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Coronavirus (COVID-19) (/coronavirus)

Guidance and support

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Part of

[Support for businesses and self-employed people during coronavirus \(/coronavirus-taxon/businesses-and-self-employed-people\)](/coronavirus-taxon/businesses-and-self-employed-people)

Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

From:

[Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#) and [Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport](#)

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9 November 2021, [see all updates \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/updates\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/updates)

1. [Contents \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19)

Shops, branches, and close contact services

Guidance for people who work in or run shops, branches, stores or similar environments and for people who provide close contact services, including hairdressers and beauticians.

Applies to England

[Guidance for Wales](#)

[Guidance for Scotland](#)

[Guidance for Northern Ireland](#)

This guide was updated on 9 November 2021.

Show all sections

What's changedShow

Guidance updated (most sections) to improve readability. Additional information added to sections on:

- [managing risk](#)
- [ventilation](#)
- [self-isolation](#)
- [reducing contact for workers](#)

Priority actions to take - what businesses need to do to protect staff and customersShow

There are 6 main actions you can take to protect yourself, your staff and your customers during ~~COVID-19~~.

1. Complete a health and safety risk assessment that includes the risk from ~~COVID-19~~

Complete a risk assessment, considering the measures set out in this guidance. Also consider reasonable adjustments needed for staff and customers with disabilities. Share it with all your staff. Keep it updated. [Find out how to do a risk assessment](#).

2. Provide adequate ventilation

You should make sure there is an adequate supply of fresh air to indoor spaces where there are people present. This can be natural ventilation through opening windows, doors and vents, mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts, or a combination of both. In particular, you should identify any poorly ventilated spaces in your premises that are usually occupied and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas. In some places, a ~~CO2~~ monitor can help identify if the space is poorly ventilated. [Read the advice on air conditioning and ventilation on the ~~HSE~~ website](#).

3. Clean more often

It's especially important to clean surfaces that people touch a lot. You should ask your staff and your customers to use hand sanitiser and to clean their hands frequently.

4. Turn away people with ~~COVID-19~~ symptoms

Staff members or customers should self-isolate immediately if they show any symptoms of ~~COVID-19~~ and book a ~~PCR~~ test as soon as possible, even if they are fully vaccinated. If they receive a positive ~~COVID-19~~ test result, they must complete their full self-isolation period. They must also self-isolate if they have been informed by NHS Test and Trace that they are a contact of a person who has had a positive test result for ~~COVID-19~~ – unless they're exempt. If you know that a worker is self-isolating, you must not allow them to come to work. It is an offence to do this. [Find out more about who should self-isolate](#).

5. Enable people to check in at your venue

You're no longer legally required to collect customer contact details, but doing so will support NHS Test and Trace to contact those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 so that they can book a test. You can enable people to check in to your venue by displaying an [NHS QR code poster](#). You do not have to ask people to check in or turn people away if they refuse. If you choose to display a QR code, you should also have a system in place to record contact details for people who want to check in but do not have the app.

6. Communicate and train

Keep all your workers, contractors and visitors up-to-date on how you're using and updating safety measures.

These are the priority actions to make your business safer during coronavirus, you should also read the full version of the guidance below.

IntroductionShow

This guide will help you understand how to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the workplace.

Who this guide is for

This document is one of a set of documents about how to work safely in different types of workplace. This is designed to be relevant for people who work in or run close contact services, shops, branches, stores or similar environments.

Shops and branches include all retail stores. This includes:

- food retailers
- chemists
- hardware/homeware stores
- fashion shops
- charity shops
- betting shops and high street gambling arcades
- car dealerships
- auction houses
- antique stores
- retail art galleries
- photography studios
- gift shops and retail spaces in theatres, museums, libraries, heritage sites and tourism sites
- mobile phone stores
- indoor and outdoor markets
- craft fairs
- similar types of retail

Branches include:

- bank branches
- post offices
- other money businesses

Close contact services include:

- hairdressing
- barbershops
- beauty and nail bars
- makeup
- tattoo studios
- tanning salons or booths
- spas and wellness businesses
- sports and massage therapy
- well-being and holistic locations
- dress fitters
- tailors
- fashion designers

You should also follow this guidance if you:

- provide mobile close contact services from your homes or in other people's homes
- provide close contact services in retail environments and the arts
- are studying hair and beauty in vocational training environments

Those running events should refer to the [organised events guidance](#) for more information.

We expect to update this document over time. You can check for updates at www.gov.uk/workingsafely.

How to use this guidance [Show](#)

This document sets out guidance on how to manage workplaces safely while reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19. It provides practical considerations of how to apply this in the workplace.

You're not required to implement every action listed in this guidance. Your updated risk assessment should consider which mitigations are likely to be most effective and appropriate for your business. This will depend on the different ways the virus can spread (set out in [Section 1.2 - Managing risk](#)) and which present the greatest risk in your workplace. It will also depend on the nature of your business, including the size and type of business, how it's organised, operated, managed and regulated. You should ensure that your risk assessment can explain the mitigations in place and why they have been chosen. You should monitor any measures you introduce to make sure they continue to protect customers, visitors and workers.

This guidance does not supersede your existing legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment and equalities duties. It's important that as a business or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations. This includes those relating to equality between individuals with different protected characteristics. This contains non-statutory guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations.

Remember this guidance does not just cover your employees. You must also take into account customers, agency workers, contractors and other people who visit your workplace.

To help you decide which actions to take, you must carry out an appropriate assessment. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers. You may also want to consult industry representatives.

1. Thinking about risk

In this section

- [1.1 Overview](#)
- [1.2 Managing risk](#)
- [1.3 Sharing the results of your risk assessment](#)

Objective: That all employers carry out a risk assessment that includes the risk of COVID-19.

As an employer, you must by law protect workers and others from risks to their health and safety. This includes risks from COVID-19.

COVID-19 transmission is a hazard that can occur in the workplace. You should manage it in the same way as other workplace hazards. This includes:

- completing a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace
- identifying control measures to manage that risk

Failure to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and put in place sufficient control measures to manage the risk may be considered a breach of health and safety law.

1.1 Overview

Your risk assessment will help you decide if you have done everything you need to. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has [interactive tools to support you](#).

You should also consider the security implications of any decisions and control measures you intend to put in place. Any revisions could present new or altered security risks you may need to mitigate.

You do not have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment if you:

- have fewer than 5 workers
- are self-employed

However, you may still find it useful to do so.

Consult your workers

As an employer, you have a legal duty to consult workers on health and safety matters. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the work they do and how you will manage the risks from COVID-19.

You may do this by consulting with any recognised trade union health and safety representatives.

If you do not have any, you can consult with a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues.

Enforcement

Enforcing authorities identify employers who do not take action to comply with the relevant law and guidance to control public health risks. When they do, they can take a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. The [HSE](#) and your local authority are examples of enforcing authorities.

When they identify serious breaches, enforcing authorities can do a number of things. They include:

- sending you a letter
- serving you with an improvement or prohibition notice
- bringing a prosecution against you, in cases where they identify significant breaches

When an enforcing authority issues you with any advice or notices, you should respond rapidly and within their timescales.

The vast majority of employers are responsible. They will work 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.

Local authorities have the power to place public health restrictions on businesses in cases where a serious and imminent threat to public health is identified.

How to raise a concern

If you're an employee, you can contact:

- your employee representative
- your trade union if you have one

You can also contact [HSE](#) at:

HSE COVID-19 enquiries

Telephone: 0300 790 6787 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm)

Online: [working safely enquiry form](#)

1.2 Managing risk

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures.

As an employer, you have a duty to take reasonably practical steps to manage risks in the workplace.

You must work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace to protect everybody's health and safety.

Consider reasonable adjustments for workers or customers with disabilities, including hidden disabilities that are not immediately obvious.

How **COVID-19** is spread

The main way of spreading COVID-19 is through close contact with an infected person. When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles (droplets and aerosols) containing the virus that causes COVID-19. These particles can be breathed in by another person.

Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated with COVID-19, when people who are infected cough or sneeze near them or if they touch them.

Managing risk and completing your risk assessment

To carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, you should consider the different ways the virus can spread and put in place measures to reduce the risk of each of these different ways.

You should use this guidance to consider the risk within your business and help decide the appropriate measures to adopt.

This guidance suggests ways to reduce the risk of each of the different ways the virus can spread. You may also identify other measures to reduce risk when carrying out your risk assessment. Some of the measures may help reduce the risk of more than one of the different ways the virus can spread.

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through aerosols, you should consider:

1. Providing adequate ventilation:

- through doors, windows and vents
- by mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts
- through a combination of both

This is because fresh air helps to dilute the virus in occupied spaces. If you have mechanical ventilation, you should maximise the fresh air your system draws in and avoid systems that only recirculate air and do not draw in a supply of fresh air.

2. Identifying any poorly ventilated spaces and taking steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas. A CO2 monitor could help you assess whether a space is poorly ventilated. If you can't improve ventilation in poorly ventilated spaces, minimise use of these spaces.
3. Encouraging use of outside space where practical. Identifying any areas of congestion in your venue and considering if any reasonable steps could be taken to avoid this.

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through droplets, consider:

1. Putting in place measures to reduce contact between people, who do not normally mix, for example, customers and workers. Where practical, measures could include:

- reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using designated space or seating for different teams, 'fixed teams', 'partnering' or 'cohorting' so each person works with the same consistent group
- giving preference to back-to-back or side-to-side working or considering using screens or barriers to separate people from each other, bearing in mind that screens are only likely to be beneficial if placed between people who will come into close face-to-face proximity with each other

2. Encouraging the use of face coverings by workers or customers in enclosed and crowded spaces. There is no longer a legal requirement for staff and customers to wear face coverings in retail or close contact services settings. If you wish to require the use of face

coverings by workers and customers in a workplace or venue, you will need to consider carefully how this fits with other obligations to workers and customers arising from the law on employment rights, health and safety and equality legislation.

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through contaminated surfaces, you should consider:

1. Advising customers and workers to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser frequently. This is particularly important before and after touching shared objects or surfaces that other people touch regularly.
2. Maintaining regular cleaning of surfaces, particularly surfaces that people touch regularly.

You should also make sure that workers and customers who feel unwell stay at home and do not attend the venue. By law, businesses must not allow a self-isolating worker to come to work.

If your building has been unoccupied for a period during any lockdowns, you should [read the HSE advice on legionella risks](#).

You should consider the recommendations in the rest of this document as you carry out your risk assessment. You could also consider any advice that has been produced specifically for your sector, for example by trade associations or trades unions.

If you're currently operating, you should already have carried out a risk assessment. Use this document to identify any adjustments or further improvements you should make.

You must review the measures you have put in place to make sure they're still working or if there are changes in the workplace that could lead to new risks.

1.2 Sharing the results of your risk assessment

You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce.

If possible, consider publishing the results on your website. We would expect all businesses with over 50 workers to do so.

All businesses should show their workers and customers that they have:

- properly assessed their risk
- taken appropriate measures to mitigate this

2. Reducing risk for customers and visitorsShow

In this section

- [2.1 Supporting NHS Test and Trace \(close contact services and betting shops only\)](#)
- [2.2 Managing your customers](#)
- [2.3 Providing and explaining available guidance](#)
- [2.4 Customer toilets](#)
- [2.5 Working in other people's homes](#)

2.1 Supporting NHS Test and Trace (close contact services and betting shops only)

Objective: to support NHS Test and Trace.

Close contact services and betting shops are encouraged to display an official NHS QR code poster. Although it's not legally required to do so, this will support NHS Test and Trace to contact those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 so that they can book a test. You can [generate a QR poster online](#), to enable individuals to check in using the NHS COVID-19 app. You should also have a system in place to record contact details for those who do not have the app.

2.2 Managing your customers

Objective: To reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and protect the health of customers when visiting stores, outlets or close contact services.

2.2.1 In shops and branches

You should consider:

1. Encouraging customers to use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises. Do this to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading from people touching products while browsing.
2. Re-thinking how assistance is provided. For example, using fixed pairs of colleagues to lift heavy objects rather than a single colleague lifting with a customer.
3. Keeping contacts around transactions to a minimum. Where possible, use contactless payments.
4. For customer restaurants and cafes, you should refer to [guidance on keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19 in restaurants, pubs, bars, nightclubs and takeaway services](#).

2.2.2 In close contact services

You should consider:

1. Operating an appointment-only system.
2. Asking COVID-19 related screening questions to clients ahead of their appointment, including:
 - Are you required to be self-isolating?
 - Have you had the recent onset of a new continuous cough?
 - Do you have a high temperature?
 - Have you noticed a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell?

If the client has any of these symptoms, however mild, they should stay at home and reschedule their appointment.

3. Ensuring any changes to entrances, exits and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them. This includes disabled clients. For example, maintain pedestrian and parking access for disabled clients.
4. Encouraging clients to arrive at the time of their scheduled appointment.
5. Informing clients and contractors of guidance about visiting the premises before and on arrival. This includes information on websites, on booking forms and in entrance ways.
6. Keeping contacts around transactions to a minimum. Where possible, use contactless payments. This includes tips.

2.3 Providing and explaining available guidance

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

You should consider:

1. Giving people clear guidance on expected customer behaviours and on how to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 when they arrive. For example, with signage and visual aids. Consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics, such as those who are hearing or visually impaired.
2. Informing customers that if they choose to wear a face covering they should be prepared to remove it safely if asked to do so by police officers and staff for identification.
3. Providing written or spoken communication of the latest guidelines to both workers and customers, inside and outside the store. You should display posters or information setting out how clients should behave on your premises to keep everyone safe. Consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics. For example, those who are hearing or visually impaired.
4. Ensuring the information you provide to visitors does not compromise their safety.

2.4 Customer toilets

Objective: To ensure that toilets are kept open and to ensure/promote good hygiene and cleanliness in toilet facilities.

Public toilets, portable toilets and toilets inside premises should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

You should consider:

1. Using signs and posters to make people aware:
 - of how to wash their hands well
 - that they should wash their hands frequently
 - that they should not touch their faces
 - that they should cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into their arms if a tissue is not available
2. Making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe, practical and accessible. Ensure suitable handwashing facilities are available. This includes running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying. Namely paper towels, continuous roller towels or hand dryers. Consider the needs of people with disabilities.
3. Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. You should use normal cleaning products and pay attention to frequently hand touched surfaces. Consider using disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces.
4. Keeping the facilities well ventilated. For example by ensuring any mechanical ventilation works effectively and opening windows and vents where possible.
5. Taking special care when cleaning portable toilets and larger toilet blocks.
6. Putting up a visible cleaning schedule. Keep it up to date and visible.
7. Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.

2.5 Working in other people's homes

Objective: To work safely in other people's homes.

If you're going to someone else's home to work, for example to provide mobile hairdressing or personal care services, you should communicate with households before any visits to discuss how the work will be carried out to reduce risk for all parties.

You should not carry out work in households that are isolating because one or more family members has symptoms, unless you're remedying a direct risk to the safety of the household or the public.

When you're working in a household where somebody may consider themselves to be at higher risk, you should consider making prior arrangements to avoid face-to-face contact if possible.

You should be particularly strict about handwashing, coughing and sneezing hygiene, such as covering your nose and mouth and disposing of single-use tissues.

You should consider:

1. Asking households to leave all internal doors open, to minimise contact with door handles.
2. Identifying busy areas across the household where people travel to, from or through. For example, stairs and corridors. Minimise movement within these areas.
3. Taking breaks outside where possible.
4. Limiting the number of workers within a confined space.
5. Arranging methods of safely disposing of waste with the householder.
6. Allocating the same worker to the same household each time there is a visit where possible. For example, the same cleaner each time.

3. VentilationShow

In this section

- [3.1 Identifying poorly ventilated spaces](#)
- [3.2 Using carbon dioxide \(CO₂\) monitors](#)

Objective: To use ventilation to mitigate the risk of aerosol (airborne) spread of COVID-19 in enclosed spaces.

Good ventilation brings fresh air into indoor spaces. The more fresh air that is brought inside, the more diluted any airborne virus will become. In poorly ventilated spaces, residual virus can remain in the air after an infected person has left and increase the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

You should ensure there is an adequate supply of fresh air in your premises. You can do this through:

1. Opening windows, air vents and doors to improve natural ventilation. Opening doors and windows even for a brief period (for example, between meetings) can help refresh the air and reduce COVID-19 particles in the air. Opening the windows and doors fully, where possible, will provide the most amount of fresh air into the space.
2. If you use mechanical ventilation, ensure that your systems are set to maximise fresh air and minimise air recirculation. It's not advised to recirculate air from one space to another, which increases the risk of transmission. However, recirculation units that do not draw in a supply of fresh air can remain in operation as long as there is an alternative supply of outdoor air.

3. Identifying any poorly ventilated spaces that are usually occupied as part of your risk assessment, and taking steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas (see below for further details).

You can also encourage the use of outside space where practical, in particular for higher risk activity such as exercise or when people are singing or raising their voices.

Ventilation and workplace temperature

There are steps you can take to make sure your workplace is adequately ventilated throughout the winter months, such as partially opening windows and doors, and opening higher-level windows.

[Read HSE advice on balancing ventilation with workplace temperature.](#)

[Watch a video which explains how ventilation reduces the risk of transmission.](#)

3.1 Identifying and managing poorly ventilated spaces

The priority for considering ventilation as a potential mitigation within your risk assessment is to identify areas of your workplace that are usually occupied, and poorly ventilated. You can do this by:

- looking for areas where people are present for an extended time and where there is no mechanical ventilation and no natural ventilation (such as open windows, vents or doors)
- using a CO_2 monitor - an average CO_2 concentration of above 1500ppm when a room is occupied is an indicator of poor ventilation
- where there is continuous talking or singing, or high levels of physical activity (such as dancing or exercise) providing ventilation sufficient to keep CO_2 levels below 800ppm is recommended.

The risk from poor ventilation is likely to be greater the more people are present in a space, the longer they are present in the space, and if people are participating in energetic activity, such as exercising, playing sport, dancing or talking loudly.

You should prioritise poorly ventilated areas for improvement to reduce the risk of aerosol transmission. In many cases, you can improve ventilation by opening doors, windows and vents, if possible, and by ensuring that any mechanical ventilation system is set to maximise fresh air and minimise air recirculation.

If these options are not available or do not provide sufficient ventilation (for example if CO_2 readings remain above recommended levels or the room continues to feel stuffy), you could consider the following options:

- changing how these spaces are used, for example, if practical for your business, restricting the length of time people spend in these spaces or the number of people using them at a single time
- asking a ventilation engineer to check the performance of your mechanical ventilation system if it hasn't been serviced recently
- installing a mechanical ventilation system (upon advice from a ventilation engineer), if there is no mechanical ventilation already or if the existing system does not provide fresh air
- installing an air cleaning or filtration unit. . Air cleaning or filtration is not a substitute for good ventilation, but where poor ventilation cannot be improved in other ways a suitable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter or ultraviolet air purifier can reduce airborne coronavirus in the space. Read [further advice on air cleaning and filtration devices from HSE](#).

[HSE](#) provides guidance on how to identify a poorly ventilated space. It also explains steps you can take to improve ventilation in these spaces. [Read advice on air conditioning and ventilation](#).

3.2 Using carbon dioxide (CO₂) monitors to identify poorly ventilated spaces

People exhale carbon dioxide (CO₂) when they breathe out. If there is a build-up of CO₂ in an area it can indicate that ventilation needs improving.

Although CO₂ levels are not a direct measure of possible exposure to COVID-19, checking levels using a monitor can help you identify poorly ventilated areas. [Read advice on how to use a CO₂ monitor](#).

How the measurements can help you take action

CO₂ measurements should be used as a broad guide to ventilation within a space rather than treating them as safe thresholds.

Outdoor levels are around 400 parts per million (ppm) and indoors a consistent CO₂ value less than 800ppm is likely to indicate that a space is well ventilated.

An average CO₂ concentration of above 1500ppm when a room is occupied is an indicator of poor ventilation. You should take action to improve ventilation where CO₂ readings are consistently higher than 1500ppm.

Where there is continuous talking or singing, or high levels of physical activity (such as dancing, playing sport or exercising), providing ventilation sufficient to keep CO₂ levels below 800ppm is recommended.

Where CO₂ monitors can help

CO₂ monitors can be used to check ventilation in a wide range of settings.

In large areas, multiple sensors may be required to provide meaningful information.

There are some spaces where CO₂ monitors are less likely to provide useful readings. These are:

- areas occupied by people for short periods or for varying amounts of time

- areas where air cleaning units are in use - filtration can remove contaminants like [COVID-19](#) from the air but not remove [CO2](#)
- small spaces like changing rooms, toilets or small meeting rooms
- spaces used by low numbers of people
- areas where [CO2](#) is produced as part of a work process

Read [HSE advice on the suitability of CO2 monitoring in different types of space](#). Where [CO2](#) monitors cannot be used, you should still identify poorly ventilated spaces and provide adequate ventilation.

4. Who should go to work

In this section

- [4.1 Protecting people who are at higher risk](#)
- [4.2 People who need to self-isolate](#)
- [4.3 Equality in the workplace](#)

Objective: To support a safe return to the workplace. To help businesses engage with their workers to find an approach that best suits their needs.

Over the summer, we have seen a gradual return to offices and workplaces. As workers return to their workplaces, employers should continue to follow this guidance. When considering a return to the workplace, employers should:

- reflect this in their workplace risk assessment
- take action to manage the risk of [COVID-19](#) spreading, in line with the guidance

You should discuss a return to the workplace with workers, and trade unions to make working arrangements that meet both business and individual needs.

You should remain responsive to workers' needs and continue to use measures that help to reduce the risks to individuals in the workplace, giving extra consideration to people at higher risk and to workers facing mental and physical health difficulties.

We recognise that ways of working have shifted through the pandemic, and many employers are looking at future hybrid models which include an element of home working. Whatever model you choose to follow for the longer term, you should discuss it with those who might be affected and also with employee representatives.

You should discuss the timing and, where applicable, phasing of any return with workers. To help them to feel safe returning to work consult with them on any health and safety measures you have put in place to reduce the risk of [COVID-19](#) spreading.

4.1 Protecting people who are at higher risk

Objective: To support those who are at higher risk of infection and/or an adverse outcome if infected.

You should give extra consideration to people at higher risk and to workers facing mental and physical health difficulties. You should continue to support these workers by discussing with them their individual needs and supporting them in taking any additional precautions advised by their clinicians.

Consider providing support for workers around mental health and wellbeing. This could include advice or telephone support.

4.2 People who need to self-isolate

Objective: To stop people physically coming to work, when they're legally required to stay home.

This includes people who:

- have tested positive for [COVID-19](#)
- have been told to self-isolate by [NHS Test and Trace](#)

People who do not need to self-isolate

People who have had close contact with someone with [COVID-19](#) do not need to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- they're fully vaccinated
- they're under 18 years 6 months old
- they're taking part in or have taken part in an approved [COVID-19](#) vaccine trial
- they're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

If they get any [COVID-19](#) symptoms, they should self-isolate immediately and [get a PCR test](#).

[Find out more about when to self-isolate](#).

You should consider:

1. Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating, if appropriate. It's illegal to knowingly require or encourage someone who is legally required to self-isolate to come to work.
2. Reading the guidance related to statutory sick pay due to COVID-19 for:
 - [employers](#)
 - [employees](#)
3. Ensuring any workers who have symptoms of COVID-19 self-isolate immediately, even if their symptoms are mild. They should continue to self-isolate until they get a negative [PCR test result](#) or for the next 10 full days. This means that if, for example, their symptoms started at any time on the 15th of the month their isolation period ends at 11:59pm on the 25th.

These symptoms are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste

Workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate immediately and continue for the next 10 full days, even if they are fully vaccinated.

Workers that test positive but have no symptoms must also self-isolate in this way. Sometimes workers develop symptoms during their isolation period. In these cases, they must restart their 10-day self-isolation period from the day after they develop symptoms. [See the guidance for people who live in households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infections.](#)

Self-isolating workers who have tested negative for COVID-19 may be able to return to work. Some exceptions apply. [See the guidance on when you need to keep self-isolating.](#)

4. Ensuring workers who are contacts of individuals who test positive for COVID-19 self-isolate for a period of 10 days, unless they're [fully vaccinated or meet the other criteria](#).
5. Ensuring any workers who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace do so. See the guidance for [those who have been in contact with, but do not live with, a person who has tested positive for COVID-19](#).

If staff members feel unwell but do not have ~~COVID-19~~ symptoms, or their test is negative, staying at home until they feel better could reduce the risk of passing on an illness to colleagues. [Find out more.](#)

4.3 Equality in the workplace

Objective: To make sure that nobody is discriminated against.

When applying this guidance, be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers or individuals.

It's against the law to discriminate against anyone because of their age, sex, disability, race or other 'protected characteristic'.

[Read the government guidance on discrimination.](#)

As an employer, you have particular responsibilities towards:

- disabled customers
- disabled workers
- workers who are new mothers or pregnant - see the [COVID-19 advice for pregnant employees](#)

You might also have other workers who are at higher risk and for whom additional precautions should be considered.

You will usually need to:

1. Understand and take into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.
2. Involve and communicate appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics might either:
 - expose them to a different degree of risk
 - make any steps you're thinking about inappropriate or challenging for them
3. Consider if you need to put in place any particular measures or adjustments to take account of your duties under equalities legislation.
4. Make reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at a disadvantage.

5. Assess the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.
6. Make sure any steps you take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others. For example, those with caring responsibilities or religious commitments.

5. Reducing contact for workers [Show](#)

Objective: Reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19 by reducing the number of people workers come into contact with.

There are no limits on contact between people from different households including in the workplace. There is no government requirement or recommendation for employers to limit capacity.

If, based on setting-specific risk assessments, you decide to reduce contact in particular circumstances, you may want to consider the following mitigations:

- designating seating (for example in offices) for specific teams, or using 'cohorting', 'fixed teams' or 'partnering', so each person works with the same consistent group
- where space and capacity allow, giving preference to back-to-back or side-to-side working between cohorts or fixed teams who don't normally mix
- using screens or barriers to separate people who don't normally mix (for example between workers and customers), noting that screens are only likely to be beneficial if placed between people who come into close face-to-face proximity with each other, and may not be practicable between desks in a side-to-side office setting

You should consider the need for these mitigations in the context of other COVID-19 workplace mitigations (such as ventilation, regular cleaning of surfaces and the use of face coverings) you have put in place. They should only be applied where practical. For example, without imposing restrictions on business operations or reducing workplace capacity.

You should take account of those with protected characteristics and discuss with disabled workers what reasonable adjustments can be made to the workplace so they can work safely.

Additionally, in close contact services, you should consider:

1. Letting clients know virtually that they're ready to be seen.
2. Asking clients to arrive at the scheduled time of their appointment.
3. Using screens to create a physical barrier between workstations, where this is practical.
4. For equipment, wherever possible:
 - keeping sharing to a minimum
 - assigning items to individuals
 - using disposable items, for example nail files
5. Making sure you clean and disinfect or sterilize non-disposable items between clients

6. Cleaning the workplace [Show](#)

In this section

- [6.1 Before reopening](#)

- [6.2 Keeping the workplace clean](#)
- [6.3 Hygiene: handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets](#)
- [6.4 Customer changing rooms](#)
- [6.5 Handling goods, merchandise and other materials](#)

6.1 Before reopening

Objective: To make sure that any site or location that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart.

Before you restart work, you should:

- assess all sites, or parts of sites, that have been closed
- review cleaning procedures and provide hand sanitiser

You should consider:

1. Checking whether you need to service or adjust mechanical ventilation systems.
2. Most air conditioning systems do not need adjustment if they draw in a supply of fresh air. [Read advice on air conditioning and ventilation.](#)

6.2 Keeping the workplace clean

Objective: To keep the workplace clean and prevent the spread of COVID-19 from touching contaminated surfaces.

You should consider:

1. Wedging doors open, where appropriate, to reduce touchpoints. This does not apply to fire doors.
2. Frequently cleaning objects and surfaces that people touch regularly. This includes counters, tills, self-checkouts, trolleys, coffee machines, betting machines or staff handheld devices. Make sure there are adequate disposal arrangements for cleaning products. For example, touch free bins.
3. Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.
4. If you're cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19, refer to the [guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#).
5. Providing extra non recycling bins for workers and customers to dispose of single use face coverings and PPE. You should refer to [guidance on how to dispose of personal or business waste, including face coverings and PPE](#).

In close contact services

In close contact services, you should also consider:

1. Sanitising any reusable equipment after each appointment and at the start and end of shifts. For example, client chairs, treatment beds, and tools such as scissors. Use your usual cleaning products.

2. Using disposable gowns for each client. Where this is not possible, use separate gowns and towels for each client. Wash them between uses and dispose of them appropriately as required.

6.3 Hygiene: handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets

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

You should consider:

1. Using signs and posters to make people aware:
 - how to wash their hands well
 - that they should wash their hands frequently
 - that they should not touch their faces
 - they should cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into their arms if a tissue is not available
2. Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards. Close contact services practitioners should increase handwashing during and in between appointments and use hand sanitizer if handwashing facilities are not available.
3. Providing hand sanitiser in multiple accessible locations in addition to washrooms. Consider the needs of people with disabilities.
4. Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets. This is to ensure they're kept clean and people socially distance as much as possible.
5. Enhancing cleaning for busy areas.
6. Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.
7. Providing hand drying facilities - paper towels, continuous roller towels or electrical driers.
8. For close contact services practitioners, changing practices to avoid skin-to-skin contact, unless it's necessary for the treatment. Use gloves for any treatments where there is a risk of contact with blood or body fluids.

6.4 Customer changing rooms

Objective: To reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in customer changing rooms.

The enclosed nature of changing rooms may result in increased risk of COVID-19 spreading. You should manage them carefully to reduce that risk. Businesses should update their risk assessments for each premises where changing rooms are being used.

You should ensure adequate ventilation in changing rooms. For example, by ensuring mechanical ventilation works effectively and opening windows and vents where possible. [Read the advice on air conditioning and ventilation.](#)

You should consider:

1. Where possible, leaving doors or curtains open in vacant changing rooms. This will increase fresh air flow into cubicles that have recently been occupied before the next customer enters.
2. Making hand sanitiser available on entry and exit.
3. Leaving a gap of several minutes between one customer leaving a cubicle and the next customer entering. For stores with 2 or more cubicles, you could do this by alternating cubicle usage.

4. Setting clear use and cleaning guidance, where changing rooms are cleaned frequently or between every use. Use normal cleaning products. Pay attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider using disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces.
5. Creating procedures to manage clothes that have been tried on, to minimise contact between customers and staff.

6.5 Handling goods, merchandise and other materials

Objective: To reduce the spread of COVID-19 through contact with objects that come into the premises.

You should consider:

1. Encouraging people to wash their hands more often. Put in place more handwashing facilities for workers who handle goods and merchandise. Provide hand sanitiser where this is not practical.
2. Reducing risk when handling merchandise. For example, through different display methods, new signage or rotation, or cleaning of high touch stock with your usual cleaning products.
3. Putting in place a process to manage customer use of testers. For example, have staff monitor the use of testers, limit customer handling, and clean them between uses. For cosmetic and make-up testing, you could also use disposable applicators and place them into disposable pots, use sanitised tiles, and decant products.
4. Putting in place pick-up and drop-off collection points to reduce the number of people workers come into contact with.
5. Setting up 'no contact' return procedures, where customers take return goods to a designated area.
6. Encouraging contactless refunds, where possible.
7. Providing guidance to how workers can safely assist customers with handling large item purchases.
8. Cleaning touch points after each customer's use or handover. Consider interior and exterior touch points in certain cases. For example, rental equipment and test drive and rental vehicles.
9. Making sure any equipment you take on home visits is thoroughly:
 - cleaned
 - disinfected
 - sterilised

Doing this before you use it, and between clients. Use your usual cleaning products.

7. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings>Show

In this section

- [7.1 Personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [7.2 Face coverings](#)

7.1 Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Where you're already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should keep doing so. Any use of PPE should be determined by an assessment of risks in the workplace.

Do not encourage the precautionary use of PPE to protect against COVID-19 unless you're in a clinical setting or responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Unless you're in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 spreading is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that PPE has an extremely limited role in providing extra protection.

If your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it.

Any PPE provided must fit properly.

7.2 Face coverings

A face covering is something which safely covers your mouth and nose.

Face coverings are no longer required by law. However, people should wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed settings where they come into contact with people they do not normally meet.

Where worn correctly, this may reduce the risk of transmission to themselves and others. Be aware that workers may choose to wear a face covering in the workplace.

Businesses can encourage customers, visitors or workers to wear a face covering. Consider encouraging, for example through signage, the use of face coverings by workers, particularly in indoor areas where they may come into contact with people they do not normally meet. This is especially important in enclosed and crowded spaces.

In close contact services, having considered the risk of COVID-19, you may decide that in your premises you're going to ask clients or staff to wear a face covering, especially where practitioners are conducting treatments which require them to be in close proximity to a person's face, mouth and nose.

When deciding your approach to face coverings, you need to consider the reasonable adjustments for staff and clients with disabilities. You also need to consider carefully how this fits with other obligations to workers and customers arising from the law on employment rights, health and safety and equality legislation.

Some people are not able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances.

[Find more information on when and where to wear face coverings.](#)

Advising your workers

If your workers choose to wear a face covering, you should support them in using face coverings safely. This means telling them:

- 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 (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 or 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)

Be aware that face coverings may make it harder to communicate with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

8. Workforce managementShow

In this section

- [8.1 Outbreaks in the workplace](#)
- [8.2 Work-related travel](#)
- [8.3 Communications and training](#)

8.1 Outbreaks in the workplace

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

You will usually need to:

1. Make sure your risk assessment includes 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. The SPOC should lead on contacting local Public Health teams.
2. If you become aware of any positive cases of COVID-19 in your workplace, you should follow the [guidance for employers](#).
3. If a staff member tests positive for COVID-19, you should immediately identify any close workplace contacts and ask them to self-isolate, unless they're [fully vaccinated or meet the other criteria](#). You should not wait for NHS Test and Trace. This prompt action will help reduce the risk of a workplace outbreak.
4. You should inform your [local authority public health team](#) if there is an outbreak at your workplace. Further information on the thresholds for notifying outbreaks and who to contact is available from [your local authority](#).

If your local UKHSA health protection team declares an outbreak, you will be asked to:

- record details of symptomatic staff
- assist with identifying contacts

You should therefore ensure all employment records are up to date.

5. To ensure eligible individuals can access Test and Trace Support payments you may consider providing staff details to the NHS Self Isolation Hub when:

- a staff member who was in close contact with the person testing positive has indicated they are not exempt from self-isolation, but the person testing positive was unable to provide that person's details to NHS Test and Trace

– it's particularly difficult for the person testing positive to identify or provide details of some members of staff they were in contact with, for example temporary workers, contractors or staff working irregular shift patterns

8.2 Work-related travel

Objective: To keep people safe when they travel between locations.

You should consider:

1. Encouraging people travelling together in any one vehicle to, wherever possible, use fixed travel partners or avoid sitting face-to-face.
2. Providing adequate ventilation by switching on ventilation systems that draw in fresh air or opening windows. You could open windows only partially if it's cold. For more information on ventilation in vehicles [read the advice on ventilation and air conditioning](#).
3. Cleaning shared vehicles between shifts or on handover.

8.3 Communications and training

Returning to work

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

You should consider:

1. Communicating clearly, consistently and regularly. This will improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.
2. Engaging with workers through existing communication routes and worker representatives. Do this to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
3. Developing communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site. This is especially important for new procedures for arrival at work.

Ongoing communications and signage

Objective: To make sure all workers are updated on how you're implementing or updating safety measures.

You should consider:

1. Engaging with workers on an ongoing basis. This includes through trade unions or employee representative groups. Do this to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.
2. Being aware of and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. See [the guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of COVID-19](#).
3. Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language. You should consider people:
 - who do not have English as their first language
 - who have protected characteristics, such as visual impairments
4. Using visual communications to explain changes to appointment schedules or stock shortages. For example, whiteboards or signage. Do this to reduce the need for face-to-face communications.

5. Communicating approaches and operational procedures with suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.

9. Tests and vaccinationsShow

In this section

- [9.1 Accessing testing](#)
- [9.2 Vaccinations](#)

It's important that you continue to put measures in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

This is important even if your workers have:

- received a recent negative test result
- had the vaccine (either 1 or 2 doses)
- natural immunity (based on proof of a positive PCR within the past 180 days)

Where you're providing testing on-site, you should ensure that workplace testing is carried out in a safe manner and in an appropriate setting where control measures are in place to manage the risk of COVID-19 spreading during the testing process. These include:

- frequent cleaning
- good hygiene
- adequate ventilation

You should also ensure that an appropriate setting is available for individuals to wait in while their test is processed.

9.1 Accessing testing

Anyone with coronavirus symptoms can [get a free NHS test](#).

Employees who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 can access testing free of charge at home or at a test site. [Read guidance on accessing tests if you do not have symptoms of COVID-19](#).

You can also pay an approved provider to provide tests or run a test site for your workplace. [Read guidance on getting COVID-19 tests for your employees](#).

Regular testing could help identify more positive cases of COVID-19 in the workplace. Read [further guidance on your options for workplace testing](#), or call 119 for more information.

9.2 Vaccinations

The COVID-19 vaccine is available in England through the NHS.

Employers should support staff in getting the COVID-19 vaccine once it's offered to them. Read [further guidance on supporting staff to get vaccinated](#).

Who has contributed to this guideShow

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. BEIS consulted with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) 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.

If you have any feedback on this guidance, please email safer.workplaces@beis.gov.uk.

Where to find more information

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): what you need to do](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for food businesses on coronavirus](#)

Find advice and support from your [business representative organisation or trade association](#).

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