

POL9 – Coronavirus Policy and Procedure

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
Unit 5 Millennium Way, Dunston, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S41 8ND



1. Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure Serendipity Healthcare Ltd remains up to date and can 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 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

Key Question	Key Lines of Enquiry
SAFE	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?
SAFE	S3: How does the service make sure that there are enough suitable staff to support people to stay safe and meet their needs?
SAFE	S5: How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?
WELL-LED	W5: How does the service work in partnership with other agencies?

- 1.3 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is registered to provide:
- Coronavirus Act 2020
 - 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:

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Service Users

2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:

Commissioners

Local Authority

NHS

Family

External Healthcare Professionals

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, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd 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 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd recognises 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. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has stated that this is now a pandemic. As care providers, ensuring robust infection control and business continuity plans form part of preparing business at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd for any events that can cause disruption to the normal business.
- 4.2 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd 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 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd understands that business continuity planning involves all aspects of the business and to be effective Serendipity Healthcare Ltd must work with their partners, suppliers and commissioners to ensure that a safe and effective service can be maintained.
- 4.3 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd 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. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd 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

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd recognises that the WHO has declared COVID-19 can be characterised as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd however, will

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ensure that it reviews the Pandemic Policy and Procedure and will complete the checklist to ensure that the business is prepared and that robust business continuity plans are in place.

5.2 Reducing the Risk of Contracting or Spreading the Virus

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that staff, when not at work, follow the WHO and Public Health England advice to reduce the risk of contracting the virus and the risk of spreading it. They must also support Service Users to follow the government requirements and remind them that failure to follow this can result in a fine. The following procedures must be followed.

You can only leave your home:

- To shop for essentials – only when you really need to
- To do one form of exercise a day – such as a run, walk or cycle, alone or with other people you live with
- For any medical need – for example, to visit a pharmacy, deliver essential supplies or as part of an agreed care plan (refer to Coronavirus FAQs point 15)
- To travel to and from work – but only where this is necessary

Further measures:

- Wash your hands regularly and properly for at least 20 seconds (2 verses of Happy Birthday) by using soap and running water
- Use hand sanitiser when it is not possible to wash hands with soap and water. Hand sanitiser must contain 60% alcohol to be effective
- Maintain at least 2 metres (6 foot) distance between yourself and anyone. 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. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands or use hand sanitiser if you do not have immediate access to soap and running water. 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 a fever (37.8 degrees, a new/persistent cough) you must undertake a Lateral Flow (LFD) before going to work.

- If the result is positive you MUST isolate for 5 Days and MUST Undertake further lateral tests on Day 5 and 6 (24 hours apart). (If negative, staff can return to work). LFD test MUST be continued until day 10.
- If a positive result is displayed on day 10, staff MUST continue to test daily until day 15 or a risk assessment will be undertaken.
- If the result is negative. Staff can return to work.

Social Distancing

Follow the Governments requirements. Everyone must comply with these requirements.

5.3 Handwashing

Staff should wash their hands:

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- Before leaving home
- On arrival at work
- After using the toilet
- After touching pets
- After breaks and sporting activities
- Before food preparation
- After using public transport
- Before eating any food, including snacks
- Before leaving work
- On arrival at home

5.4 Confidentiality

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd 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 confidentiality 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 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd 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. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will, as part of pandemic preparedness, assess whether any staff need additional training, support or require a DBS check.

5.5a Weekly COVID test for all staff

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will receive weekly PCR tests for staff to administer at home, which will help identify more asymptomatic cases and protect care users who are more vulnerable to the virus.

Regular testing will give staff peace of mind by picking up on any asymptomatic transmission and protect those they care for.

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will expect all active staff to undertake weekly testing. Staff who refuse to take the tests, will be contacted by HR.

5.5b COVID-19 Vaccination

The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is safe and effective. It gives you the best protection against coronavirus. The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will expect all staff to have the vaccine once offered. Any staff refusing to have the vaccine will be contacted by HR.

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Following government guidelines, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will contact all staff who have refused the vaccine and take every step to promote uptake.

Staff who still refuse after the 4th of February 2022 will not be allowed to work with service users face to face after the 31st of March 2022.

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. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd 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 Actions if a Service User Meets the Criteria and Displays Symptoms

If the Service User receiving care and support has symptoms of COVID-19, then the risk of transmission should be minimised through safe working procedures, as detailed below.

Personal Protective Equipment

Care Workers should use personal protective equipment (PPE) for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids.

Aprons, gloves, face masks and plastic face shields/eye protection should be used in these situations. Two types of full body suits are available for staff to wear.

1. Single use white suits
2. Washable suits

Personal protective equipment must be used for each episode of care. It is essential that personal protective equipment is stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags must be placed into another bag, tied securely, and kept separate from other waste. They should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin.

Cleaning

If Care Workers undertake cleaning duties, then they must use usual household products, such as detergents and bleach as these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces.

Frequently touched surfaces must be cleaned regularly.

Personal waste (for example, used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids), and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags must be placed into another bag, tied securely, and kept separate from other waste. They should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin for disposal as normal.

Laundry

If Care Workers support the Service User with laundry, then they must not shake dirty laundry before

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washing. This minimises the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air.

Wash items as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items. If the Service User does not have a washing machine, wait a further 72 hours after the 7-day isolation period has ended; the laundry can then be taken to a public laundromat. Items heavily soiled with body fluids, for example, vomit or diarrhoea, or items that cannot be washed, must be disposed of, with the owner's consent, following the correct disposal procedures.

5.7a **Action if a member of staff meets the criteria and displays symptoms or has received a positive test result**

The staff member must isolate immediately.

If they are displaying symptoms, they must undertake a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will supply all staff with enough tests to undertake them at home for 1 month at a time.

If a staff member receives a positive test with no symptoms, they will still need to isolate following government guidelines for isolating at that time.

5.8 **Isolation Notes Online**

Isolation notes will provide Serendipity Healthcare Ltd with evidence for their employers that they have been advised to self-isolate due to coronavirus.

As isolation notes can be obtained without contacting a doctor, this will reduce the pressure on GP surgeries and prevent people needing to leave their homes.

For the first seven days off work, employees can self-certify so they do not need any evidence for Serendipity Healthcare Ltd. After that, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd may ask for evidence of sickness absence. Where this is related to having symptoms of coronavirus or living with someone who has symptoms, the isolation note can be used to provide evidence of the advice to self-isolate.

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

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will follow Public Health England guidance 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

5.10 **Rubbish Disposal Including Tissues**

- All waste that has been in contact with the individual with symptoms, including used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids, must be put in a plastic rubbish bag, and tied. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied

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securely, and kept separate from other waste. This must be put aside for at least 72 hours before being disposed of as normal

5.11 Raising Concerns

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd 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 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd and be able to raise concerns without any fear and receive timely feedback on their concerns.

5.12 Working from Home

Where staff at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd can work from home, and Serendipity Healthcare Ltd has agreed to the arrangement, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd has the following expectations.

- Staff can work independently and on their own initiative
- Staff can motivate themselves
- Complete agreed work within set deadlines
- Staff can manage their workload effectively
- Staff can cope well under any new pressure posed by working at home
- Staff will adopt healthy work from home practices which includes compliance with Health and Safety
- Staff will maintain contact with Serendipity Healthcare Ltd and colleagues with whom they would usually interact with
- Confidentiality will be maintained in line with the Data Protection Act
- Any concerns will be raised immediately with the Registered Manager
- Meeting with Service Users or external organisations will not take place with the employees at home unless teleconferencing facilities are used

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd understands during the coronavirus outbreak, that where the employee's role makes home working feasible, working from home will be supported. The decision to temporarily allow home working is not a contractual change.

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will investigate mechanisms to communicate effectively with staff who work from home. The free software made available by Microsoft Teams or Zoom to support video conferencing and calls over wi-fi is an option will be considered.

5.13 Shielding at Risk Groups

The Government advised on 21st March that those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) must be shielded and protected. The full Public Health England guidance can be read [here](#). Shielding is a measure to protect extremely vulnerable people by minimising interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others. This means that those who are extremely vulnerable should not leave their homes, and within their homes should minimise all non-essential contact with other members of their household.

1. Strictly avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or a new and continuous cough
2. Do not leave your house
3. Do not attend any gatherings
4. Do not go out for shopping, leisure, or travel and, when arranging food or medication deliveries, these should be left at the door to minimise contact

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5. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, Internet, and social media

People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

- Solid organ transplant recipients
- People with specific cancers
- People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, and severe COPD
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired

The NHS in England will contact people with these conditions to provide further advice.

Where Care is being provided to any individual meeting the criteria for shielding (vulnerable groups) as a minimum, single use disposable plastic aprons, surgical mask and gloves must be worn for the protection of the Service User.

5.14 Supporting Hospital Discharge

The Registered Manager will follow the COVID-19 discharge guidance and will ensure that communication channels remain open.

6. Definitions

6.1 Pandemic

- A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease COVID-19 was characterised as a Pandemic on 11th March 2020

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

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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

6.7.1 Social Distancing

- Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

6.8 Health and Social Care Key Workers

- This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment

Reviewed 26th January 2021