

18th March 2020

Dear Employer,

Re: Coronavirus Update and College Closure

From 9.00 PM (21.00) this evening, Wednesday 18th March 2020, the college will be closed to learners and visitors, initially until Monday 20th April 2020, as we move to online learning in response to the continued threat from the spread of the Coronavirus.

We have taken this difficult decision following the government's briefings on Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th March and their advice that:

- All members of a household should self-isolate for 14 days should anyone in the household have a fever or a cough.
- Pregnant women are now considered to be a vulnerable group.

We have been closely monitoring the impact of this advice on apprentices', learners' and staff attendance and we have decided that it is not operationally possible to follow all of the government's advice and run the college safely.

We do not know which of our apprentices, learners or staff (or their family members) who have symptoms have the virus as they will not be tested at this time. However, because they will not be tested, we are unable to assess the risk this presents to us.

We have tried to accommodate staff, apprentice and learner absence by joining groups together. However, it is no longer safe to do so. We are also aware that placing apprentices and learners into even bigger groups increases the risk of spreading the virus, perhaps to pregnant, elderly or sick family members who are not able to be 'socially distant'.

We know this decision will likely add to your anxiety and you will be worried about your apprentice's and/or learner's time away from college and the impact on their learning. However, through the use of online teaching, the college will continue to prepare apprentices and learners for the assessments that are required for their apprenticeship or main learning programme and, for those that are doing so, re-sits in GCSE English and maths or functional skills.

It is important that your apprentice and/or learner is able to access the college's online learning platforms, for example, Google Classroom or Moodle so that they are able to access the learning resources that have been prepared for them. If your apprentice and/or learner is not able to access online resources, please let the college know as soon as possible so that printed copies of resources may be made available to them. Course teams are well-prepared for either of these scenarios and have already been discussing these with your apprentice over the past few weeks as the national situation has been developing.

Educational institutions have yet to receive guidance from the government about the summer examination schedule. Once we know, you will know. We are aware,

however, that some awarding bodies are flexing their assessment windows to accommodate the submission of practical assessments over a longer timeframe. Again, once we understand the detail of these arrangements, we will communicate them to you.

We will continue to review the situation and the advice from the government and Public Health England throughout this time and we will update you again before your apprentice and/or learner is due back in college on Monday 20th April 2020.

We must all act responsibly during this time, following the guidance from the government and Public Health England (updated daily) and the NHS, please follow the links below:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

We will send further details of staff contacts for each curriculum area shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Nichola Newton
Principal and CEO
Warrington & Vale Royal College