

Temporary accommodation and day centres for people experiencing rough sleeping (updated 18 January)



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

Coronavirus (Covid-19) is causing significant disruption across the country and this is likely to continue for some months. We have put this guide together to support you to manage your temporary accommodation and day centres and to safeguard the wellbeing of your staff and the people that use your services in recognition that Coronavirus may be especially difficult to manage in these settings.

Summary

- hostels and day centres do not need to close at the current time, unless directed to do so by the health authorities or the respective national government
- regularly touched objects and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected frequently using your standard cleaning products
- if a member of staff becomes unwell on site with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home
- if a resident in a hostel becomes unwell, they should stay in their room
- if someone becomes unwell in a day centre, and they do not have a home or room in which to self-isolate, they should be isolated temporarily in an area of the day centre; staff are advised to contact the local authority
- staff, residents and visitors should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds, more frequently and catch coughs and sneezes in tissues
- providers are encouraged to work closely with local authority public health, housing and social care teams to identify appropriate local solutions for people who don't have anywhere to self-isolate

- staff are eligible for statutory sick pay (SSP) when staying at home (see our What you need to know about coronavirus and welfare benefits publication)

1. What you should do if someone has symptoms of Coronavirus in a hostel

Hostel residents

If a resident staying in a hostel is showing symptoms of Coronavirus:

- they need to be isolated from staff and other residents. If clinical advice is needed this can be obtained from the [NHS 111 website](#) or by calling 111 if there is no internet access available. They should not visit a GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or hospital. In an emergency, if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk dial 999
- they should minimise use of shared facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas as much as possible. They should aim to keep two metres from other people and not share a bed with another person. Shared spaces should be kept well ventilated if possible

Guidance for:

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland

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- if persons experiencing symptoms are expected to use shared toilet or bathroom facilities, they should use a separate bathroom if possible
- where use of shared facilities cannot be avoided, the bathroom, kitchen etc. should be cleaned and disinfected using the regular cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- if using a separate bathroom is not possible, you should consider drawing up a rota for washing or bathing, with the person who is unwell using the facilities last, before thoroughly cleaning the bathroom themselves (if they are able to and where it is appropriate)
- a person who is unwell should also use separate body and hand towels from other people
- residents experiencing Coronavirus symptoms should also avoid using shared kitchens whilst others are present. They should take their meals back to their room to eat and use a dishwasher (if available) to clean and dry crockery and cutlery.

Hostel staff

- If a member of staff becomes unwell with Coronavirus symptoms they should be sent home and advised to follow the [stay at home guidance](#)
- If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with Coronavirus symptoms they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should, however, wash their hands for 20 seconds thoroughly after any contact with someone who is unwell.

It is not necessary to close either the hostel or the day centre or send any staff home, unless government policy changes. You should keep monitoring your government website for the latest details.

[England](#)

[Wales](#)

[Scotland](#)

2. What you should do if someone has symptoms of Coronavirus and is using a day centre

If someone becomes unwell and displays Coronavirus symptoms:

- they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door
- ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If this is not possible then they should be moved to an area which is at least two metres away from other people.
- should they need to go to the bathroom, they should use a separate bathroom, if possible
- the bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using the regular cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

There is no need to close the venue or send staff home if they've been in close contact with a person experiencing Coronavirus symptoms, unless government policy changes. You should keep monitoring your government website for the latest advice.

Clinical advice can be accessed online at [NHS 111](#) or you can call 111 if there is no internet access. In an emergency, if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk, you should call 999. They should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or hospital.

Hostels and day centres who work with clients who are unable to self-isolate in accordance with the NHS [guidance](#) are advised to alert their local authority to this issue. Local authority public health, housing and social care teams have been encouraged to work closely together to identify appropriate local solutions.

3. Situation specific considerations

Coronavirus, homelessness and drug and alcohol users

There are particular issues for consideration in relation to Coronavirus for people who are currently experiencing homelessness or experiencing homelessness and drug and alcohol use.

In supporting your clients, you should consider contingency planning for situations such as:

- reduced or interrupted supply of medicines, or access to them
- reduced access to or interrupted supply of drugs or alcohol
- greater vulnerability to the effects of viral infection because of reduced immunity from poor health, drug and alcohol use, or medication for other conditions
- risk of exacerbation of breathing impairment from coronavirus (COVID-19) due to simultaneous substance misuse e.g. opioids.

In specialist substance misuse services, responses should include ensuring that sufficient treatment capacity is available if people look for withdrawal support or substitute prescribing as an alternative to using illicit drugs.

The UK government has produced this [guidance on clinical management of drug misuse and dependence](#) you can use in considering contingency plans.

Cleaning and laundry

The UK Government has provided this advice on [cleaning and disinfection of settings which are similar to a healthcare setting](#). There is separate guidance for non-healthcare settings in:

[England](#)

[Wales](#)

[Scotland](#)

- laundry should be washed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, using the warmest water setting possible and dried completely
- laundry that has been in contact with an unwell person can be washed with other people's items
- do not shake dirty laundry before it is washed - this minimises the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air
- clean and disinfect anything used for transporting laundry with your usual products, in line with the cleaning guidance above.

If there has been a confirmed or suspected case in one of your hostels or day centres, you may wish to discuss which guidance is most appropriate to the setting with your local Health Protection Team.

[England](#)

[Wales](#)

[Scotland](#)

4. Further guidance

Guidance from the Westminster government is [here](#).

Guidance from the Welsh government is [here](#).

Guidance from the Scottish government is [here](#)

Guidance from the Northern Ireland Executive is [here](#).

5. Resources

Public Health Wales has produced several posters and other resources. These can be found at the link below:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-resources/>