Immediate action these changes are business critical and to be delivered as a matter of urgency.

**CRITICAL IMPACT**

**Reason for this review**
New Policy

**Were changes made?**
Yes

**Summary:**
This is a new policy that supports the Pandemic Policy and Procedure and the Business Continuity Policy and Procedure. The policy reflects the current situation with COVID-19 and will be updated as the situation evolves. The policy contains a Factsheet so that information can be shared with staff and service users. The document references the guidance issued on 25 February by Public Health England for Social Care providers.

**Relevant legislation:**
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Registration and Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

**Underpinning knowledge - What have we used to ensure that the policy is current:**
**Suggested action:**

- Encourage sharing the policy
- Establish process to check and confirm staff understanding of the policy
- Include discussion in staff handovers
- Ensure policy is on the agenda for all supervisions
- Hold specific meetings to discuss impact
- Display changes and impact in relevant places e.g., office, staff room, reception areas, kitchens etc.
- Ensure relevant staff are empowered to develop specific and individualized processes to share policy changes
- Share information quickly and widely
- Ensure all staff know about the policy changes
1. **Purpose**

1.1 To ensure that St Philips Care Group remains up to date and is able to respond in the event of a member of staff, Service User or contact, contracting the virus (SARS coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2)) which results in the disease COVID-19.

1.2 To support St Philips Care Group in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Question</th>
<th>Key Lines of Enquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
<td>S2: How are risks to people assessed and their safety monitored and managed, so they are supported to stay safe and their freedom is respected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
<td>S3: How does the service make sure that there are sufficient numbers of suitable staff to support people to stay safe and meet their needs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
<td>S5: How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WELL-LED</td>
<td>W5: How does the service work in partnership with other agencies?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that St Philips Care Group is registered to provide:
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Registration and Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

2. **Scope**

2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:
- All staff
- Senior Management

2.2 The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:
- Service Users

2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:
- Family
- Commissioners
- External health professionals
- Local Authority
- NHS

3. **Objectives**

3.1 To ensure that safe, effective procedures are in place with staff and Service Users having information in an accessible format.

3.2 As the spread of the virus is resulting in response requirements changing daily, St Philips Care Group will ensure that it stays up to date with reliable sources of information and has the flexibility to respond when required.
4. Policy

4.1 St Philips Care Group recognizes that the outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus SARS coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) which results in the disease COVID-19 is a fast-moving situation. With the WHO stating that it’s too early to say whether the disease will be labelled an ‘outbreak’, St Philips Care Group understands that the World Health Organisation have stated that countries should be preparing themselves. As care providers, ensuring robust infection control and business continuity plans form part of preparing business at St Philips Care Group for any events.

4.2 St Philips Care Group will ensure that staff are aware and understand the importance of pandemic preparedness and will carry out preparations by following the checklist in the Pandemic Policy and Procedure at Home Is Where The Help Is Ltd. St Philips Care Group understands that business continuity planning involves all aspects of the business and to be effective St Philips Care Group must work with their partners, suppliers and commissioners to ensure that a safe and effective service can be maintained.

4.3 St Philips Care Group understands that they have a responsibility for ensuring that staff follow good infection control and prevention techniques and that they support Service Users with this too. St Philips Care Group will ensure that staff have access to reliable information to reduce anxiety and dispel any myths and inaccurate information that may cause worry or distress to staff, Service Users or the wider public.
5. Procedure

5.1 Pandemic Policy
St Philips Care Group recognises that the WHO has declared COVID-19 as a public health emergency of international concern, known as a PHEIC, but have not classified it as an epidemic. St Philips Care Group however, will review the Pandemic Policy and Procedure and complete the checklist to ensure that the business is prepared and that robust business continuity plans are in place.
St Philips Care Group will ensure that staff have access to the Coronavirus Fact Sheet within the Forms section of this document.

5.2 Reducing the Risk of Contracting or Spreading the Virus
St Philips Care Group will ensure that staff follow the WHO advice to reduce the risk of contracting the virus and reducing the risk of spreading it. The following procedures must therefore be followed:

- **Wash your hands regularly and properly** by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- **Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance** between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing (social distancing). When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth**. Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick
- **Practice respiratory hygiene**. Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19
- **If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early**. Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and are having difficulty breathing, seek medical attention by calling your GP or 111. Do not go directly to your GP or hospital. Why? 111 and your GP will have the most up-to-date information on the situation. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to direct you quickly to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help to prevent the spread of viruses and other infections
- **Stay informed and follow advice given by 111, your GP or Public Health England**. National and local authorities will have the most up-to-date information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area. They are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves
- People who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work

5.3 Handwashing
Staff should wash their hands:
- Before leaving home
- On arrival at work
- After using the toilet
- After breaks and sporting activities
- Before food preparation
- Before eating any food, including snacks
- Before leaving work
- On arrival at home

5.4 Confidentiality
St Philips Care Group will follow confidentiality and GDPR policies and procedures to ensure that the details of staff involved in caring for Service Users with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is kept confidential. Employees should also respect each other’s confidentially and take care not to inadvertently share information when using social media.
Where staff are suspected or confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, their personal details should be
treated as confidential, as they would be for any other St Philips Care Group Service User.

5.5 Safe Staffing
In the event of an outbreak of COVID-19, where staff are moved from other areas to support work on COVID-19, assessments should be made on the ability to continue to deliver safe and effective care in the services affected. Steps should be taken to mitigate any risks resulting from staff moving to other areas.

5.6 Reducing the Risk of Stigmatization
Stigma occurs when people negatively associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a specific population. In the case of COVID-19, there are an increasing number of reports of public stigmatization against people from areas affected by the epidemic, this means that people are being labelled, stereotyped, separated, and/or experience loss of status and discrimination because of a potential negative affiliation with the disease. St Philips Care Group will ensure that staff understand the importance of preventing and addressing social stigma by making sure facts are available to staff and Service Users.

5.7 Identifying Possible Cases of the Virus
The current advice from Public Health England is as follows;
If, in the 14 days before the onset of illness (cough or fever or shortness of breath), there has been travel to China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, or Thailand, this includes transit, for any length of time, in these countries or contact (see definition below) with confirmed cases of COVID-19 or someone has;
- Severe acute respiratory infection requiring admission to hospital with clinical or evidence of pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome on x-ray, or
- Acute respiratory infection of any degree of severity, including at least one of shortness of breath (difficulty breathing in children) or cough (with or without fever), or
- Fever with no other symptoms
- are immunocompromised but may not have the same symptoms as someone with healthy immune system
the advice is to;
- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as you would with the flu
- Call NHS 111 to inform them of the recent travel to the country

5.8 If someone has returned from the areas below since February 19 and develop symptoms they must stay at home and call 111 for advice. They do not need to follow this advice if they have no symptoms.
- Northern Italy (anywhere north of Pisa, Florence and Rimini)
- Vietnam
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Myanmar

5.9 Definition of Contact
Contact with a case is defined as any of the following:
- Living in the same household
- Direct contact with the case or their body fluids, or in the same room of a healthcare setting when an aerosol generating procedure is undertaken on the case without appropriate PPE
- Direct or face to face contact with a case, for any length of time
- Being within 2 metres of the case for any other exposure not listed above, for longer than 15 minutes
- Being otherwise advised by a public health agency that contact with a confirmed case has occurred

5.10 Actions if a Service User Meets the Criteria and Displays Symptoms
If a Service User complains of symptoms and meets the criteria above from either travelling or contact with others, staff must make sure;
- The Service User is safe and withdraw from the room
- They immediately wash their hands and avoid touching the face, nose, mouth or eyes
- They contact 111 for advice or 999 if an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk) and explain which country they have returned from in the last 14 days and outline their current
They contact St Philips Care Group as soon as possible and advise of the situation. This must be a high priority.

They do not attend any other Service Users, visit their GP or travel in the community until advice is sought.

Whilst they wait for advice from NHS 111 or an ambulance to arrive, staff should remain at least 2 metres from other people. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in a bag then throw the tissue in the bin. If they do not have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available. This will apply only to the period of time while waiting for transport to hospital.

5.11 Action if a Member of Staff Reports Symptoms

St Philips Care Group will ensure that the member of staff has sought advice from 111 or the GP.

St Philips Care Group must contact Northumberland County Council and the local health protection team for advice.

Advice must be sought on whether the member of staff will need to self-isolate and what action will need to take place for any Service Users that they may have had contact with.

If a member of staff reports that there are concerns about their children, close family, friends who they have had close contact with the local health protection team must be contacted for advice.

St Philips Care Group must ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that records are held in line with Data Protection Act requirements.

In the event of a confirmed case, closure of the office, workplace or residential setting is not recommended. St Philips Care Group will be contacted by the Public Health England (PHE) local Health Protection Team to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on actions that should be taken.

5.12 Cleaning the Office and Workplace Where There are Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

The local Health Protection Team will provide advice on cleaning. Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the person has come into contact with must be cleaned including:

- All surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids.
- All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones.
- Clothing and linen used by the person should be set aside pending assessment of the person by a healthcare professional.

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.

5.13 Rubbish Disposal Including Tissues

- All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and marked for storage until the COVID-19 test result is available, which will be within 24 hours.
- If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste.
- Should the individual test positive, the local Health Protection Team advise you what to do with the waste and laundry.

5.14 Raising Concerns

St Philips Care Group has effective procedures in place to allow staff to raise any concerns in relation to equipment, policies and processes for managing COVID-19 at the earliest opportunity. All staff must be aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure at St Philips Care Group and be able to raise concerns without any fear and receive timely feedback on their concerns.
6.1 Pandemic
- A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease

6.2 World Health Organisation
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations that is concerned with world public health

6.3 COVID-19
- Novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China. The virus was named severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease it causes is called COVID-19

6.4 Outbreak
- A disease outbreak is the occurrence of disease cases in excess of normal expectancy. The number of cases varies according to the disease-causing agent, and the size and type of previous and existing exposure to the agent

6.5 Social Stigma
- Social stigma in the context of health is the negative association between a person or group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. In an outbreak, this may mean people are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated against, treated separately, and/or experience loss of status because of a perceived link with a disease. Such treatment can negatively affect those with the disease, as well as their caregivers, family, friends and communities. People who do not have the disease but share other characteristics with this group may also suffer from stigma. The current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours against people of certain ethnic backgrounds as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus

6.6 The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 was put in place with immediate effect on 25th February to impose restrictions on any individual considered by health professionals to be at risk of spreading the virus
- The regulations apply to any individuals seeking to leave supported isolation before the current quarantine period of 14 days is complete. It will also apply to future cases during the current coronavirus incident where an individual who may be infected or contaminated could present a risk to public health
### Key Facts - Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- St Philips Care Group must make sure they have the facts about the new coronavirus or the disease COVID-19 from a reliable source. Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care are 2 examples. Staff should read the fact sheet in the Forms section for more information.
- St Philips Care Group must have an up to date business continuity plan in place. The Pandemic Policy and Procedure has a checklist to help plan for an outbreak of a disease like COVID-19.
- It's important that Service Users are made aware of how they can help limit the spread of COVID-19 and that they understand the signs and symptoms of the disease.
- St Philips Care Group will need to work closely with Northumberland County Council, health providers, suppliers and other agencies to ensure that there is continuity and consistency of care.
- The current understanding is that the virus does not survive on surfaces for longer than 72 hours. Regular cleaning of frequently touched hard surfaces and hands will therefore help to reduce the risk of infection.
- Washing your hands often, with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if handwashing facilities are not available - this is particularly important after taking public transport.

### Key Facts - People affected by the service

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- A coronavirus is a type of virus. Coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. This new virus is called SARS coronavirus-2. The disease it causes is called COVID-19.
- There is no vaccine at the moment for this virus. Washing your hands regularly with soap and water will help prevent the spread of the disease. Try not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- It's ok to feel worried or anxious. St Philips Care Group has plans in place to make sure you will get the care that you need.

### Further Reading

As well as the information in the 'underpinning knowledge' section of the review sheet we recommend that you add to your understanding in this policy area by considering the following materials:

**Public Health England Blog:**

Outstanding Practice

To be ‘outstanding’ in this policy area you could provide evidence that:

- St Philips Care Group has robust infection control policies and procedures in place and staff understand the importance of good hand hygiene, how to use personal protective equipment appropriately and they share their knowledge with Service Users appropriately
- Staff have accurate and up-to-date information and St Philips Care Group can respond quickly and safely to a fast-changing situation
- St Philips Care Group has shared its pandemic and business continuity plan and everyone knows what their roles and responsibilities are
Coronavirus Fact Sheet

Coronavirus ~ COVID-19

What is it?

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness like the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). This new coronavirus started in Hubei Province, China. The virus was renamed (11th Feb 2020) SARS-CoV-2 and the disease the virus causes is now called COVID-19.

While coronavirus is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or tiredness are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness, not coronavirus.

How is it spread?

The coronavirus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

♦ Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious;
♦ Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes, or;
♦ Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

COVID-19 Key Facts

- It is most likely to be spread through coughs and sneezes when a person is infectious
- It is possible to spread it from surfaces – as this is a new virus it is not known how long it lasts on surfaces
- You must not go to A&E if you are unwell and think you may have COVID-19
- You must call your GP or 111
- Good hand hygiene is one of the best ways of preventing the spread of the virus
- Cough etiquette helps too
How can we help stop it spreading?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You must:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- Cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues and use alcohol-based hand-sanitiser
- If unwell, avoid contact with others (touching, kissing, hugging etc.)

‘The UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the public from low to moderate. But the risk to individuals remains low.’ NHS Website Feb 2020

What are the symptoms?

If you have been;

- To Wuhan or Hubei Province in China in the last 14 days
- To other parts of China, including Macau and Hong Kong, in the last 14 days
- To Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Republic of Korea or Malaysia in the last 14 days
- In close contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus
- And have a high temperature, cough, shortness of breath (even mild)
- You may be at risk of having been in contact with someone who has the virus, SARS-CoV-2
What do I do if a member of staff becomes ill?

In the following scenarios workers must notify their manager and **cannot** go to work if:

- They have left, or transited through mainland China in the last 14 days (they must isolate themselves for 14 days from leaving mainland China)
- They have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus in the last 14 days (they must isolate themselves for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case)
- Any person who has fever or respiratory symptoms, however mild, within 14 days of return to the UK must not attend work. They should remain at home and contact their GP or 111 by phone immediately for advice

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Which Policies Do I Need?

- Business Continuity
- Infection Control
- Pandemic
- Sickness Absence
- Unable to Attend the Workplace
- Compassionate Leave
- Bereavement Policy
**What about a close family member?**

Workers who do not have any symptoms, but who have a household member who has travelled to a risk area and has symptoms should be excluded from work until the household member has been clinically assessed and results of testing are available.

*There is currently no vaccine to prevent Novel Coronavirus. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.*

**What is self-isolation?**

If the worker is required to self-isolate, then they should be advised to remain at home for 14 days following last exposure and avoid close contact with other people as much as possible. Advise that they:

- Avoid having visitors
- Ask friends, family or delivery services to drop off any food or medicines that they might need/run other errands on their behalf
- Don’t go to work, school or public areas
- Don’t use taxis or public transport
- Don’t go to the GP or A&E
What action do I need to take now?

- Check your Business Continuity Plan
- Complete an action plan if there are any gaps
- Complete your pandemic checklist – how prepared are you?
- Check your staff and Service User Files – Who is at Risk?
- Contact your Local Authority – what is the local plan?
- Make sure you have communicated your policies and procedures
- Make sure your infection control training is up to date
- Keep your staff and Service Users up to date
- Stay up to date - it is a fast-moving situation!

Handwashing Techniques to Stay Healthy

Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. How long? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.
Useful Contacts

♦ Out of Hours Clinical Advice: 111 for personal use
♦ Public Health England: 020 8200 4400 (professional use only)
♦ You can also contact your local office. The details are on the website:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergency-contacts-public-health

♦