HM Government

Working safely during COVID-19 in other people's homes

COVID-19 secure guidance for employers, employees and the self-employed

23 July 2020

Document updates

Published 11 May 2020
Last updated 23 July 2020

Date	Version	Update	Section
14 June 2020	2.0	Updated guidance on the need to self isolate if advised by the government's track and trace service	3.2 People who need to self-isolate
14 June 2020	2.0	Guidance on test and trace for workers and the need to keep a record of staff shift patterns	7.1 Shift Patterns and Outbreaks
14 June 2020	2.0	Guidance for workers travelling to and from work	4.1 Coming to work and leaving work
14 June 2020	2.0	Guidance on considering the security implication of any implemented risk mitigations	1.Thinking about risk 4.6 Accidents, security, and other incidents
24 June 2020	3.0	Guidance on support bubbles and the need to self-isolate if anyone in your support bubble has COVID-19 symptoms	3.2 People who need to self-isolate
24 June 2020	3.0	Updated guidance on social distancing to reflect 2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable is acceptable.	1.1 Managing Risk Throughout
3 July 2020	4.0	Updated to include link to DHSC guidance on Test and Trace	7.1 Shift Patterns and Outbreaks
3 July 2020	4.0	Updated to discourage shouting/loud music	1.1. Managing Risk
3 July 2020	4.0	Updated to include guidance in the event of a local lockdown	1. Thinking about risk
3 July 2020	4.0	Update to the COVID-19 secure poster to reflect 2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable	1.2 Sharing the results of your risk assessment Webpage
3 July 2020	4.0	Include guidance in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace as section 7.1.2	7.1 Shift Patterns and Outbreaks

Document updates (continued)
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Date	Version	Update	Section
23 July 2020	5.0	Updated guidance on working from home	2. Who should go to work Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020 Poster
23 July 2020	5.0	Include guidance on disposing of personal or business waste, including face coverings and PPE.	5.1 Keeping the work area clean
23 July 2020	5.0	Updated guidance on face coverings and where to wear them.	6.1 Face Coverings
23 July 2020	5.0	Updated guidance on the use of public transport for work related travel	7.2 Work-related travel

Introduction

What do we mean by 'working in other people's homes'?

We acknowledge that this is a complex environment due to the varied employment relationships, including the self-employed, employers and agencies. This guidance applies to those working in, visiting or delivering to home environments. These include, but are not limited to, people working in the following areas:

In home workers – such as repair services, fitters, meter readers, plumbers, cleaners, cooks, visiting childcare providers, and surveyors (this is not an exhaustive list).

To home services – such as delivery drivers momentarily at the door.

This guidance does not directly apply to live-in nannies who spend all their time with one household, or to their employers.

The UK is currently experiencing a public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is critical that employers, employees, the self-employed and customers take steps to keep everyone safe. This document is to help employers, employees and the self-employed in the UK understand how to work safely during this pandemic, ensuring as many people as possible comply with social distancing guidelines (2m apart, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable). We hope it gives you freedom within a practical framework to think about what you need to do to continue, or restart, operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand how important it is to work safely and support your employees' and customers' health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic and not contribute to the spread of the virus. The government is clear that workers should not be forced into an unsafe workplace and the health and safety of workers and customers, and public health, should not be put at risk.

We know many people are also keen to return to or contribute to volunteering. Organisations have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This guidance around working safely during COVID-19 should ensure that volunteers are afford the same level of protection to their health and safety as others, such as workers and customers.

This document has been prepared by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) with input from firms, unions, industry bodies and the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and in consultation with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Public health is devolved in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; this guidance should be considered alongside local public health and safety requirements and legislation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. For advice to businesses in other parts of the UK please see guidance set by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government, and the Welsh Government.

We expect that this document will be updated over time. This version is up to date as of 23 July 2020. You can check for updates at www.gov.uk/workingsafely. If you have any feedback for us, please email safer.workplaces@beis.gov.uk.

This document is one of a set of documents about how to work safely in different types of workplace. This one is designed to be relevant for people who provide services in, and to, people's homes (whether employed or self-employed) as well as employers of these individuals (which may include households). It will also be relevant to agencies who work with these individuals.

People delivering close contact services in other people's homes should also refer to guidance on keeping workers and clients safe during COVID-19 in close contact services.

How to use this guidance

This document sets out guidance on how to open workplaces safely while minimising the risk of spreading COVID-19. It gives practical considerations of how this can be applied in the workplace.

Each business will need to translate this into the specific actions it needs to take, depending on the nature of their business, including the size and type of business, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated. They will also need to monitor these measures to make sure they continue to protect customers and workers.

This guidance does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities and it is important that as a business or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics. It contains non-statutory guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations. When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors and other people, as well as your employees.

To help you decide which actions to take, you must carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other health and safety related hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers.

Table of Contents

1. Thinking about risk

Objective: That all employers carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment.

COVID-19 is a public health emergency. Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19, and in particular businesses should consider the risks to their workers and customers. As an employer, you also have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety. This means you need to think about the risks they face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your business addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. You should also consider the security implications of any decisions and control measures you intend to put in place, as any revisions could present new or altered security risks that may require mitigation. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. If you have fewer than five workers, or are self-employed, you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment. Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to. There are interactive tools available to support you from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/assessment.htm.

Employers have a duty to consult their people on health and safety. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the work and how you will manage risks from COVID-19. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that you take their health and safety seriously. You must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of your workers creates a culture where relationships between employers and workers are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, workers should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues. If concerns still cannot be resolved, see below for further steps you can take.

How to raise a concern:

- [ ] Contact your employee representative.

- [ ] Contact your trade union if you have one.

- [ ] Use the HSE form available at https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm.

- [ ] Contact HSE by phone on 0300 790 6787.

1. Thinking about risk (continued)

Where the enforcing authority, such as the HSE or your local authority, identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they are empowered to take a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. For example, this would cover employers not taking appropriate action to ensure social distancing, where possible.

Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of COVID-19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law. The actions the enforcing authority can take include the provision of specific advice to employers to support them to achieve the required standard, through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements. Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to two years. There is also a wider system of enforcement, which includes specific obligations and conditions for licensed premises.

Employers are expected to respond to any advice or notices issued by enforcing authorities rapidly and are required to do so within any timescales imposed by the enforcing authorities. The vast majority of employers are responsible and will join with the UK's fight against COVID-19 by working with the government and their sector bodies to protect their workers and the public. However, inspectors are carrying out compliance checks nationwide to ensure that employers are taking the necessary steps.

Employers must follow all instructions from authorities in the event of new local restrictions.

1.1 Managing risk

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Employers have a duty to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures. Employers must work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace so that everybody's health and safety is protected. In the context of COVID-19 this means protecting the health and safety of your workers and visitors by working through these steps in order:

- Ensuring both workers and visitors who feel unwell stay at home and do not attend the premise.

- In every workplace, increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning.

- Businesses and workplaces should make every reasonable effort to ensure their employees can work safely. From 1st August, this may be working from home, or within the workplace if COVID-19 Secure guidelines are followed closely. When in the workplace, everyone should make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable is acceptable).

- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity can be redesigned to maintain a 2m distance or 1m with risk mitigations where 2m is not viable.

- Further mitigating actions include:

  - Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.

  - Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.

  - Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other.

  - Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.

  - Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others).

- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, even through redesigning a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.

1.1 Managing risk (continued)

- You should ensure that steps are taken to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices to each other. This includes, but is not limited to, refraining from playing music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting, including if played at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission, particularly from aerosol transmission. We will develop further guidance, based on scientific evidence, to enable these activities as soon as possible.

- Finally, if people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead. No one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

- In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

The recommendations in the rest of this document are ones you must consider as you go through this process. You could also consider any advice that has been produced specifically for your sector, for example by trade associations or trades unions.

If you have not already done so, you should carry out an assessment of the risks posed by COVID-19 in your workplace as soon as possible. If you are currently operating, you are likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that you use this document to identify any further improvements you should make. You must review the measures you have put in place to make sure they are working. You should also review them if they may no longer be effective or if there are changes in the workplace that could lead to new risks.

1.1 Managing risk (continued)

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Steps that will usually be needed when working in homes:

☐ No work should be carried out in a household which is isolating because one or more family members has symptoms or where an individual has been advised to shield - unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household or to public safety.

☐ When working in a household where somebody is clinically vulnerable, but has not been asked to shield, for example, the home of someone over 70, prior arrangements should be made with vulnerable people to avoid any face-to-face contact, for example, when answering the door. You should be particularly strict about handwashing, coughing and sneezing hygiene, such as covering your nose and mouth and disposing of single-use tissues.

Staying updated with the latest guidance and considering how it can be applied to your work. This can include:

☐ Washing your hands more often than usual for 20 seconds using soap and water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose.

☐ Reducing the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue and throw the tissue in a bin immediately, then wash your hands.

☐ Cleaning regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

☐ Communicating with households prior to any visit to discuss how the work will be carried out to minimise risk for all parties.

☐ Maintaining social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable) as far as possible.

1.2 Sharing the results of your risk assessment

You must share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. If possible, you should consider publishing the results on your website (and we would expect all employers with over 50 workers to do so). We would expect all businesses to demonstrate to their workers and customers that they have properly assessed their risk and taken appropriate measures to mitigate this. You should do this by displaying a notification in a prominent place in your business and on your website, if you have one. Below you will find a notice you should sign and display in your workplace to show you have followed this guidance.

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

FIVE STEPS TO SAFER WORKING TOGETHER

✔ We have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and shared the results with the people who work here

✔ We have cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance

✔ We have taken all reasonable steps to help people work safely from a COVID-19 Secure workplace or work from home

✔ We have taken all reasonable steps to maintain a 2m distance in the workplace

✔ Where people cannot keep 2m apart we have ensured at least a 1m distance and taken all the mitigating actions possible to manage transmission risk

Signed on behalf of employer _____
                              Employer representative signature

Employer _____   Date _____
         Employer name

Who to contact: _____
                Your Health and Safety Representative
(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)

2. Who should go to work

Objective:

Employers should ensure workplaces are safe whilst also enabling working from home.

It is recognised that for providers of in-home services, it is often not possible to work from home.

In order to keep the virus under control, it is important that people work safely. Working from home remains one way to do this. However, the risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if COVID-19 Secure guidelines are followed closely. Employers should consult with their employees to determine who, from the 1st August, can come into the workplace safely taking account of a person's use of public transport, childcare responsibilities, protected characteristics, and other individual circumstances. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk. When it is decided that workers should come into their place of work then this will need to be reflected in the COVID-19 risk assessment and actions taken to manage the risks of transmission in line with this guidance. It is vital employers engage with workers to ensure they feel safe returning to work, and they should not force anyone into an unsafe workplace.

Steps that will usually be needed:

Planning for a phased return to work for people safely and effectively.

Finding digital or remote alternatives to physical, in-home work where possible such as video or phone consultations.

Discussing working environment and practices with householders and clients in advance to confirm how the work will be carried out, if a physical visit is needed.

Employers and agencies should keep in touch with workers, who they might usually meet with face-to-face, on their working arrangements including their welfare, mental and physical health and personal security.

2.1 Protecting people who are at higher risk

Objective: To protect clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable individuals.

- Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (see definition in Appendix) have been strongly advised not to work outside the home during the pandemic peak and only return to work when community infection rates are low.

- Clinically vulnerable individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions, see definition in Appendix), have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.

- If clinically vulnerable individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to maintain social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable). If they cannot maintain social distancing, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. As for any workplace risk you must take into account specific duties to those with protected characteristics, including, for example, expectant mothers who are, as always, entitled to suspension on full pay if suitable roles cannot be found. Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- ☐ Providing support for workers around mental health and wellbeing. This could include advice or telephone support.

- ☐ See current guidance for advice on who is in the clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable groups.

2.2 People who need to self-isolate

Objective: To make sure individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance to stop infection spreading do not physically come to work. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19, those who live in a household or are in a support bubble with someone who has symptoms and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government's test and trace service.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- ☐ Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate.

- ☐ See current guidance for employees and employers relating to statutory sick pay due to COVID-19.

- ☐ See current guidance for people who have symptoms and those who live with others who have symptoms.

2.3 Equality in the workplace

Objective: To make sure that nobody is discriminated against.

- In applying this guidance, employers should be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers or individuals.

- It is breaking the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as age, sex, disability, race or ethnicity.

- Employers also have particular responsibilities towards disabled workers and those who are new or expectant mothers.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Understanding and taking into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.

- [ ] Involving and communicating appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics might either expose them to a different degree of risk, or might make any steps you are thinking about inappropriate or challenging for them.

- [ ] Considering whether you need to put in place any particular measures or adjustments to take account of your duties under the equalities legislation.

- [ ] Making reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at a disadvantage, and assessing the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.

- [ ] Making sure that the steps you take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example, those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.

3. Social distancing for workers

Objective:

Ensuring workers maintain social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable), wherever possible, including arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites.

- You must maintain social distancing in the workplace wherever possible.

- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity can be redesigned to maintain a 2m distance or 1m with risk mitigations where 2m is not viable. Mitigating actions include:

  - Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.

  - Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.

  - Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other.

  - Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.

  - Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others).

- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, even through redesigning a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff.

- Social distancing applies to all parts of a business, not just the place where people spend most of their time, but also entrances and exits, break rooms, canteens and similar settings. These are often the most challenging areas to maintain social distancing and workers should be specifically reminded.

3.1 Coming to and leaving a home for work

Objective: To maintain social distancing wherever possible, on arrival and departure and to ensure handwashing upon arrival.

Steps that will usually be needed:

☐ Considering travelling to sites alone using your own transport, where insurance allows.

If workers have no option but to travel together, for example, delivery teams, the following should be encouraged:

☐ Arranging for journeys to be with the same individuals and limiting the number of people travelling per vehicle.

☐ Maintaining good ventilation, for example, keeping windows open and passengers facing away from one another to reduce risk of transmission.

☐ Cleaning vehicles regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products, with emphasis on handles and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces.

☐ Employers or agencies matching workers to households local to them, where possible, to minimise transportation.

☐ Washing hands on arrival and maintaining social distancing when entering the home.

☐ See government guidance on travelling to and from work.

Maintaining social distance when entering the home
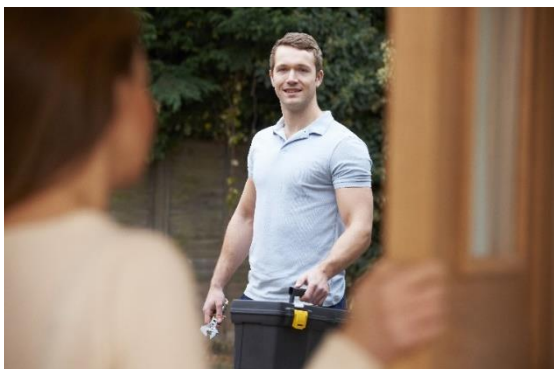
3.2 Moving around when working in a home

Objective: To maintain social distancing wherever possible while performing work in the home.

- It is recognised that for providers of some in-home services, it will not always be possible to maintain physical distance from customers.

- If it is not possible to maintain social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable) while working in the home, then extra attention needs to be paid to equipment, cleaning and hygiene to reduce risk.

- Working materials, such as tools or domestic appliances, should be assigned to an individual and not shared if possible. If they need to be shared, they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Discussing with households ahead of a visit to ask that social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable) are maintained between workers and householders, if possible.

- [ ] Asking that households leave all internal doors open to minimise contact with door handles.

- [ ] Identifying busy areas across the household where people travel to, from or through, for example, stairs and corridors, and minimising movement within these areas.

- [ ] Bringing your own food and drink to households and having breaks outside where possible.

- [ ] Limiting the number of workers within a confined space to maintain social distancing.

- [ ] Using a fixed pairing system if workers have to be in close proximity. For example, during two-person assembly or maintenance.

- [ ] Allocating the same workers to a household where jobs are repetitive. Employers and agencies should introduce fixed pairing to have the same individuals allocated to a household where jobs are repetitive in nature.

3.3 Appointments in the home

Objective: To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Using remote working tools to avoid in-person appointments.

- [ ] Only absolutely necessary participants should physically attend appointments and should maintain social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable).

- [ ] Avoiding transmission during appointments, for example, from sharing pens, documents and other objects.

- [ ] Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.

3.4 Accidents, security and other incidents

Objective: To prioritise safety during incidents.

- In an emergency, for example, an accident, provision of first aid, fire or break-in, people do not have to comply with social distancing guidelines 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.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Reviewing your incident and emergency procedures to ensure they reflect the social distancing principles as far as possible.

- [ ] Considering the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may need mitigations.

4. Interacting with householders

Objective: To make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety.

4.1 Providing and explaining available guidance

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] If you are an employer or agency, providing your workers with information about how to operate safely in people's homes.

- [ ] Communicating with households prior to arrival, and on arrival, to ensure the household understands the social distancing and hygiene measures that should be followed once work has commenced.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

5. Cleaning the work area

5.1 Keeping the work area clean

Cleaning a boiler before repair

Objective: To keep work areas in a home clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your usual cleaning products.

- [ ] Arranging methods of safely disposing waste with the householder.

- [ ] Removing all waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift and at the end of a job.

- [ ] If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the specific guidance.

- [ ] Maintaining good ventilation in the work environment, for example keeping windows or doors open.

- [ ] Using non recycling bins to dispose of single use face coverings and PPE. You should refer to guidance for information on how to dispose of personal or business waste, including face coverings and PPE.

5.2 Hygiene

Washing hands frequently when carrying out work

Objective: To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Washing your hands more often than usual for 20 seconds using soap and water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose.

- [ ] Reducing the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve, not your hands. Throw the tissue in a bin immediately, then wash your hands.

- [ ] Cleaning regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

- [ ] If handwashing facilities are not accessible, you should carry hand sanitiser.

5.3 Handling goods, merchandise and other materials

Objective: To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come in to or are removed from the home.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Ensuring social distancing and hygiene measures are followed when supplies or tools are needed to be delivered to a home, for example, building supplies.

- [ ] Collecting materials in bulk to reduce the frequency of needing to visit shops to buy or collect materials.

- [ ] Removing waste in bulk if possible.

6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks.

Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.

At the start of this document we described the steps you need to take to manage COVID-19 risk in the workplace. This includes working from home and maintaining social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable). When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE.

The exception is clinical settings, like a hospital, or a small handful of other roles for which Public Health England advises use of PPE. For example, first responders and immigration enforcement officers. If you are in one of these groups you should refer to the advice at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-plan/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-plan

and

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings.

Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly.

6.1 Face coverings

There is growing evidence that wearing a face covering in an enclosed space helps protect individuals and those around them from COVID-19.

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. It is not the same as a face mask, such as the surgical masks or respirators used by health and care workers. Similarly, face coverings are not the same as the PPE used to manage risks like dust and spray in an industrial context. Supplies of PPE, including face masks, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings like those exposed to dust hazards.

Face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

Face coverings are mandatory on public transport and will be mandatory in a number of indoor premises from the 24th July 2020.

People are also encouraged to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where there are people they do not normally meet. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and before and after taking them off.

Find further detail on when and where to wear face coverings.

Some people don't have to wear a face covering including for health, age or equality reasons.

6.1 Face coverings (continued)

Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling workers:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and before and after removing it.

- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.

- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.

- Continue to wash your hands regularly.

- Change and wash your face covering daily.

- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.

- Practise social distancing wherever possible.

Please be mindful that the wearing of a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

7. Workforce management – guidance for employers and agencies

7.1 Team working and outbreaks

7.1.1 Team working and working groups

Objective: To change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each worker has.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Where multiple workers are in a home, creating fixed teams of workers who carry out their duties in those teams, and minimising contact between each team.

- [ ] Identifying areas where people need to hand things to each other (such as shared tools and domestic appliances) and finding ways to remove direct contact, for example, by using drop-off points or transfer zones.

- [ ] Allocating the same worker to the same household each time there is a visit, for example, the same cleaner each time.

- [ ] You should assist the Test and Trace service by keeping a temporary record of your staff shift patterns for 21 days and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks. Further guidance can be found here.

7.1 Team working and outbreaks

7.1.2 Outbreaks in the workplace

Objective: To provide guidance in an event of a COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] As part of your risk assessment, you should ensure you have an up to date plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak. This plan should nominate a single point of contact (SPOC) where possible who should lead on contacting local Public Health teams.

- [ ] If there is more than one case of COVID-19 associated with your place of work, you should contact your local PHE health protection team to report the suspected outbreak. Find your local PHE health protection team.

- [ ] If the local PHE health protection team declares an outbreak, you will be asked to record details of symptomatic staff and assist with identifying contacts. You should therefore ensure all employment records are up to date. You will be provided with information about the outbreak management process, which will help you to implement control measures, assist with communications to staff, and reinforce prevention messages.

7.2 Work-related travel

7.2.1 Cars, accommodation and visits

Objective: To avoid unnecessary work-related travel and keep workers safe when they do need to travel between homes.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Follow the social distancing guidelines outlined in Section 3.1 – 'Coming to and leaving a home for work'.

- [ ] Where workers need to move between different homes and locations to complete their work, social distancing and hygiene advice should be considered, especially before entering other homes.

- [ ] Walking or cycling where possible. Where not possible, you can use public transport or drive. You must wear a face covering when using public transport.

- [ ] Where workers are required to stay away from their home, centrally logging the stay and making sure any overnight accommodation meets social distancing guidelines.

7.3 Communications and Training

7.3.1 Returning to work

Objective: To make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working amongst your workers.

- [ ] Engaging with workers and worker representatives through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.

7.3 Communications and Training

7.3.2 Ongoing communications

Objective: To make sure all workers are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented or updated.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Ongoing engagement with workers, (including through trades unions or employee representative groups) to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.

- [ ] Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19).

- [ ] Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration of groups for which English may not be their first language and those with protected characteristics such as visual impairments.

- [ ] Communicating approaches and operational procedures to households to help their adoption before work commences.

8. Deliveries to the home

Objective

To maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave a home.

Safe delivery of goods to the home

Steps that will usually be needed:

- [ ] Minimising contact during deliveries wherever possible.

- [ ] Where possible and safe, having single workers load or unload vehicles.

- [ ] Where possible, using the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed.

- [ ] Minimising the contact during delivery, for example, by calling to inform of your arrival rather than ringing the doorbell.

- [ ] Minimising the contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example, using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents.

Where to obtain further guidance

34

COVID-19: what you need to do

https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Support for businesses and employers during coronavirus (COVID-19)

https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support

General guidance for employees during coronavirus (COVID-19)

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-and-support-for-employees-during-coronavirus-covid-19

COVID-19: guidance for tradespeople and working in people's homes

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance#tradespeople-and-working-in-peoples-homes

Appendix
Definitions

Clinically extremely vulnerable	Clinically extremely vulnerable people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group, or will have been told by their GP. Guidance on who is in this group can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19
Clinically vulnerable people	Clinically vulnerable people include those aged 70 or over and those with some underlying health conditions, all members of this group are listed in the 'clinically vulnerable' section here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing

34

Appendix
Definitions

Support Bubbles	The term 'support bubble' refers to single adult households, where adults live alone or with dependent children only, expanding their support network so that it includes one other household of any size. Further guidance on this can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household

HM Government