



Title: Covid-19 IPC Guidance

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This briefing summary note is correct at the time of publishing. However, guidance on COVID-19 is subject to regular updates on GOV.UK, please use the hyperlinks to read further.

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Sustained community transmission occurring across UK

COVID-19: Epidemiological definitions of outbreaks and clusters in particular settings

Background

This guidance provides nationally agreed epidemiological definitions for coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreaks and clusters in particular settings. The definitions are to inform local alerts and action and to provide consistency.

The definitions should be used in conjunction with the [communicable disease outbreak management - operational guidance](#), local outbreak management plans, COVID-19 specific national response systems and the [COVID-19: infection prevention and control guidance](#).

Here is the link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/epidemiological-definitions-of-outbreaks-and-clusters-in-particular-settings>

SICPs are the basic IPC measures necessary to reduce the risk of transmitting infectious agents from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection and are required across ALL COVID-19 pathways.

SICPs must therefore be used by all staff, in all care settings, at all times and for all patients/individuals, whether infection is known or not, to ensure the safety of patients/individuals, staff and visitors. This section highlights the key measures for the COVID-19 pathways. Please refer to the practical guide ¹ for additional information on the other elements which remain unchanged.

The elements of SICPs are:

- patient placement and assessment for infection risk (screening/triaging)
- hand hygiene
- respiratory and cough hygiene
- personal protective equipment (see below)
- safe management of the care environment (see below)
- safe management of care equipment (see below)
- safe management of healthcare linen
- safe management of blood and body fluids

- safe disposal of waste (including sharps)
- occupational safety: prevention and exposure management
- maintaining social/physical distancing (new SICP due to COVID-19)

Here is the link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/standard-infection-prevention-control-precautions-sicpsall-pathways>

Risk pathways to support returning services

Background

This guidance was updated on 21st August and supersedes the COVID-19 UK IPC guidance (18 June 2020).

The key message is:

Patients/individuals to be managed in 3 COVID-19 pathways:

- High risk: there is no change in recommendations for IPC or for the use of PPE by staff when managing patients/individuals who have, or are likely to have, COVID-19
- Medium risk: this includes patients/individuals who have no symptoms of COVID-19 but do not have a COVID-19 SARS- CoV-2 PCR test result
- Low risk: patients/individuals with no symptoms and a negative COVID-19 SARS- CoV-2 PCR test who have self-isolated prior to admission.

Here is the link to the guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

Main changes to the guidance

1. Local and national prevalence and incidence data will be used to guide returning services as advised by country specific/public health organisations.
2. Patients/individuals to be managed in 3 COVID-19 pathways, high, medium and low risk.
3. Sessional use of single use PPE items has been minimised and only applies to extended use of facemasks for healthcare workers.

4. The use of facemasks (for staff) and face coverings (if tolerated by the individual) is recommended in England and Scotland in addition to social distancing and hand hygiene for staff, patients/individuals and visitors in both clinical and non-clinical areas to further reduce transmission risk.
5. Physical distancing of 2 metres is considered standard practice in all health and care settings.
6. Patients/individuals on a low risk pathway require Standard Infection Prevention & Control Precautions for surgery or procedures.

Face coverings: when to wear one and how to make your own

Published 14 July 2020

Last updated 21 August 2020

Background

This guidance explains what face coverings are, their role in reducing the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), the settings in which they are recommended, and how they should be safely used and stored. This information is based on current scientific evidence and is subject to change. This information relates to the use of face coverings in public spaces where social distancing is not always possible.

Here is the link to the guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

These are the changes made

- Added that face coverings are required in sports stadiums.
- Updated exemptions to show when face coverings are not required. This includes (but is not limited to):
 - children under the age of 11 (Public Health England do not recommended face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
 - people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability

- employees of indoor settings (or people acting on their behalf, such as someone leading part of a prayer service) or [transport workers](#) - although employers may consider their use where appropriate and where other mitigations are not in place, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidelines
- police officers and other emergency workers, given that this may interfere with their ability to serve the public
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others - including if it would negatively impact on your ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity

COVID-19: personal protective equipment use for aerosol generating procedures

Background:

Guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for aerosol generating procedures (AGPs)

Published:

10 January 2020

Last updated 21 August 2020

Here is the link to the guidance:

[COVID-19: personal protective equipment use for aerosol generating procedures](#)

These are the changes made:

The headings on the instruction sheets were updated, in line with the written guidance, to include airborne precautions.

NHS Test and Trace: how it works

Background:

This guidance which has information on coronavirus test and trace. The guidance was first published on 27 May 2020 and last updated on 21 August 2020. This guidance provides an overview of the NHS Test and Trace service, including what happens if you test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive.

The NHS Test and Trace service:

- ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus, and also includes targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS and social care staff and care home residents
- helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus

Here is the link to the guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): [NHS Test and Trace: how it works](#)

These are the changes made:

How the NHS Test and Trace service works

Part 1: for someone with symptoms of coronavirus

- isolate: as soon as you experience coronavirus symptoms, medical advice is clear: you must self-isolate for at least 10 days. Anyone else in your household must self-isolate for 14 days from when you started having symptoms
- test: get a free NHS test immediately to check if you have coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access
- results: if your test is positive, you must complete the remainder of your 10-day self-isolation. Anyone in your household must also complete self-isolation for 14 days from when you started having symptoms. If your test is negative, you and other household members no longer need to self-isolate
- share contacts: if you test positive for coronavirus, the NHS Test and Trace service will send you a text or email alert or call you with instructions of how to share details of people with whom you have had close, recent contact and places you have visited. It is important that you respond

as soon as possible so that we can give appropriate advice to those who need it. You will be told to do this online via a secure website or you will be called by one of our contract tracers.

Part 2: if you are contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service because you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus

- alert: you will be alerted by the NHS Test and Trace service if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. The alert will usually come by text, email or phone call. You should then log on to the NHS Test and Trace website, which is normally the easiest way for you and the service to communicate with each other – but, if not, a trained call handler will talk you through what you must do. Under-18s will get a phone call and a parent or guardian will be asked to give permission for the call to continue
- isolate: you will be told to begin self-isolation for **14 days** from your last contact with the person who has tested positive. It's really important to do this even if you don't feel unwell because, if you have been infected, you could become infectious to others at any point up to 14 days. **Your household doesn't need to self-isolate with you, if you do not have symptoms, but** they must take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing and handwashing and avoid contact with you at home
- test if needed: if you develop symptoms of coronavirus, other members of your household must self-isolate immediately at home for **14 days** and you must get a test to check if you have coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access. If your test is positive, you must continue to stay at home for at least 10 days and we will get in touch to ask about your contacts since they must self-isolate. **If your test is negative, you must still complete your 14-day self-isolation period because the virus may not be detectable yet** - this is crucial to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus.

Hospital Discharge Service Guidance

Updated 21 August

Background

Guidance on how health and care systems should support the safe and timely discharge of people who no longer need to stay in hospital.

Hospital discharge service: Policy and Operating model

This document sets out how health and care systems can ensure that people:

- are discharged safely from hospital to the most appropriate place
- continue to receive the care and support they need after they leave hospital

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/911252/Hospital_Discharge_Policy.pdf

Hospital discharge service: action cards

The action cards summarise the responsibilities of health and care staff in the hospital discharge process

This document outlines how your role will alter in line with the overarching discharge framework. These changes will ensure that people who need care receive it in the right setting.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hospital-discharge-service-action-cards/hospital-discharge-service-requirements-action-cards-for-staff>

Reintroduction of NHS Continuing Healthcare

Sets out how clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) will restart NHS continuing healthcare (CHC) assessment processes from 1 September 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reintroduction-of-nhs-continuing-healthcare/reintroduction-of-nhs-continuing-healthcare-nhs-chc-guidance>