

COVID-19 & WORKPLACE SAFETY: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF & MANAGERS

**The information in these slides was correct as of 25/06/20.
COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving area and guidance is subject
to change**

(Updated on 31st July 2020 to include update to length of quarantine)

Public Health
June 2020

What will be covered

This webinar is intended for **staff and managers** in a range of settings to know how to work safely.

Advice will be given on:

1. How is coronavirus spread?
2. Symptoms and self-isolation
3. Key measures to prevent transmission
4. What to do if someone is vulnerable
5. Personal hygiene
6. Safe working principles
7. Visitors
8. PPE and face coverings

Coronavirus information

How is coronavirus spread?

- Primarily transmitted through **small respiratory droplets** through sneezing, coughing, or when people interact with each other for some time in close proximity
- Droplets are **heavy** and **only remain in air for a short time**. They only **travel short distances**, generally <1m for large droplets and <2m for smaller droplets.
- Droplets can land on the mouth, eyes or nose. Can also land on surfaces where they can be transferred to the hands and then enter the body when someone touches their nose, mouth or eyes
- Virus can survive on different surfaces from several hours to three days
- Infectious period begins up to 3 days before symptoms appear and lasts up to 10 days after onset.

Symptoms and self isolation

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss of or change in your sense of smell or taste**

You must stay at home (self-isolate) if you or anyone in your household develops symptoms:

- That person with symptoms must stay at home (self-isolate) for 10 days from onset of symptoms
- Everyone else needs to stay at home for 14 days from when the first person's symptoms start **OR if they develop symptoms** 10 days from when their symptoms first started

Use the [NHS website](#) for information on self-isolating and on treating symptoms. If the condition gets worse or persists beyond 10 days, contact NHS 111 for advice.



Preventing transmission

Key measures to prevent transmission

Most effective ways of preventing transmission:

- 1. Good personal and workplace hygiene**
- 2. Social distancing**
- 3. Self-isolating if symptomatic**

Personal hygiene

Reason

The virus can only be transferred to your body through your mouth, nose or eyes. Touching your face with your hands is one of the most common ways to get infected.

- Wash hands frequently – for at least 20 seconds
- Soap and water is best
- If your hands are visibly dirty, always wash them with soap and water
- Alcohol-based hand gel should be used if you cannot use soap and water
- With sanitiser, ensure all parts of hands are covered and rub together for 20-30 seconds until dry
- People are less likely to wash their hands if they are wearing gloves

- Avoid touching your face at all times
- Don't cough or sneeze into your hands. Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of used tissue immediately.



Everyone should wash their hands before and after touching equipment and/or surfaces used by another person

On your way to and from work

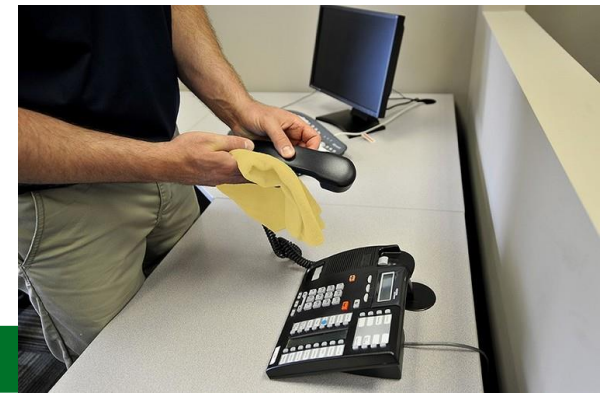
- Stagger arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace
- **Walk, run, or cycle to work where possible**
- **If you need to take public transport** to work, where social distancing is not possible and you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet, you will need to wear a form of face covering
- Store your spare clothes and bags on arrival in your lockers
- Wash your hands, or use hand sanitiser where not possible, at entry/exit points

Workplace hygiene

Reason

Virus can survive on different surfaces from several hours to three days, but alcohol wipes and usual disinfectants are effective at killing it.

- Wipe down frequently touched surfaces often
- If handling equipment or items (e.g. laptops/ tools/ papers/ books) that have been used by others, you should wipe these down – alcohol wipes will kill any virus.
- If you need to use or hold something that has been held/used by another person, both parties should wash hands or use sanitiser before and after touching these items.
- Equipment that is being transferred from one staff member to another may be quarantined for 72 hours as an added precaution.

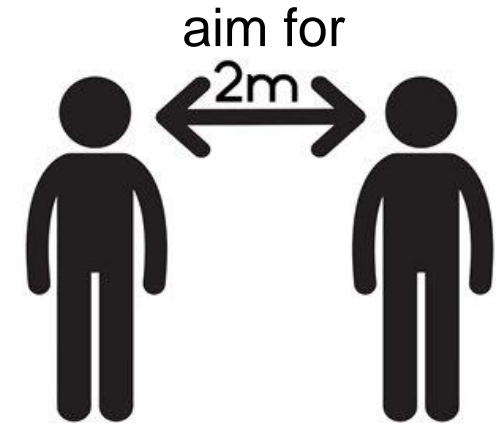


Social distancing in the workplace

Wherever possible, keep at least two metres from others

If 2 metres is not possible, stay at least one metre apart AND ensure you take further mitigation measures (referred to as “1 metre plus”)

- Keep 1m+ interactions as brief as possible.
- Use barriers/screens
- Use face coverings



Good practice

- If you don't need to be close, move away
- Maintain social distancing during breaks
- Face away from each other or work side-by-side (**not** face-to-face)
- Rearrange furniture and maximise the space you have
- Do not use small meeting rooms or other enclosed spaces
- Increase ventilation, e.g. by opening windows
- Regulate visitors so that the space does not become overcrowded

Vulnerable staff members

If someone is vulnerable

The NHS have defined two groups who are more at risk of COVID-19:

1. People who are ‘shielding’:

- These are people at the most extreme risk of COVID-19 (“clinically extremely vulnerable”)
- People in this group should have received a letter informing them of the requirement to shield
- This includes strong advice not to work outside the home ([guidance here](#))
- Note: the requirement for shielding is expected to end from 1 August

2. People who are ‘vulnerable’:

- People at increased risk of severe illness, for example people with some pre-existing conditions ([listed here](#))
- If staff are required to come into the workplace, their manager should arrange a time to discuss risks and complete a short 'individual risk assessment' form with the staff member.
- If this risk assessment identifies that they are vulnerable to COVID, they should be supported to work in a role where 2metres social distancing is possible, or to work from home.

Safe working principles

Moving around in the workplace

- Maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible while moving around at work
- Avoid non-essential trips within buildings and across sites, where possible, and use phones instead and cleaning them between use.
- Take the stairs wherever possible
- Reduce the maximum occupancy for lifts and wash your hands or use hand sanitiser after operating the lifts

At the your work station

- Maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible while you are at your work station
- Work stations should be assigned to an individual and not shared. If they need to be shared they should be shared by the smallest number of people.
- Avoid use of hot desks and spaces and, where not possible, cleaning workstations between different occupants using shared equipment.
- If it is not possible to keep workstations 2m apart, then:
 - Arrange work stations side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face
 - Use screens to separate people from each other
- Wipe down workstation at the beginning and end of each day with disinfectant wipes

At meetings

- Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings
- Only attend meetings if it is absolutely necessary, and you should maintain 2m separation throughout.
- Avoid the risk of spreading the infection during meetings, for example, avoid sharing pens and other objects.
- Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms wherever possible
- Wash your hands, or use hand sanitiser where not possible, before and after the meeting

In common areas

- Maintain 2m social distancing while using common areas
- Stagger break times to reduce amount of people using break rooms or canteens
- Use safe outside areas for breaks
- Bring your own food where possible
- Wash cutlery/crockery/containers in hot soapy water or in the dishwasher
- When sitting at tables, avoid sitting face-to-face
- Remain on-site during breaks, when not possible, maintain social distancing while off-site.
- Store your personal items and clothing in lockers.
- Stagger use of locker rooms, changing areas and other facility areas to reduce concurrent usage.

During accidents, security and other incidents

- In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.
- People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

Visitors

Risk assessment of visitors

Ensure you **communicate procedures & undertake a risk assessment for all visitors:**

- Do not admit anyone who has not arranged an appointment.
- If someone has an urgent issue, ask them to make an urgent appointment before travelling to the site.
- Advise visitors to avoid travelling by public transport wherever possible.
- When notifying visitors of an appointment: tell them they must notify you if they or anyone in their household has had symptoms in the 14 days before the appointment.
- Consider asking visitors to confirm on the day of the appointment that neither they nor anyone in their household has symptoms.
- Symptoms are outlined in slide 4
- If a visitor or someone in their household has had symptoms within the previous 14 days, postpone and reschedule the appointment.



PPE and face coverings

Do I need personal protective equipment?

Official guidance is clear: when managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial

- The most effective way to prevent COVID-19 is good hand hygiene and social distancing
- Health and safety advice is clear that first action to take to reduce risk in the workplace is to **change the way we work**
- In most cases, risks can be adequately mitigated by social distancing and good hygiene.
- **Supplies of PPE, including face masks and gloves, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, who regularly provide care for symptomatic people**

What about gloves?

- There is no evidence that gloves protect the wearer outside of a clinical setting, indeed their use outside a clinical setting can actually increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19
- Wearing gloves can give a **false sense of protection** and **lead to neglecting hand hygiene**.
- If someone has touched a contaminated surface with a gloved hand, they are just as likely to transmit contamination as someone who hasn't worn gloves.
- **COVID-19 does not pass through the skin**, it infects people by entering through the mouth, nose or eyes. **If someone handles something contaminated with coronavirus and then touch their face, gloves won't stop them from getting infected.** Regularly washing or sanitising hands is by far the best way to avoid infection.

What about face coverings?

A face covering can be very simple and is not PPE. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. It is not the same as surgical masks or respirators used by health and care workers or for dust and spray in an industrial context.

A face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

It is important to use face coverings safely: wash your hands before putting one on and taking it off.

Face coverings for home visits

- Staff visiting residents in their homes **should come prepared to wear a face covering if needed** (i.e. if social distancing at 2 metres is difficult) or if members of a household member requests that one is worn.
- The Council supports staff to request that residents wear a face covering if social distancing at 2 metres is difficult. Staff may supply the resident with a face covering if the resident is not able to supply their own.

When are they compulsory?

- On public transport, visiting hospitals and in shops (for those aged over 11).

Further information on face coverings is available [here](#)

Any questions?