

Staff guidance for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Issued 6 April 2020

This guidance has been produced to ensure that staff understand when and where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is masks, aprons or gloves should be used, and the general infection prevention and control (IPC) measures that will reduce transmission. Please consider in conjunction with your existing IPC procedures.

PPE is not needed for everyday general use or when working with people who are neither symptomatic nor requiring 'shielding'. When used properly, in conjunction with other measures (such as hand washing and hand sanitiser), PPE can reduce exposure and transmission from viral infections such as COVID-19. However, it needs to be used rationally to ensure that supplies can last as long as possible during times of increased need.

General principles to minimise PPE use and reduce transmission risk

Where possible it is important to adjust activities, to reduce the need for PPE such as;

- Maintaining social distancing (a minimum of 2 metres) from people.
- Minimising exposures such as through using video conferencing¹.
- Bundle activities together, to minimise the number of people exposed and the number of times they need to be exposed¹.
- Use physical barriers to minimise exposure such as glass or plastic windows¹.

General hygiene principles

Good hygiene principles should be used in all interactions. Even if you are using PPE, continue to maintain good hygiene principles.

- Perform hand hygiene frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based products¹. When removing PPE, it is important to wash as far as exposed forearms.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth¹.
- Practising respiratory hygiene when coughing or sneezing, such as into a bent elbow or tissue and then immediately disposing of it¹.
- Ensure frequently touched surfaces are kept clean².
- Do not shake dirty laundry before cleaning as this may cause the virus to disperse into the air².
- Ventilation by opening windows, where appropriate and safe to do so³.

Please note - Staff that have had and recovered from COVID-19 infections should continue to follow infection control precautions including use of PPE².

Council staff in hospital

Council staff visiting hospital inpatient facilities should follow the ward's infection control policy for visitors and make appropriate use of the PPE issued to them by the hospital.

Risk assessment

Attempts should be made, where appropriate, to ascertain whether a patient or individual meets the case definition for a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 before any essential face-to-face or care episode⁴.

Initial risk assessment where possible should take place by phone or other remote triage, prior to entering the premises or clinical area or at 2 metres social distance on entering. Where the health or social care worker assesses that an individual is symptomatic and meets the case definition, appropriate PPE should be put on prior to providing care.

Where the potential risk to health and social care workers cannot be established prior to face-to-face assessment or delivery of care (within 2 metres), the recommendation is for health and social care workers in any setting to have access to and where required wear apron, surgical mask, eye protection and gloves, as appropriate (see table)⁴.

Risk assessment on use of eye protection should consider the risk of droplet transmission (risk of droplet transmission to eye mucosa such as with a coughing individual) during the care episode⁴.

Application and removal of PPE

You must know how to safely take any PPE on AND off before you begin to apply it.

PPE should always be 'donned' and 'doffed' safely to minimise the spread of infection using the guidance provided. A useful video can be found on the Learning Hub.

<https://leicestershiretotara.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=2962>

Single use and sessional use of PPE

Single use

Aprons, non-fluid resistant / repellent **surgical masks** and **gloves** are subject to single use as per Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs), with disposal and hand hygiene after each individual contact⁴.

Sessional use







Fluid-resistant / repellent (Type IIR) **surgical masks** (FRSM) and **eye protection** can be subject to single sessional use as appropriate⁴.

Disposal of PPE

It is important to use new PPE for each episode of care and is disposed of securely within disposable rubbish bags, then placed within another bag, tied securely and kept separate from any other waste for at least 72 hours before being placed in the usual household waste bin. Care homes will have well established processes for waste management³.

References

- 1 World Health Organisation, Rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for coronavirus disease (COVID-19), interim guidance, 19 March 2020
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331498/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPCPPE_use-2020.2-eng.pdf [Accessed 25 March 2020]
- 2 Public Health England, COVID-19: guidance on home care provision, 19 March 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-home-care-provision> [Accessed 25 March 2020]
- 3 Public Health England, COVID-19: guidance on residential care provision, 19 March 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-residential-care-provision> [Accessed 6 April 2020]
- 4 Public Health England, COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE), Updated 5 April 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe> [Accessed 6 April 2020]

	General Hygiene 	Non-fluid repellent / resistant surgical mask 	Fluid repellent / resistant surgical mask 	Apron 	Gloves 	Eye protection 	References and further information [Accessed 6 April 2020]
No suspected or confirmed cases	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-residential-care-provision
Individual well; but individual, or member of household in need of shielding	Yes	Single Use	No	Single use	Single use	No	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877599/T2_Recommended_PPE_for_primary_outpatient_and_community_care_by_setting_poster.pdf
Direct contact with individual of unknown risk	Yes	No	Sessional use	Single use	Single use	Risk assess, sessional use	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877603/T4_Additional_considerations_of_COVID-19_poster.pdf
Working in area with possible or confirmed case(s) and able to maintain 2 metres social distance, including assessing	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877602/T3_Recommended_PPE_for_ambulance_staff_paramedics_first_responders_and_pharmacists_poster.pdf
Working in reception/ communal area or transport with possible or confirmed case(s) and unable to maintain 2 metres social distance	Yes	No	Sessional use	No	No	No	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877599/T2_Recommended_PPE_for_primary_outpatient_and_community_care_by_setting_poster.pdf
Direct contact (within 2 metres), where facility has suspected or confirmed case(s)	Yes	No	Sessional use	Single use	Single use	Risk assess, sessional use	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877599/T2_Recommended_PPE_for_primary_outpatient_and_community_care_by_setting_poster.pdf
Care in household where any member of household has suspected or confirmed case(s)	Yes	No	Sessional use	Single use	Single use	Risk assess, sessional use	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877599/T2_Recommended_PPE_for_primary_outpatient_and_community_care_by_setting_poster.pdf