

COVID-19 Response Policy

August 2023

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Version No.	2
Date of Issue:	August 2023
Date for Review:	August 2024

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1. Introduction

COVID-19, first discovered in 2019 and caused by a respiratory coronavirus, was initially referred to as a Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. The pandemic had a drastic impact on society, including how we interact with each other, undertake daily tasks, and protect the vulnerable people within our community. As a result, the healthcare sector had to adapt how it functions and responds to the needs of its patients, to maintain staff and patient safety.

People who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 include:

- older people
- those who are pregnant
- those who have no immunity through prior infection or are unvaccinated
- people of any age whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness
- people of any age with certain long-term conditions.

The risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19 and other respiratory infections is very low for most children and young people.

2. Policy Statement

YourHeartScan.co.uk is committed to mitigating all risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, as with other respiratory infections, including risks to staff, business, patients and the wider community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Infection Prevention and Control Policy, as well as any other relevant and associated policies listed at the end of this document.

3. Scope

This policy and its procedures apply to all staff and services provided by YourHeartScan.co.uk while the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing and present within society.

The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring that the principles of this policy are maintained and always followed.

Due to continuous changes in response to the COVID 19 pandemic the Registered Manager will sign up for 'updates' from the gov.uk website to ensure that the content of this policy and working practices remain current and in line with standards for best practice.

The most recent and up to date guidelines can also be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>

4. Definitions

Personal Protective Equipment: equipment intended to be worn or held by a person to protect them from risks to their health and safety while at work.

5. General Infection Control Principles

General infection control principles should be always maintained and encouraged on the behalf of others, including:

- routine and regular handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds
- 'catch it, bin it, kill it' for any respiratory secretions.

Up to date government advise on best practice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19>

Please refer to YourHeartScan.co.uk's Infection Prevention and Control Policy.

6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Effective and appropriate use of PPE is one of several actions YourHeartScan.co.uk is taking to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

Non-pharmaceutical interventions (such as mask wearing and enhanced ventilation) will be implemented, depending on latest risk assessment of local prevalence.

PPE will be donned in line with the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual for England: https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/C1676_National-Infection-Prevention-and-Control-IPC-Manual-for-England-version-21_July-2022.pdf

Ordering PPE

YourHeartScan.co.uk will promote the safety of its staff by ensuring an ongoing proactive relationship with their suppliers in order to mitigate any risks associated with a delay in the procurement of PPE, particularly during escalations of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.

YourHeartScan.co.uk will also utilise the government's PPE supply portal to ensure that stocks are always maintained to an acceptable level.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has implemented a replacement portal platform to better serve eligible providers in accessing coronavirus (COVID-19) related PPE stock, free of charge.

Information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment>

The new portal can be accessed here: [Access the new PPE Portal](#)

The contact number for customer services team is: 0800 876 680, Monday to Friday between 8am to 5pm

The Registered Manager is responsible for undertaking weekly stock checks on COVID-19 related PPE and for ensuring that additional stock is ordered well in advance of the supply becoming low.

7. Occupational Health

YourHeartScan.co.uk are not an NHS or NHS Commissioned Service. However, YourHeartScan.co.uk will follow government guidance on managing healthcare staff with symptoms of a respiratory infection or a positive COVID-19 test result: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection/managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-or-a-positive-covid-19-test-result>

Staff members with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19

Any staff member who has symptoms of a respiratory infection, a high temperature and/or does not feel well enough to go to work should stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Staff should follow the guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>

Staff should follow government guidance on LFD testing and returning to work: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection/managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-or-a-positive-covid-19-test-result>

Patient-facing staff returning to work with a negative LFD test result but still displaying respiratory symptoms should have a risk assessment undertaken before continuing patient-facing activities.

Staff members who receive a positive LFD test result for COVID-19

Staff who have received a positive COVID-19 test result, should not attend work for 5 days and follow the guidance for people with a positive COVID-19 test result: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>

Staff should follow government guidance on not attending work, LFD testing and returning to work: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection/managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-or-a-positive-covid-19-test-result>

Staff members who are contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19

Patient-facing staff who are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 should inform their Line Manager for a risk assessment and discussion on ways to minimise risk of onwards transmission.

Line Managers should consider, where possible and appropriate, the following:

- redeployment to lower risk areas, if possible, for patient-facing healthcare staff
- working from home for non-patient-facing healthcare staff

- limiting close contact with other people especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces.

Whilst attending work, staff must rigorously comply with all of YourHeartScan.co.uk's infection control measures and follow advice for staff with symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19 if they develop symptoms: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>

Risk Assessments

YourHeartScan.co.uk follows the current guidance on the gov.uk website which no longer requires risk assessments to be completed for all staff who come into direct contact with patients (and/or their relatives). Nevertheless YourHeartScan.co.uk understands that some members of staff may fall into vulnerable groups and may prefer a risk assessment to still be completed. If this is the case, the individual should meet with the Registered Manager, or another appropriately appointed individual, to determine whether any special arrangements are required to mitigate their risk, or if they need to consider redeployment or alternative options for working during periods of escalation.

YourHeartScan.co.uk will regularly talk to these staff through one-to-one conversations in which they can talk through any concerns and measures being taken to help ensure their safety can be discussed, and reasonable adjustments made in line with the Equality Act 2010. Risk assessment discussions will be purposeful, supportive and specifically designed to review physical and psychological risk factors to an individual, as well as their personal circumstances.

YourHeartScan.co.uk will always take into account the latest government guidance on vulnerable workers and all staff are encouraged to disclose any underlying medical issues when commencing their employment.

Staff groups who may be at higher risk of complications if they contract COVID-19 may include, but are not limited to the following;

- Staff who identify as an ethnic minority
- Pregnant staff
- Staff who were previously considered clinically vulnerable and were advised to shield
- Staff who have a BMI over 30 and are considered obese
- Staff who are immunosuppressed

YourHeartScan.co.uk will seek HR or Occupational Health support if required, depending on each individual staff member's circumstances.

8. Vaccinations

Vaccination is an important component of good infection prevention and control. Vaccinations protect people against vaccine preventable infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Staying up to date with recommended vaccinations including booster and seasonal doses, helps reduce the risks created from infection.

YourHeartScan.co.uk encourages its staff to make sure they receive the vaccinations they are eligible for (including vaccination against COVID-19). Risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the safety of people who receive care and workers wherever possible.

The Green Book has the latest information on vaccines and vaccination procedures for vaccine preventable infectious diseases in the UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>

9. Business Continuity

In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak among YourHeartScan.co.uk's staff that seriously affects staffing levels and YourHeartScan.co.uk's ability to meet its service requirements, YourHeartScan.co.uk will initially identify 'spare staff' for each day who will be able to make themselves available at short notice and who can be contacted outside of rostered hours.

Failing this, where staffing levels are unable to be maintained, patients will be signposted to other services or their NHS GP. Patients will also be assessed for priority status, which will account for whether the patient has needs that cannot be similarly met elsewhere and those with existing relationships with the clinic.

10. Support for Staff

YourHeartScan.co.uk along with the government, recognise that working in healthcare during and following the COVID-19 pandemic may have a negative effect on its staff's mental health. As such, several services are offered to help support staff and YourHeartScan.co.uk encourages its staff to reach out if they are feeling overwhelmed or

anxious. Information on available services/charities is available from the Registered Manager.

11. Training

YourHeartScan.co.uk will ensure all staff have had appropriate training and are kept up to date on the latest government guidelines regarding COVID-19, in order to keep themselves and patient's safe.

COVID-19 specific training will be included in mandatory infection prevention training.

12. Monitoring

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through routine audit and the investigation of any adverse incidents, outcomes, or complaints.

13. Related Policies and Procedures

- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

14. Legislation and Guidance

Guidance

- Care Quality Commission: [GP mythbuster 99: Infection prevention and control in General Practice | Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)
- Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection/managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-or-a-positive-covid-19-test-result>
- Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>
- Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk>

- Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>
- Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19?priority-taxonomy=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109c8e8eae>
- Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-information-and-advice-for-health-and-care-professionals>

NHS, National infection prevention and control manual for England:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/C1676_National-Infection-Prevention-and-Control-IPC-Manual-for-England-version-21_July-2022.pdf

15. Compliance

Safe	S2: How are risks to people assessed, and their safety monitored and managed, so they are supported to stay safe?
Effective	<p>E3: How does the service make sure that staff have the skills, knowledge, and experience to deliver effective care, support and treatment?</p> <p>E4: How well do staff, teams and services work together within and across organisations to deliver effective care and treatment?</p>
Well-led	W5: Are there clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues, and performance?

16. Summary of Review

Version	1
Last amended	August 2023
Reason for Review	Annual
Were changes made?	yes
Summary of changes	Legislation and guidance links updated.
Target audience	All staff, Managers
Next Review Date	August 2024