avoid having visitors to their home. Individuals should monitor their symptoms and call NHS 111 (or your national alternative) if they develop any of the following symptoms - fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

**In the case of a confirmed infection, will RM deep clean the workplace?**

We take the health and safety of our employees very seriously. We have all the systems and processes in place to carry out deep cleaning of property if required. Each case will be considered on its own merits. Any decision to deep clean of our units would be made in line with Public Health England guidance.

**Customer Guidance**

**Can you catch Coronavirus from parcels and letters?**

The Government published advice to businesses on gov.uk on Tuesday 25th February, available [here](#).

It states that "there is no perceived increase in risk for handling post"

Public Health England have advised there is nothing to suggest that surfaces outside the human host such as mail packages have the ability to transmit the Coronavirus. The World Health Organisation has also advised that coronaviruses do not survive long on objects, such as letters or packages.

**Is it safe for customers to receive parcels and letters from China?**

The World Health Organisation has advised that it is safe to receive parcels and letters from China. They stated that "people receiving parcels and letters from China are not at risk of contracting the new coronavirus. From previous analysis, we know coronaviruses do not survive long on objects, such as letters or parcels."

**Have you suspended deliveries to China?**

Royal Mail is maintaining its service to China. We have been working hard with our partners to secure alternative air capacity to continue running our services to China. Many other international postal operators have suspended their services.

**Italy**

**Is it true that you have suspended deliveries in Italy?**

Royal Mail has not suspended deliveries to anywhere in Italy. We are continuing to accept mail items to Italy in the normal way. As a precautionary measure to minimise the spread of Coronavirus, Italy's postal service has stopped delivering to a number of postcodes and their corresponding areas. Collections, deliveries and parcel-post have all been suspended until further notice.

**PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND GUIDANCE ON IMPACTED AREAS**

Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public> for the latest guidance