

## COVID-19 Policy

### Additional Documents

COVID 19 Staff Testing Policy

COVID 19 Risk Assessment (Caregivers & Clients)

COVID 19 Risk Assessment (Office)

### Background

The COVID pandemic has been devastating to the UK as a whole and particularly to those in vulnerable groups. The nationwide introduction of testing for people working in health and social care, is a welcome progression in the continuing fight against the disease. As we are now in Tier 3 the campaign for our staff to be tested has been prioritised by Government.

Government advice is to test our staff regularly (weekly) to ensure those who are infectious but asymptomatic are identified at the earliest possible stage.

In acknowledging the rising cases and the subsequent government advice, Inchwater intends to ask all staff to self-test. The reasons for doing so are:

- The client group we work with are identified as ‘vulnerable’
- Clients are predominantly over the age of 75, with an average age of 85 (See Appx 1), placing them in the highest vulnerability group with the poorest outcomes
- Staff often work with more than one client, meaning transmission is possible
- Staff are unable, in many cases, to observe social distancing when visiting clients

Within these reasons, we have obligations under:

- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** - section 2 - places a duty on an employer to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** - places a duty on an employer to assess the risks to the health and safety of employees. This means an employer can be prosecuted if they knowingly allow an employee to continue working while infected and their behaviour places the employee themselves or others at risk

**Standard PPE** is to be worn at all times during the pandemic and consists as follows: facemask, gloves, apron. Facemask may be changed daily, gloves and apron to be changed at every call (or more often).

**Full PPE** is to be worn when a client is either COVID suspect or COVID positive, and is as follows: Facemask, face-shield, gloves, apron, sleeve-protectors, shoe-protectors. All PPE should be changed at every visit (or more often) other than the face-shield which can be cleaned using a suitable agent.

## Policy

### 1. Employees

1.1 All staff are asked to self-test on a weekly basis, on the days the government have asked for tests to be performed. For the domiciliary care sector, the days have been identified as Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. For operational purposes, Inchwater will ask all staff to self-test on a **Thursday or Friday**.

1.2 Staff will be asked to sign a GDPR form that allows the company to review test results. The results will be sent from the government to the individual via SMS text messaging, and to Inchwater via email. Inchwater is not responsible for any delay in receiving results.

1.3 Tests are **not** mandatory and caregivers or other members of staff **may decline** to complete a self-test. However, Inchwater has a duty of care to its vulnerable clients and to its staff and, in order to do so, may decline to offer any scheduled hours until a negative test has been received. This is not intended as a punitive measure but rather a measure used to protect others. When the government no longer advise weekly testing for social care employees, this measure will no longer be required.

### Results

1.4 A positive result will necessitate the member of staff self-isolating for 10 days as per current NHS advice and staff will be taken off rota for the duration. See Section 1.8 for further actions.

According to government advice, a positive test means no further testing is required for 90 days unless further symptoms develop.

1.5 A negative result will mean no further action is necessary.

1.6 An inconclusive result will require a further test at the earliest opportunity. The member of staff will be required to collect an additional self-test or have one delivered to them within 24 hours of the inconclusive result.

### Contact

1.7 If a member of staff believes they have come into contact with a person, not a client\*, who was later found to be COVID positive, current guidance is to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of contact. Inchwater recommends the individual is tested in addition to the weekly test they may have taken, but regardless of the result, they will still have to self-isolate.

1.8 On notification that a caregiver is COVID positive, the following will happen within **24hrs**:

- Contact tracing to identify clients who have been visited by the caregiver in the past **five days**

- Contact tracing to identify caregivers who may have worked with same clients in the past **five** days
- Caregivers and clients (or client' family) will be contacted by telephone to advise them of the situation. Clients (or their family) and staff will be asked to observe any changes to their health and contact 111 if concerned.

1.9 All staff and clients are subject to GDPR regulations and should observe the privacy of others. This means:

- Caregivers must not disclose or discuss positive COVID test results of others. Doing so may breach our confidentiality policy and may result in disciplinary action. Any concerns or queries should be directed to the office.
- Inchwater office staff will not disclose the identity of the individual unless it is pertinent to the safety of either a staff member, or a client.

\* Please see section 2. Clients for client contact.

## 2. Clients

2.1 On notification that a client is COVID suspect, any caregiver working, or due to work, with the client will be informed. Caregivers are required to wear full PPE in such cases. The client, or their family, will be asked to arrange a COVID test at the earliest opportunity.

2.2 On notification that a client is COVID positive, the following will happen within **24hrs**:

- Contact tracing to identify caregivers who may have worked with same client in the past **five** days
- Contact tracing to identify clients who have been visited by the identified caregivers in the past **five** days
- Caregivers and clients (or client's family) will be contacted by telephone to advise them of the situation. Clients (or their family) will be asked to observe any changes to their health and contact 111 if concerned.

2.3 All staff and clients are subject to GDPR regulations and should observe the privacy of others. This means:

- Caregivers must not disclose or discuss positive COVID test results of others, with clients. Doing so may breach our confidentiality policy and may result in disciplinary action. Any concerns or queries should be directed to the office.
- Inchwater office staff will not disclose the identity of the individual unless it is pertinent to the safety of either a staff member, or a client.

## **Appendix 1 - References**

*All websites accessed 03/12/2020*

COVID cases in Dover: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/protect-kent-and-medway/cases-in-kent>

COVID RIDDOR reporting: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/riddor/index.htm>

CQC reporting: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/notifications/notification-finder>

NHS COVID self-test video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCqo7MhQT6U>

Government Advice on testing: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>