**Our ref**: AR/JB/Letters2020/CLS

18th March 2020

Dear Apprentices and Employers

**Reference: Coronavirus**

You will be hearing the daily news updates about coronavirus and as a College we are putting in place changes to the way we operate to help reduce the potential spread of the virus.

We have provided further information about symptoms, when to isolate and how to keep safe on our website: <https://www.myerscough.ac.uk/> these updates are regularly sent out via the Onefile e-portfolio announcement system.

We are closely monitoring the situation and following the daily recommendations of Public Health England and the Department of Education. We are also proactively developing our own additional measures to cope with as many of the foreseeable eventualities we can anticipate resulting from the virus.

As of today, the College is moving to remote learning for many of our courses and increasing the number of our teaching and support staff who are working from home with reduced functions on our college campuses. Thankfully, we have not had any confirmed cases of COVID19 and we are trying to keep teaching and learning and core business functions operating as far as possible.

**Block release / Day Release** - we do expect apprentices to attend classes as usual up until the Easter break on Friday 27th March. From this point forwards we will be moving to online delivery until further notice. Any apprentices who are unable to attend the College as a result of the measures announced by the Government should inform the College of their non-attendance as normal. Should there be a reason to cancel block release e.g. due to staff illness / isolation then we will be in touch with you directly.

**Work-based learning** – At present the College is only operating essential visits in cooperation with employers. These include new sign-ups, any outstanding Health and Safety placement appraisals, work-place on-line exams and any preparation for End-point assessments. All other contact with apprentices will be carried out remotely and on-line using a range of technology.

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Where apprentices are displaying any symptoms (e.g. a high temperature of 37.8 degrees and above, difficulty breathing or a new continuous cough) and self-isolating it is important that the College is made aware of whether this is as a precautionary measure or whether they have been required to by health practitioners.

We are mindful of the potential of the virus, and measures set out by the Government and Public Health England. Should there be an escalation of the current situation we will keep you updated regularly announcements, both on the College website and via Onefile.

We understand that this is a critical time for apprentices with many taking final exams and practical end-point assessments in the coming weeks. It is therefore essential that we maintain business as usual, whilst ever we can and that all apprentices attend all lessons and work-based visits so that we can continue to support achievement. At this stage there is no advice from the Department for Education, exam awarding bodies, End-point Assessment Organisations or Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation). There is a lot of grapevine and heresay but there are no facts. The most important thing we can do is ensure that we continue to teach to the best of our ability and ensure that there are plenty of materials on our colleges’ virtual learning environments to prepare apprentices for the forthcoming assessments. We also need all of our apprentices to complete their work to their usual deadlines.

In the unfortunate event that the College is required to close or work-based visits are completely cancelled, we will endeavour to continue to support apprentices with their studies and this may require some remote learning.

We appreciate that this is a challenging time and we would like to thank you for your continued support and patience during what may be a period of continued disruption over the next few weeks. The measures that we are putting in place are being done so with the health and safety of all apprentices, staff and employers in mind. As the position changes we will continue to review our position and communicate with you.

If you wish to read more detailed information for yourself, please access the following websites:

Updates on COVID-19:

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| --- |
| * <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> |

Guidance for educational settings:

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| --- |
| * <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19> |

ACAS helpline which is 0800 123 1100

* <https://www.acas.org.uk/advice>

ACAS also have a dedicated Coronavirus page on their website here:

* <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

Yours sincerely

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