

As you will be aware, the UK is currently experiencing an outbreak of Coronavirus, or more specifically COVID19. I am therefore writing to all employees to provide important information regarding how myself and the Corporate Management Team are responding to the outbreak, how this may impact on you, what measures you can take to protect yourself and how future updates will be provided.

First of all I would like to reassure you that, whilst the situation is developing rapidly, the number of cases of the virus in the Scotland remains relatively low, as does the risk of exposure. Therefore, for the moment, to a large degree it is business as usual across the organisation.

However, in light of the developing situation, the Corporate Management Team, along with other key members of management, are meeting on a regular basis, liaising with our colleagues in each of our constituent Councils and keeping a watching brief on the latest updates from the Scottish Government and the relevant public health protection authorities, such as NHS Inform and Health Protection Scotland. We have a Business Continuity Plan in place for this type of eventuality and this plan is now being put into action. We will continue to monitor the situation daily and are following all official guidelines provided. The health and safety of our employees is paramount and remains our key priority.

### **Taking Measures to Reduce the Spread of COVID19**

A key message that I want to stress is the importance of proper hand washing in order to protect yourself and avoid spreading the virus. Please ensure that you follow this guidance from the NHS:

#### **DO**

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work and before eating
- use hand sanitiser gel/alcohol wipes if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid shaking hands and close contact with people who are unwell

#### **DON'T**

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

For further information on this please go to:

<https://youtu.be/bQCP7waTRWU>

### **Self-isolation on Return from Certain Countries**

The Government is currently advising people to self-isolate if they have recently returned from certain countries even if they have no symptoms, which means staying at home and not having contact with other people. In the event that you are told to self-isolate, you must not attend work during the isolation period. You must contact your line manager as soon as possible to let them know that you are required to self-isolate and you must keep them updated on any developments. Where feasible, depending on your job role, you may be able to work from home during this period, assuming you continue to show no

symptoms. If it is not feasible for you to work from home, which will be the case for the vast majority of our employees, your absence will be recorded as authorised 'self-isolation' leave and this time off work will be paid. If you become unwell or start to develop symptoms of COVID19 during your self-isolation period, you must follow the normal sickness absence reporting procedures and will be treated as being on sickness absence.

If you return from an area which does not require automatic self-isolation, and you have no symptoms, you should attend work as normal. If you do have symptoms on your return including a cough, fever or difficulty breathing, you should self-isolate, call your GP surgery or 111 if the surgery is not open, and also follow our normal sickness absence reporting procedures. You will be treated as being on sickness absence and must submit the required self-certificate/medical certification.

For further information regarding self-isolation please go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#returning-travellers>

### **Self-isolation Advice for People without Symptoms**

You may also be told to self-isolate even if you are not experiencing symptoms, but you are a contact of a confirmed case of COVID19. For further information regarding this scenario please go to:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19#self-isolation-advice-for-people-without-symptoms>

### **Contracting COVID19**

If you develop symptoms at any time, you should call your GP surgery or phone 111 if your GP surgery is not open, follow the advice given to you and keep your line manager updated on your condition. If it is confirmed that you have contracted COVID19, your time off work will be treated in the same way as any other sickness absence. You must comply with our normal rules on sickness absence notification.

### **Moving Forward**

Again, I want to stress that I do not wish to cause panic or anxiety by sending this communication but instead wish to reassure you that we are closely monitoring the situation and making decisions based on the advice and information provided to us by the relevant authorities. As we navigate through this rapidly changing situation, I endeavour to keep you as informed as I can via email updates, management briefings and by using our Twitter and website pages.

If you have a specific query regarding work and COVID19, please contact your line manager in the first instance.

If you have not already done so and wish to provide your email address to us in order to benefit from electronic access to communications such as these, please forward your email address to [Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk](mailto:Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk). We will not forward your email address onto any third parties or use it for any other purpose other than to communicate with you.

Iain C Waddell, Managing Director, 12 March 2020