



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Question and Answers for VTCT Employees

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Contact with the Coronavirus	4
2.1. What happens if I contract Coronavirus?	4
2.2. What happens if I have had contact with someone with Coronavirus or someone who has just travelled back from a Coronavirus affected area?	4
2.3. What happens if I am advised to self-quarantine?	4
2.4. Because of an underlying condition I feel I am particularly vulnerable, do I get any special considerations ..	4
2.5. What happens if I do not wish to attend work because I am worried about catching Coronavirus	4
2.6. Food Safety	5
3. Travel	5
3.1. Do I have to travel abroad (even if it is part of my role)?.....	5
3.2. Travel in the UK.....	5
3.2.1. Do I have to use Public Transport?	5
3.2.2. Should I still attend large scale events?	5
4. Cancellation of Centre Visits and Examinations	6
5. I have caring responsibilities and need additional time off.....	6
6. What precautions are being taken at Aspire House and other VTCT/ITEC Offices	6
7. Office Closure.....	6
7.1. What Happens if any ITEC/VTCT Office Has to Shut?	6
8. Personal Travel	7
8.1. I have an Overseas Holiday Planned Can I Still Take This	7



1. Introduction

This Question and Answer Sheet is to be read in conjunction with any communications issued by VTCT on the Coronavirus by the CEO or his representative.

Human to human transmission of Coronavirus is happening. It's not known for definite how the virus spreads, however it's generally thought to be in the same way the flu is spread. Think dirty hands, dirty surfaces and objects, respiratory droplets, sneezing, coughing and even breathing. Therefore, the highest levels of personal hygiene are essential (but shouldn't it always be!).

It's worth remembering that the most effective ways of preventing transmission of any flu-like disease include:

- Catching coughs, sneezes and running noses in disposable tissues – Catch it, Bin it, Kill it
- Carrying hand sanitiser with you at all times. Use after sneezing, coughing and touching dirty surfaces for example
- Regularly wash hands correctly following the prescribed method with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. You can read more about the correct hand washing routine [here](#). You should wash your hands:
 - before leaving home
 - on arrival at work
 - after using the toilet
 - after breaks
 - before food preparation
 - before eating any food, including snacks
 - before leaving work
 - after using public transport
- Avoid necessarily touching your own mouth, face, eyes and nose
- Avoid people who are seemingly unwell with flu-like symptoms
- if you are worried about your symptoms or those of colleague family member or friend, please call NHS 111. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment

For general information about the current situation on the Coronavirus and how this is affecting the UK, the government publishes information and daily updates here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>. This includes helpful information on who should consider self-isolating, particularly for those people who have recently travelled to affected countries.



2. Contact with the Coronavirus

2.1. What happens if I contract Coronavirus?

Please ensure you (or a member of your family) report this to Pam Praine, Head of Human Resources as soon as possible. If you are off sick with Coronavirus, then usual sick leave and pay policies apply.

Pam Praine can be contacted on: Email: pampraine@vtct.org.uk

Work Number: 02380 684516 (Internal 216)

Mobile: 07766 258678

2.2. What happens if I have had contact with someone with Coronavirus or someone who has just travelled back from a Coronavirus affected area?

If you have been in contact with someone with Coronavirus please call NHS 111 and follow their advice, do not attend work until you have done so. If you are in contact with someone who has just travelled back from a Coronavirus affected area, please check the updates published by the government (see link above). If you are still concerned call NHS 111.

2.3. What happens if I am advised to self-quarantine?

If you are self-quarantining because you have returned from a high risk area or you may have been infected, we would ask you to continue with this self-quarantining. If possible you should work from home during this period, and we will do all we can to facilitate this even if this means you are not carrying out your normal duties. During this period, you will receive your full pay.

If for any reason you cannot work from home having explored all opportunities, please notify HR, you will continue to receive full pay during this period.

2.4. Because of an underlying condition I feel I am particularly vulnerable, do I get any special considerations

If you are pregnant (or think you may be pregnant), are undergoing treatment or have a medical condition that you believe makes you more vulnerable, please speak with Human Resources to confidentially discuss your concerns and look at any adjustments that can be made.

2.5. What happens if I do not wish to attend work because I am worried about catching Coronavirus

We will continue to review the situation regarding Coronavirus and provide updates accordingly. However, at the present time it is expected that you will attend work as normal. If you choose to refuse to attend work this will be dealt with under the usual absence management procedures.



2.6. Food Safety

So far, there is no evidence that the virus can be transmitted through food. However, normal food hygiene and hand washing routines should be followed. Please see above.

3. Travel

3.1. Do I have to travel abroad (even if it is part of my role)?

The guidelines in Alan Woods Statement on Coronavirus dated 2 March 2020 applies:

With immediate effect, all non-essential business travel to any country currently affected by COVID-19 should not be undertaken by VTCT employees, until further notice. No travel should be taken to: **China, Italy, Hong Kong and Macau, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Iran, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar.**

This guidance is being monitored and will be updated accordingly.

At the present time, the only essential travel is for iTEC practical examinations and apprenticeship end-point assessments.

If you are asked to travel abroad on business and do not feel comfortable carrying out this travel, please speak to your line manager. Our general view is that we will try to minimise travel during this time but that where travel is necessary because of the business need, and asking someone to travel to a country is not contrary to government advice or instruction, then we will try to conduct a business as usual policy. If following speaking to your line manager, you require further assistance please speak to HR.

3.2. Travel in the UK

At the present time there are no restrictions on UK travel. Should the situation change we will review our approach. However, we would encourage everyone to consider alternative methods such as 'remotely' joining meetings. If you are asked to travel and do not feel comfortable with this again, please discuss initially with your line manager and again, if necessary, with advice from HR

3.2.1. Do I have to use Public Transport?

At the moment there are no restrictions on using public transport, however, if you have access to a vehicle and prefer to drive you will be reimbursed in accordance with the Travel and Expenses Policy. If you are driving your own vehicle on VTCT business it must be insured for business use and we have had sight of your driving licence and insurance documents.

3.2.2. Should I still attend large scale events?

At the present time there are no restrictions on attending large scale events. We will keep this matter under review following any government guidance or instruction. Again, please discuss any concerns initially with your line manager.



4. Cancellation of Centre Visits and Examinations

If you are an EQA, Examiner or Apprenticeship Assessor and your pre planned visits are cancelled please ensure that you inform your line manager so that these can be logged. We will then review ensure you are not significantly negatively impacted financially. A final decision has not yet been made but may include advance payments if visits are delayed or other discretionary payments.

5. I have caring responsibilities and need additional time off

If you need to take additional time off, for example because a school or day centre is closed for deep cleaning, then you may be entitled to paid leave if you are unable to work from home, under the provisions of the Absence Policy and Procedure – Leave for Domestic, Personal or Family Reasons. In the first instance please notify your line manager who will liaise with HR on a case by case basis.

6. What precautions are being taken at Aspire House and other VTCT/iTEC Offices

Hand sanitisers, hand washing facilities and tissues will be made available within the offices together with our normal cleaning routines. In addition, sprays and wipes will be made available so staff can increase the cleaning of their workstations should they wish. Staff are also encouraged to keep the kitchen areas clean during the day. If there is any reason additional cleaning is required, then this will be arranged.

Our cleaner has been instructed to focus on cleaning work surfaces however, she will only clean clear desks. It is therefore recommended your desk area is kept as clear as possible at the end of the day.

Current advice from the Health and Safety Executive is that air conditioning units should remain operational and not be switched off

7. Office Closure

7.1. What Happens if any iTEC/VTCT Office Has to Shut?

If any office has to shut during a working day, staff would be informed and the office would be closed in an orderly manner. If the office needs to be shut outside of normal working hours, you will receive a text notification. Please ensure that your mobile number is correct on iTrent and ICT are informed of any changes.

If the office is shut and you are unable to work from home, you will still continue to receive full pay.



8. Personal Travel

8.1. I have an Overseas Holiday Planned Can I Still Take This

The decision to travel is one for you and your family to make, we would however encourage you to consider the latest government advice.



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