Water Witness Guidance to all staff on Coronavirus

The following is guidance concerning Water Witness and Shahidi wa Maji business activities in relation to the current coronavirus (COVID19) situation. This guidance is applicable to WW and Shahidi Staff and contractors.

Introduction

A new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) causing respiratory symptoms was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, China. It has since spread to many countries (hotspots are China, Japan, South Korea, Iran, Italy with small numbers of cases in numerous other countries as of 6th March) and the likelihood of a global outbreak is high.

Water Witness takes the health and safety of employees, contractors and the people in the countries in which we work very seriously. Please ensure you keep up to date with changing advice as this is a developing situation. We will be closely monitoring the situation very regularly (biweekly) and will pass on any relevant updates to staff as soon as they are published. As of 6th March, there are a limited number of cases in UK and none in our countries of operation, but this may change as the outbreak develops.

This guidance note contains:

1. Information to staff on the COVID-19 virus:
   1. Symptoms
   2. How the disease is spread

2. Information and advice on protection against COVID-19
   1. Through improved hygiene
   2. In the workplace
   3. Before, while and after travelling
   4. When attending meetings and events

3. Contingency plans and emergency numbers

Useful sources of up to date information on Coronavirus

1. The COVID-19 Virus

1.1 Symptoms

Typical symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. 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.

1.2 How coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads
COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. When someone who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or exhales they release droplets of infected fluid. There are therefore two main routes by which COVID-19 can be transmitted:

1. Infection can be spread to people by breathing in droplets coughed or sneezed out or exhaled by infected individuals when in close contact (within 2 metres).
2. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables, telephones or door handles. People could catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions e.g. through shaking hands then touching their own face.

There is currently no evidence that people who are without any symptoms are infectious to others.

2. Protection against COVID-19

2.1 Improved hygiene

Hand washing. Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water is one of the most important ways of preventing the spread of infection. If soap, clean water and towels are not available, alcohol hand rub can be used. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth unless your hands are clean. See hand hygiene guidance.

Follow good hygiene practices: cover your nose and mouth with a tissue, sleeve or flexed elbow when coughing or sneezing, use tissues only once, disposing of them promptly and carefully, wash hands frequently.

Clean frequently touched surfaces to help to reduce the risk of infection. Surfaces (e.g. desks, tables, door handles) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly.

Avoid close contact (approx. 1-2 metres) with infected people or people who appear unwell and their personal items. Avoid shaking hands where possible.

Regular hand hygiene and cleaning of frequently touched surfaces will help to reduce the risk of infection.

2.2 In the workplace
d) Coronavirus in the workplace

- Water Witness will follow the advice of the UK government and recommendations of the UK Chief Medical officers at all times.
- Employees at specific risk from Coronavirus are entitled to work from home.
- Should any employees show symptoms of Coronavirus, they must not attend work, and are required to contact and follow the guidance of a medical professional.
• Our usual sick leave and pay entitlements apply if someone has coronavirus (see Employee Handbook).
• Staff who are in ‘self-isolation’ will be expected to work from home, unless this is not possible, in which case they must speak with their line manager. The time may be given as sick leave.
• If any employee is identified as a possible or confirmed COVID-19 case, we will follow Government guidance to deep clean the office environment. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings]
• Employees are entitled to time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependant') has Coronavirus as per the Employee Handbook.

2.3 Before, while and after travelling

Based on the latest information, Water Witness should assess the benefits and risks related to any upcoming travel plans. Any travel commitments be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Please discuss any travel plans with your line manager. Those who do not wish to travel and feel insecure to do so, are not obliged to travel.

2.3.1 General Travel Advice regarding coronavirus (COVID 19)

• Please ensure you keep up to date with changing advice as this is a developing situation.
• Note that travel to areas against Government advice will invalidate our travel insurance cover.
• Any contractors working with Water Witness must ensure their business and personal travel insurance reflects appropriate cover.
• The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) currently advises against travel to certain countries and to areas of certain countries. As of 6th March, this includes all travel to Hubei province, China and it advises against all but essential travel to the rest of mainland China (not including Hong Kong and Macao). The FCO also advises against all but essential travel to Daegu and Cheongdo in South Korea. [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus]

2.3.2 Before travelling on Water Witness business

• Check for the latest travel advisories (restrictions). Information on any travel restrictions can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website. Information on risk areas can also be found on HPS website and PHE website.
• Check travel advice and outbreaks information. Outbreak and additional information will be highlighted under the 'Notice Board' tab and 'News' tab on the specific destination pages of https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/
• **Be prepared.** Before you travel, seek advice from your healthcare practitioner to ensure that you receive any necessary health advice and vaccinations. Do this well in advance if possible (at least 4 weeks), as courses of vaccines may take time. There is no vaccine available at present to protect against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

• **Always ensure you have health insurance cover.** Travel insurance is essential and must cover medical evacuation and repatriation in the event that you become unwell and have to be transported home. Check the impact this outbreak may have on your travel insurance coverage before you travel.

• **Make sure you know what to do and who to contact if you feel unwell while travelling.**

• **Consider taking a first aid kit.** This should include a small, basic first aid kit, including some means of checking body temperature, either a thermometer or strips to place on the forehead and alcohol-based rub for hand hygiene.

• **Protective facemasks** are available in the Edinburgh office for staff to use. There is currently insufficient evidence to support the use of facemasks as a useful preventative measure for the general public but they are provided for those who prefer to use one.

2.3.2 During travel on Water Witness business

• **Hand washing.** Frequent and thorough hand washing is one of the most important ways of preventing the spread of infection. If soap, clean water and towels are not available, alcohol hand rub can be used. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth unless your hands are clean.

• **Avoid close contact with people who appear unwell** and their personal items.

• **Avoid contact with animals, poultry (chickens, ducks, geese, pigeons, quail) or wild birds, and the places where they are present, for example, bird/animal markets, commercial or backyard farms. Also avoid contact with sick or dead animals or birds.**

• **Do not eat uncooked or undercooked poultry or meat.** All meat and poultry, including eggs must be thoroughly cooked.

• **If you become unwell with a fever, cough or difficulty with breathing, promptly seek out medical attention.** The British Embassy can assist with contacting medical aid and relatives. Postpone any further travel until you are well again.

• **Do not attempt to bring live animals, poultry or poultry products back into the country.**

2.3.3 After travelling on Water Witness business

• If you have travelled to the UK from restricted areas listed on the UK Government website stay indoors and avoid contact with other people immediately. Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do next. **Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.**


• Pay attention to your health when returning from any trip, particularly over the first 14 days.

• If you develop symptoms (fever, a cough or problems breathing) or any other ‘flu like’ or respiratory illness during this period, seek immediate medical attention. Contact one of the following:
  
  o NHS 111 (England): NHS111
  o 0300 200 7885 (Northern Ireland)
  o NHS 24 (Scotland): Call 111 or your General Practitioner

• **Do not visit a health-care setting (for example your health centre or a hospital), before seeking telephone advice as above, describe your symptoms and provide details of your recent travel history.**

• Follow the advice that you are given.
• Do not travel while you are unwell and limit your contact with others as much as possible to prevent the spread of any infectious illness until you can be seen by a Doctor.
• Follow good hygiene practices: cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, use tissues only once, disposing of them promptly and carefully, wash hands frequently.

2.4 When attending meetings and events

Upcoming trainings or events convened by Water Witness or Shahidi wa Maji will be reviewed on a case by case basis, taking into account health risks to employees, contractors and the people in the countries in which we work. The Coronavirus should be included within any pre-event risk assessment. Risks should be raised with the Director or Deputy Director before reaching a decision on whether it should go ahead or be re-arranged.

3. Contingency plans

Contingency plans will be put into place if:
• Staff are abroad in an affected area and are placed in quarantine and/or not allowed to travel back to their home.
• Government advice requires closing of one of our offices.
• There are cases of Coronavirus within the office environment.
• An event needs to be cancelled due to the risks of Coronavirus.

Emergency Numbers
If you are away from the office and have any concerns relating to Coronavirus and your health, please contact:

• Dorcas Pratt – Deputy Director. dorcaspratt@waterwitness.org +44 (0)7807 620 213
• Nick Hepworth – Director nickhepworth@waterwitness.org +44 (0)7519 120 967