



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE

# Offices and contact centres: coronavirus workplace guidance

How to work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic if you work or employ people in an office or contact centre.

First published: 7 July 2020

Last updated: 1 April 2021

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# Introduction

The guidance is intended to cover **all alert levels** although some aspects are

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not allowable at level 4, and these will be marked, when relevant. Note that all regulations and guidance are subject to change at short notice. You must ensure that you consider the up to date version of the regulations and the guidance.

The **Coronavirus Regulations** impose strict restrictions on gatherings, the movement of people, and the operation of businesses, some of which are required to close temporarily.

Businesses that are permitted to operate, or premises that are allowed to open (the **business and premises that must remain closed are listed here**) must do so safely in a way that complies with the Coronavirus Regulations, in addition to other legal obligations imposed on employers (such as health and safety legislation).

To support businesses to work safely the Welsh Government has adopted five key principles:

- care: our health and well-being comes first
- comply: the laws that keep us safe must be obeyed
- involve: we will share responsibility for safe work
- adapt: we all need to change how we work
- communicate: we must all understand what to do

Further **guidance on the key principles** is available on the Welsh Government website.

This document is to help employers, employees and the self-employed in indoor environments such as offices, contact centres, operations rooms and similar premises to understand how to work safely, taking all reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19. When local restrictions or national alert levels are in place then the requirements of those alert levels take precedence. Information on the **current alert levels in place** (including what is permitted) should be checked regularly for updates.

The Welsh Government has updated the **Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales** setting out how we will all work together to manage the risks of COVID-19 and it is recommended that you review the plan.

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This updated Coronavirus Control Plan, which takes account of vaccination and the dominant Kent variant, sets out how we will move through the **alert levels** and how we can help people and businesses plan for the future, as we continue our careful approach to unlocking the current restrictions.

## How to use this guidance

The Welsh Government has issued guidance notes under the Coronavirus Regulations **on taking all reasonable measures to minimise exposure to coronavirus in workplaces and premises open to the public** and **Face Coverings: guidance on measures to be taken by employers and managers of premises**. These guidance notes are referred to collectively in this document as the “Statutory Guidance”.

This document builds on the requirements in the Statutory Guidance with practical advice as well as signposting other sector-specific and other relevant guidance. It gives practical considerations of how safe practices could be applied to your business and operation. Each business must comply with the **Coronavirus Regulations** and have regard to the **Statutory Guidance** and should use this document to help them decide what specific actions they could take to operate safely, depending on the nature of the business including the size and type of business, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated.

In the event of any discrepancy between this guidance and the **Statutory Guidance**, you should have regard for the Statutory Guidance. This guidance is not a substitute for legal advice, which you should consider obtaining where necessary, nor does it supersede any legal obligations including in relation to health and safety, employment or equalities. 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**. Failure to comply with relevant legislation could result in enforcement action by the relevant authorities.

The **Coronavirus Regulations** set out a specific and separate system of enforcement. This means that enforcement officers from local authorities can

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require certain (specified) measures to be taken in relation to premises, and they can if necessary close them. Closure can be required either because specified measures are not subsequently taken or because the breach of the requirements is sufficiently serious to justify closing a premises immediately or with only very limited notice. The Welsh Government has issued **guidance for enforcement officers** that you may wish to review so that you understand what action can be taken if you fail to comply with the Coronavirus Regulations and/or do not take account of the **Statutory Guidance**.

When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers and contractors, as well as your employees and anyone else on the premises.

To help you decide which actions to take, Coronavirus Regulations require you to carry out a specific COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other Health and Safety related hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with staff and representatives (recognised trade union or a representative chosen by workers) and be made available to staff. **HSE (Health & Safety Executive)** provide useful templates to help you undertake a specific COVID-19 risk assessment that will take you through the hierarchy of controls from the most to the least effective. An overview of the hierarchy of controls can be found in Appendix 1.

This document will be updated over time. This version is up to date as of 29 March 2021.

The Welsh Government reviews the **Coronavirus Regulations** every 3 weeks. These reviews provide an opportunity to assess the effectiveness and consequences of the provisions and may result in amendments to the regulations. It is important to note that if there is an increase in COVID-19 cases, new rules may be introduced to reduce the spread of the virus and protect public health outside of the standard 3 week review period. In addition, an increase in the transmission of COVID-19, either across Wales or in a specific locality, might affect what is considered a “**reasonable measure**”, with more measures potentially being needed. In these circumstances, there may be also more activities where the risk of exposure to COVID-19 is such that the only means of minimising the risk is not to do it. It is therefore important to regularly revisit your COVID-19 risk assessment to ensure that the actions you have

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taken are in line with the most recent [regulations](#).

# 1. Thinking about and managing risk

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

As an employer or business operator, you have a legal responsibility to protect employees and contractors; and anyone else on the premises, from risks to their health and safety. You also need to assess the risks from COVID-19 and take [reasonable measures](#) to minimise exposure to the virus. Risk assessments are used to think about these risks and to determine everything reasonably practicable that can be done to minimise them.

When undertaking your specific COVID-19 risk assessment you must have regard to the [Coronavirus Regulations](#) and the [Statutory Guidance](#) and use this document to inform your decisions and control measures, recognising you cannot eliminate all risks. Risk assessments must be reviewed and updated regularly, whenever circumstances change including whenever the coronavirus [alert levels](#) change in Wales. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control risk. 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 [Managing risks and risk assessments at work](#).

These risk assessments will be the starting point for implementing the [reasonable measures](#) that are required to be taken to minimise exposure to the coronavirus on premises open to the public and in workplaces.

This involves considering issues such as:

- whether ventilation is adequate
- hygiene factors including hand washing and access to
- ensuring physical distancing is taking place and if 2m is practical
- the extent to which the use of screens, PPE and face coverings can mitigate

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## risks

It will also include considering how employers maximise the number of people who can work from home.

Employers have a duty to consult staff on health and safety through meaningful discussion with them and/or their recognised trade union (if one exists). At its most effective, full involvement of your staff creates a culture where relationships between employers and workers are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. 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 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 staff. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

If you are required by law to have a written risk assessment (if you have five or more employees) then significant findings must be written down and control measures put in place. Risk assessments are a legal requirement for pregnant women, no matter the size of the business and further guidance is available for employers of pregnant women here.

Your assessment should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 (those **defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable from coronavirus (COVID-19)** – previously known as 'shielding' or are in **the increased risk group**). The online **COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool** is a two-stage risk assessment for NHS and Social Care workers, which is suitable for use for all staff who are vulnerable or at risk of contracting COVID-19, including people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Risk assessments should include staff that are working from home.

If an individual is concerned about the safety measures in any premises where work takes place or a service is provided, then they can report this to the Public

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Protection services of the relevant local authority (which include environmental health and health & safety).

Where the enforcing authority, such as the local authority, identifies employers or business operators who are not taking action to comply with relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues. If concerns still cannot be resolved, an employee can take the following steps:

- Contact their employee representative
- Contact their trade union or association if they have one
- Use the [HSE form available here](#)
- Contact HSE by phone 0300 790 6787

## 1.1 Managing risk

Objective: To reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking appropriate preventative measures.

All those responsible for **work, and premises open to the public**, must **take reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 on the premises, and reduce the risk of people who have been on the premises from spreading the virus.**

Where it is reasonably practicable for a person to work at home, employers should support them to do so by being as flexible as possible and making adjustments to ensure that staff work from home wherever that is possible. This may include issuing staff with laptops or mobile phones and facilitating communication from wherever members of staff may be.

Employees should not be required or placed under pressure to attend a workplace setting if there is not a clearly demonstrated business need for them to do so. Employers who are considering requiring their staff to attend workplace settings should first assess whether alternative arrangements could meet the

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majority of the employer's needs. This should be discussed with staff or representatives of staff.

Where there is a demonstrable business need for staff to attend the workplace, you should **take all reasonable measures to ensure** that a distance of 2 metres (2m) is maintained between any persons on the premises. This requirement is referred to in this document as the "physical distancing duty".

The requirement to maintain 2m distance does not apply to persons from the same household, support bubble or an extended household (if permitted at current alert level), or between a carer and the person being assisted by the carer.

In addition to applying the physical distancing duty where possible, you must also take all other reasonable measures to minimise exposure to COVID-19 on your premises and to minimise the spread of the virus by those who have been at the premises, for example, by:

- Limiting the level of face-to-face interaction.
- Using physical barriers.
- Increasing hygiene, environmental cleanliness and providing reminders about the importance of hygiene.
- Washing hands well for 20 seconds with soap, and drying thoroughly, or using alcohol-based hand gels before and after close contact.
- Minimising loud noises which will require people to shout over them.
- Wearing or providing personal protective equipment where sector specific guidance says it is required and ensuring it is worn correctly.
- **Requiring face coverings** to be worn by staff in parts of the premises that are open to the public and in other parts of the premises where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Providing **information to staff and visitors to the premises about the need to wear face coverings** and explaining where in the premises they are required.
- **Recording contact details** of staff, and visitors to support **Test, Trace, Protect (TTP)**.
- Making staff aware of the employer's compliance with the TTP strategy and the need for employers to release their personal contact information in the

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event of a TTP enquiry that involves the business/organisation and its employees.

- Ensuring that employees are allowed or enabled to self-isolate. If they have tested positive for COVID-19 or been notified they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

The extra precautions you may need to take will depend on the nature of the work, for example, if closer working is required that makes observing the physical distancing duty difficult, and the type of premises the work takes place in. **Statutory Guidance** has been produced to help people understand what “taking all reasonable measures” means, which you must have regard to. Furthermore, you must have regard to the Statutory **Guidance on the measures to be taken by employers and manager of premises in relation to face coverings** issued by the Welsh Government.

Your specific COVID-19 risk assessment will help you decide what actions you need to take.

## 1.2 Sharing the results of your risk assessment

Objective: To reassure everyone working on your premises by sharing your risk assessment with them

You are required by the **Coronavirus Regulations** to provide information to those entering or working at your premises about how to minimise exposure to COVID-19. We also encourage all businesses to demonstrate to staff and customers/visitors that they have properly assessed their risk and taken appropriate mitigating actions. If possible, you should publish this information on your website, particularly where you are an employer with over 50 workers. A notice that you may wish to display in your workplace or on your premises to show that you have followed this guidance is available here: **five key steps to keep wales safe at work**.

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## 2. Who should go to work?

Objective: To support employees to work from home whenever possible.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- considering who is needed to be on-site; for example:
  - workers in roles critical for business and operational continuity, safe facility management, or regulatory requirements and which cannot be performed remotely
  - workers in critical roles which might be performed remotely, but who are unable to work remotely due to home circumstances or the unavailability of safe enabling equipment
  - discussing with staff the practicalities of them working from home, be as flexible as you can and make any reasonable adjustments to allow them to do so, for some or all of their time
  - monitoring the well-being of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to the rest of the workforce
  - providing equipment for people to work at home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems

### 2.1 Protecting people who are at higher risk

Objective: To protect people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable from coronavirus (COVID-19) – previously known as ‘shielding’.

All those identified as being at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (due to a serious underlying health issue) were previously advised to shield by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales. **Shielding** helped to protect extremely vulnerable people by reducing their contact with other people, and therefore the risk of being exposed to COVID-19. The Welsh Government will update shielding advice in line with current alert levels. Depending on the current alert level, that could mean that those on the shielding list are able to go to work if they are unable to work from home, provided their employer has taken reasonable measures to minimise the risk of them being exposed to COVID-19 in the

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workplace. However, when possible, and similar to other staff, they should carry on working from home (refer Subsection 1.1 above).

The most important thing is that you make contact with any staff that were previously shielding before they attend the workplace to understand the practical implications of them doing so. They might not have left the house for some months and might be very anxious about having contact with 'outside' people, so will need reassurance that their safety is being taken seriously, and all risks have been considered and mitigated as far as reasonably practicable.

You will need to undertake a risk assessment to consider what new measures you may need to take as a result of someone that was previously shielding returning to the workplace.

There is also guidance on **what to do if you share a home with someone who was previously or is shielding**. That guidance is also relevant for employees working alongside individuals that were previously shielding.

In addition, there is another wider group of **people at increased risk of serious illness from COVID-19** who are advised to closely follow **social and physical distancing measures** at all times. You should therefore discuss with all employees who were previously shielding and those at increased risk the practicalities of them working from home. You should be as flexible as you can and make any reasonable adjustments to allow them to do so, for some of, or all of their time.

If it is agreed that they cannot work from home and will need to attend the workplace you will need to take all reasonable measures to minimise their risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. They should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles which will enable them to stay 2m away from others.

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 people who had been shielding.

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Steps that will usually be needed:

- Providing support for workers around mental health and well-being. This could include advice or telephone support.
- See current [social distancing guidance](#) for advice on those who were shielding and those in the increased risk group.
- See current [guidance for those individuals who were previously shielding](#) that need particular consideration and those at [increased risk](#).

## 2.2 People who need to self-isolate

Objective: To make sure individuals who need to self-isolate do not come into the workplace.

No one should attend a workplace-setting if they:

- have been told to self-isolate by [NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect](#) because they have either tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in recent close contact with a confirmed/positive case of COVID-19, and are still within their self-isolation period as set out in the [guidance](#);
- have [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, and are waiting for a test result;
- are a confirmed positive case and have isolated according to the guidance ([self-isolation](#)), but still have a high temperatures;
- are a member of the same household, support bubble or extended household (when permitted) as someone who has COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19, and are still within the self-isolation period as set out in the guidance ([self-isolation](#))
- are a member of the same household, support bubble or extended household as someone who has tested positive, and are still within the self-isolation period set out in the guidance.

If an employee has a positive test result and/or is told to self-isolate by NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect as a contact of a positive case then they should inform you, as their employer, as soon as is possible and in line with your sickness policies, and in any case before they are due to next attend the workplace and they must not attend the workplace.

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You must allow or enable an employee to self-isolate if they have symptoms or live with someone who has been told to self-isolate by NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect or have had close contact with a person that has tested positive.

If multiple cases of COVID-19 appear in your setting or workplace, an outbreak control team from either the Local Authority or Public Health Wales will, if necessary, be assigned to help you as an employer to manage the outbreak. Employers should seek advice from their Local Authority in the first instance as per guidance (**employers: coronavirus test, trace, protect guidance**).

You must not threaten the security of an employee's job in order to persuade them to return to the workplace before their self-isolation period ends.

Helping your staff to stay at home for the required self-isolation period will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection households can pass on to others in the community and therefore, potentially, the rest of your workforce.

If possible, and if they are well enough (if they are a confirmed case of COVID-19), you should support staff to work from home while self-isolating. If they cannot work from home then refer to the guidance for employers relating to **statutory sick pay due to COVID-19 (on GOV.UK)**.

Before an employee returns to work after a period of self-isolation, you should confirm that:

- If they were self-isolating because they or someone they live with had symptoms, that a test was taken and the result was negative, enabling them to leave self-isolation before the full self-isolation period was completed. Please see below for guidance on when you can stop self-isolating in this context.
- If they have been identified as a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, they have completed their required period of self-isolation and have not personally developed COVID-19 symptoms late in their isolation period.
- If they were the confirmed case of COVID-19, they have completed their required period of self-isolation and do not have, or have not had any continuing symptoms (other than a loss of or change to normal taste or

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smell) in the last 48 hours;

- If a member of their household, support bubble or extended household was the confirmed case of COVID-19, they have completed their required period of self-isolation and have not personally developed COVID-19 symptoms late in their isolation period .

If the answer to any of these scenarios is 'no', then the employee cannot return to work and you should not insist that they do.

You can stop isolating as long as:

- you don't have a high temperature and you are well
- no-one else in your household has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19
- you have not been advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace

Anyone in your household who is isolating because of your symptoms can also stop isolating.

It is important that you continue to socially distance.

People who are **identified as a close contact** with someone who has coronavirus will be advised by contact tracers to **book a PCR test** as soon as possible at the start of their self-isolation period, and again on day 8. If the tests are negative, they will still need to self-isolate for the full 10 day period.

There is no requirement of proof of a negative test to return to work.

Work-related travel to and from Wales must follow the rules set out in our **border rules for people travelling to and from Wales**.

Currently, there is no direct arrival into Wales from travellers who have been in a country on the '**red list**'. This is subject to change at short notice, and so the **latest information as to countries affected should be checked regularly here**.

PLEASE NOTE, changes are made regularly to the exempt country list for Wales and that further restrictions preventing any travel abroad or into or out of

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Wales may be put in place from time to time. Any such restrictions will take precedence to any information given here and should be adhered to. It is therefore advisable to **check the latest position before employees' departure** on both the outward and return journeys for any work-related travel.

Anyone that develops **COVID-19 symptoms** at work should be sent home to self-isolate, and their workplace cleaned in accordance with **guidance for cleaning in non-healthcare settings (on GOV.UK)**. Further guidance is provided in Section 3.8 below on what to do if there is more than one case of confirmed COVID-19 associated with your workforce within a 10-day period.

## 2.3 Equality in the workplace

Objective: To treat everyone in your workplace equally.

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

It is unlawful 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 staff that have disabilities 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 make any measures you are thinking about implementing 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 equalities legislation.
- Making reasonable adjustments to avoid workers with disabilities being put at a disadvantage, and assessing the health and safety risks for new or

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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. Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19 on your premises and reducing the risk of those that have been on your premises from spreading the virus.**

Objective: To take all reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the spread of the virus by those that have been on the premises, by maintaining 2m physical distance between everyone on your premises and implementing extra precautions.

As outlined in Subsection 1.2 above, you should implement all reasonable measures to keep everyone on your premises 2m apart, including individuals who have to wait to enter your premises. The **physical distancing duty** applies to all parts of your premises; including, but not limited to, entrances and exits, toilets, kitchens and break areas and outside. It also applies to vehicles used for the purpose of work.

As well as keeping everyone 2m apart where possible, you must also take other **reasonable measures** to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 on your premises. The extra precautions you may need to take will depend on the nature of the work, for example, if closer working is required that makes observing the physical distancing duty difficult, and the type of premises the work takes place in. You must have regard to the **Statutory Guidance**, which has been produced to help people understand what “taking all reasonable measures” means. Your specific COVID-19 risk assessment will help you decide what actions you need to take.

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## 3.1 Coming to work and leaving work

Objective: To maintain physical distancing on arrival and departure and to ensure handwashing upon arrival.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the premises (this will help reduce demand and overcrowding on public transport at key times), taking account of the impact on those with **protected characteristics**.
- Providing additional facilities or parking such as bike-racks to help people walk, run, or cycle to work, where possible.
- Ensuring staff wear **face coverings** as required under the Coronavirus Regulations either due to the nature the of premises (mandatory) or as a reasonable measure to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus in any premises
- Providing **information to staff and visitors to the premises about the need to wear face coverings** and explaining where on the premises they are required.
- Limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, for example, work minibuses. This could include leaving seats empty.
- Limiting the number of exit and entry points into and out of the premises. Consider having separate entrance and exit points if possible.
- Providing more storage for workers for clothes and bags.
- Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points and main thoroughfares on the premises.
- Providing sufficient handwashing facilities, and/or alcohol based sanitiser, where possible, for example at entry/exit points, and not using touch-based security devices such as keypads.
- Maintaining use of security access processes, such as display of passes, and adjusting processes at entry/exit points to reduce risk of transmission. For example, cleaning pass readers regularly and asking staff to hold their passes above pass readers rather than touching them.
- See the Welsh Government's **guidance on travelling to and from work** and use **of face coverings on public transport**.

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## 3.2 Moving around buildings and worksites

Objective: To maintain physical distancing while people travel through the premises.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Reducing movement by discouraging non-essential trips within premises, for example, restricting access to some areas, encouraging use of radios, telephones, emails, or other electronic devices, where permitted, and cleaning them between use.
- Restricting access between different areas of a premises.
- Reducing job and location rotation.
- Introducing more one-way flows through premises with appropriate signage.
- Reducing maximum occupancy for lifts, providing alcohol based hand gel for the operation of lifts, regularly cleaning lift buttons and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible (remembering to undertake frequent cleaning of handrails on stairs).
- Making sure that people with disabilities are able to access lifts.
- Managing use of high traffic areas including corridors, lifts, turnstiles and walkways to maintain physical distancing.

## 3.3 Workplaces and workstations

Objective: To maintain physical distancing between individuals when they are at their workstations.

For people who work in one place, work areas should allow them to maintain **physical distancing**.

Work areas should be assigned to an individual and not shared. If they need to be shared, the smallest number of people should share them and a frequent and thorough system of cleaning key touch points should be adopted.

Steps that will usually be needed:

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- reviewing layouts to ensure that workstations are 2m apart
- where it is not possible to move workstations further apart:
  - use screens to separate people from each other, and/or
  - arrange people to work side-by-side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face
  - consider if **face coverings** should be worn and make appropriate arrangements
- using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help workers keep to a 2m distance
- managing occupancy levels to enable physical distancing
- avoiding use of hot desks and spaces, and where this is not possible (for example call centres or training facilities) frequently and thoroughly cleaning workstations between different occupants, including shared equipment
- marking desks so that it is clear which desk should be used to maintain physical distancing

### 3.4 Meetings

Objective: To minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by reducing face-to-face meetings and maintaining physical distancing in meetings where participants must attend in-person.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Using remote working tools as often as possible to avoid in-person meetings.
- Only necessary participants should physically attend meetings and should stay 2m apart from each other throughout.
- Reducing the risk of transmission during meetings, by not sharing objects, for example pens and paper.
- Providing alcohol based sanitiser in meeting rooms and encouraging its use.
- Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms, if possible.
- For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain 2m **physical distancing**.
- Rearranging the layout of meetings rooms to ensure 2m physical distancing can be maintained by participants, including removing furniture if necessary.
- Providing signage outside meeting rooms stating the maximum occupancy to observe 2m physical distancing and the need to maintain the layout within

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the room.

### 3.5 Common areas

Objective: To maintain physical distancing while using common areas.

Steps that will usually be needed

- Working collaboratively with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant premises to ensure consistency across common areas, for example, receptions and staircases.
- Staggering break times to reduce pressure on the staff break areas or places to eat, and ensuring physical distancing is maintained in staff break areas.
- Ensuring staff and visitors wear **face coverings** as required under the Coronavirus Regulations either due to the nature of the premises (mandatory) or as a reasonable measure to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus in any premises.
- Providing information to staff and visitors to the premises about the need to wear face coverings and explaining where on the premises they are required, whilst being sensitive to the needs of those with exemptions. Staff should be informed that they may remove face coverings temporarily whilst physically distancing to assist those who are reliant on lip reading or seeing facial expressions to communicate.
- Using safe outside areas for breaks with physical distancing measures in place.
- Creating additional space by using other parts of the premises that have been freed up by, for example, remote working.
- Installing screens to protect staff in receptions or similar areas.
- Reconfiguring seating and tables to maintain spacing and limit face-to-face interactions.
- Encouraging staff to remain on-site and, when not possible, maintaining physical distancing while off-site.
- Regulating use of locker rooms, changing areas and other facility areas to reduce concurrent usage.
- Encouraging storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces, for example, lockers.

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## 3.6 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 stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe to do so.

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 physical 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.

## 3.7 Managing your customers, visitors and contractors

Objective: To minimise the number of unnecessary visits to the premises.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.
- Asking visitors if they are **COVID-19 symptom** free.
- Limiting the number of visitors on the premises at any one time.
- Ensuring staff and visitors wear **face coverings** as required under the Coronavirus Regulations either due to the nature of the premises (mandatory) or as a reasonable measure to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus in any premises whilst being sensitive to the needs of those with exemptions. Staff should be informed that they may remove face coverings temporarily whilst physically distancing to assist those who are reliant on lip reading or seeing facial expressions to communicate.
- Providing **information to visitors to the premises about the need to wear**

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- face coverings** and explaining where on the premises they are required.
- Limiting visitor times to a specific time window and restricting access to required visitors only.
  - Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people, for example, carrying out services at night.
  - **Collecting and retaining a record of all visitors** to support the **TTP** programme and (for GDPR reasons) making them aware of the need for to do so.
  - Encouraging visitors to use alcohol based sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter and leave the premises.
  - Revising visitor arrangements to ensure physical distancing and good hygiene, for example, by removing the need for them to physically sign in.

### 3.8 Actively implement Test, Trace, Protect in the workplace

Objective: To ensure employers meet their responsibility to help the Test, Trace, Protect programme.

Guidance has been published that explains **how employers in Wales can play their part in helping to deliver Wales' TTP strategy** to slow the spread of COVID-19, protect our health and care systems and save lives. This covers their responsibilities to employees and contractors associated with the operation of their business and includes relevant information for the self-employed.

**NHS COVID-19 app** users are able to scan (check-in) when they enter a venue. **Premises in Wales which are required to collect details of staff, customers and visitors** must continue to do so, including people who check in through the app. However, you may wish to consider creating a QR code for use with the app and display it on your premises as an additional measure to assist individuals with tracing potential contacts. You can **create a QR code and display posters here (on GOV.UK)**.

Steps will usually be needed:

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- **Recording and retaining contact details** to support TTP and undertake any necessary TTP **actions required by employers**.
- As part of your specific COVID-19 risk assessment, ensuring you have an up to date plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak within your workforce. 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 workforce within a 10-day period, you will be contacted by TTP.
- If the PHW health team declares an outbreak, you will be asked to provide your TTP records and details of symptomatic staff. 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.

### 3.9 Providing and explaining available guidance

Objective: To make sure people understand what they need to do to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 when they are on your premises.

The **Coronavirus Regulations** require that you provide information to those entering or working at your premises about how to minimise exposure to COVID-19. The Welsh Government has **produced some resources to help employers keep their workplace safe** that you may wish to display on your premises.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Providing clear information on physical distancing, face coverings and hygiene to people on arrival, for example, signage, visual aids and before arrival, for example, by phone, on the website, by email. Consider the particular needs of those with **protected characteristics**, such as those who are visually impaired. Consideration will need to be given to provision for those exempt from wearing face coverings and temporary removal of face coverings to assist those who are reliant on lip reading or seeing facial expressions to communicate.
- Establishing host responsibilities relating to COVID-19 and providing any

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necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.

- Reviewing entry and exit routes for visitors and contractors to minimise contact with other people.
- Coordinating and working collaboratively with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant sites, for example, shared working spaces.
- Informing visitors that they should be prepared to remove face coverings, if asked to do so by police officers and staff, for the purposes of identification.

## 4. Cleaning and preparing the premises

### 4.1 Before reopening (if applicable)

Objective: To make sure that any premises that has been closed or partially operated is clean, safely prepared and ready to restart, including:

- An assessment and preparation of all premises, or parts of premises, that have been closed before restarting work.
- Carrying out cleaning procedures and providing alcohol based sanitiser before restarting work.

Those in control of a premises have a **legal duty to ensure effective ventilation (on [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk))**. Further **advice on air conditioning and ventilation is available from the HSE here**.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has updated and expanded its advice to help employers provide adequate ventilation in their workplaces and premises during the pandemic. The guidance builds on helping you to identify and take action in poorly ventilated areas. It also provides guidance on other factors to consider when assessing the risk from aerosol transmission, and determining whether adequate ventilation is being provided to reduce this risk.

You should be maximising the fresh air in a space and this can be done by:

- natural ventilation
- mechanical ventilation

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- a combination of natural and mechanical ventilation, for example where mechanical ventilation relies on natural ventilation to maximise fresh air

Read the updated [guidance on air conditioning and ventilation \(on hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk) and find out how you can provide adequate ventilation in your workplace, helping to protect workers and other people from transmission of coronavirus.

There is also advice available for building services, particularly around ventilation of buildings, both in use and when returning to buildings which have been closed from the following:

- [Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers](#)
- [The Building Engineers Services Association](#), and
- [REHVA](#)

Ventilation and the new variants (technical details for those with mechanical systems)

Ventilation is a key mitigation measure to control the far-field (more than 2m) transmission of COVID-19 by aerosols between people who share the same indoor space. Ventilation is not likely to have significant impacts on close range transmission by droplets and aerosols (within 1-2m) or transmission via contact with surfaces (high confidence).

Higher viral load associated with people who have the new variant could have significant implications for transmission via the air, as previous scientific modelling suggests that viral load is a major determinant of airborne transmission risks. SAGE before the introduction of the new variant stated; for most workplaces and public environments adequate ventilation equates to a flow rate of 8-10 l/s/person based on design occupancy, although guidance for some environments allows for lower flow rates of 5 l/s/person. Since the introduction of the new variant, SAGE has recommended where possible, increasing ventilation flow rates mentioned above by a factor of 1.7 (70%) to account for the increase in transmissibility.

For some existing and older buildings, ventilation systems may not have been

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designed to meet current standards and additional mitigations may be needed. As a precautionary measure it is recommended that ventilation is included as part of any workplace or public indoor environment COVID secure risk assessment, and the necessary mitigation measures are adopted.

In most buildings, maintaining comfortable temperatures and humidity above 40-60% relative humidity is likely to be beneficial to reducing the survivability of the virus. However, this is likely to be less important than the ventilation rate mentioned above (medium confidence).

If buildings have been closed or had reduced occupancy water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use, increasing the risks of Legionnaires disease. [HSE guidance covering water management and legionella is available here \(on hse.gov.uk\)](#).

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Checking any water supplies - mains water supplies that have to be reconnected (because they were turned off when a premises was closed) will need running through to flush away any microbiological or chemical residue that might have built up while it was disconnected. The Drinking Water Inspectorate, who are the Regulators and technical experts in England and Wales, has produced this [advice on maintaining drinking water quality when reinstating water supplies after temporary closure due to the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- Checking whether you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example, so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels.
- Most air conditioning systems do not need adjustment, however where systems serve multiple buildings or you are unsure, advice can be sought from your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineers or advisers.
- Removing any fans from, for example, workstations, to avoid the recirculation of air.
- Opening windows and doors frequently to encourage ventilation, where possible, and if it is safe to do so.

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## 4.2 Keeping the workplace clean

Objective: To keep the premises clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses, using your usual cleaning products.
- Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly including door handles, door plates, light switches and keyboards, and making sure there are adequate disposal arrangements for cleaning products.
- Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.
- Limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers or whiteboards.
- If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the specific [guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings \(on GOV.UK\)](#).

## 4.3 Hygiene – handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets

Objective: To help everyone practice good hygiene throughout the working day.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Using signs and posters to provide information on good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue (which is then binned safely) or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain thorough hand hygiene standards.
- Providing alcohol based sanitiser in multiple locations, particularly key entry and exit points, in addition to washrooms.

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- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and physical distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Enhancing frequency of cleaning of busy areas.
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.
- Providing hand-drying facilities – preferably paper towels.

## 4.4 Changing rooms and showers

Objective: To minimise the risk of transmission in changing rooms and showers

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Where shower and changing facilities are required, setting clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items and that physical distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Introducing enhanced cleaning of all facilities regularly during the day and at the end of the day.

## 4.5 Handling goods, merchandise and other materials, and onsite vehicles

Objective: To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come onto the premises and vehicles at the site.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site.
- Cleaning procedures for vehicles.
- Introducing greater handwashing facilities for workers handling goods and merchandise and providing alcohol based hand gel where this is not practical.
- Regular cleaning of vehicles that workers may take home.
- Restricting non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers.

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## 5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is manufactured in accordance with regulated standards and 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. Face coverings commercially available to the public are not considered to be PPE.

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. When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not recommended. This is because the risks associated with COVID-19 are different to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social and physical distancing, good hygiene routines and fixed teams or partnering (refer to section 7.1 for guidance on fixed teams and 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 Wales 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 on the Welsh Government website ([health and social care professionals](#)) and from [Public Health Wales](#).

Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission to your workforce is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection to staff 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.

More [information on PPE in Wales is available here](#).

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## 6. Face coverings

Wearing a face covering is mandatory for everyone in Wales in the indoor areas of premises that are open to public, transport hubs, and on **public transport** unless a person has an **exemption from wearing one**. This requirement only applies to areas that are accessible to members of the public such as reception areas and waiting rooms though may also include communal areas of buildings shared with other businesses, such as landings, staircases etc.

For any other premises, including the non-public areas of premises that are open to the public, the Welsh Government considers that, if physical distancing cannot be continuously maintained, those responsible for work carried out at those premises should, as a **reasonable measure** under the **Coronavirus Regulations**, **require staff and visitors to wear a face covering so as to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at the premises**. This means that a decision not to require staff or visitors to wear a face covering in premises not open to the public, including the non-public areas of premises that are open to the public, should be based on a COVID-19 risk assessment that provides evidence that there is a compelling reason not to. The guidance for members of the public can be seen here (**face coverings: guidance for public**).

A face covering can be very simple; it just needs to cover the mouth and nose. It is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of higher specification PPE. 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 surgical 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.

The duty to wear a face covering under the **Coronavirus Regulations** is incumbent on the public who visit, and the staff who work in, indoor public premises. It is important to remember that face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and do not negate the need for those **responsible for premises open to the public, or premises where work takes place, to take other reasonable measures**.

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Therefore, you must continue to do everything reasonably possible to keep everyone 2m apart and implementing other precautions, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, ensuring good respiratory hygiene, regular and thorough hand hygiene and increasing surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and the Welsh Government would therefore not expect to see employers relying solely on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

Effective face coverings should have a water repellent outer layer if possible, and comprise of 3-layers of different fabrics, which are non-stretchy. They should fit well with no air gaps around the sides and under the chin. You can [make face coverings at home and this guidance explains how](#).

Employers should be sensitive to the needs of employees, visitors and other members of the public who have an exemption from wearing face coverings. Additionally, employers and employees should be aware that they may remove their face coverings temporarily whilst keeping physical distance to assist others who are reliant on lip reading or seeing facial expressions to communicate.

Employers should be sensitive to the needs of those with exemptions from wearing face coverings, but also support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means reminding them of the following information:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, (or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser) and dry thoroughly before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- when wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or the face covering as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- to not hang a face covering from the neck or pull down from the nose
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or damaged
- wash your hands regularly
- change and wash or discard (as applicable) your face covering daily
- if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions
- after wearing a reusable face covering, it should be placed inside a plastic bag prior to it being washed to prevent onwards contamination from the used

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face covering

- if it is not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste and help keep Wales tidy
- practicing **social and physical distancing** and frequent and thorough washing of hands is the most effective way of reducing the transmission of COVID-19

## 7. Workforce management

### 7.1 Shift patterns and working groups

Objective: To change the way work is organised to create distinct groups (or partnering) and reduce the number of contacts each employee has.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- As far as possible, where staff are split into teams, partners or shift groups, fixing these teams or shift groups so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.
- Identifying areas where people directly pass things to each other, for example office supplies, and finding ways to remove direct contact, such as using drop-off points or transfer zones.

### 7.2 Work-related travel

Detailed guidance has been published to help employers, employees and the self-employed with the practical steps they could take if **working in or from vehicles**. If possible, workers should use their own mode of transport rather than travelling together (unless it is with someone from their own household or extended household – if permitted at current alert level).

If workers have no option but to travel together, for example with delivery or removals teams, then you should also familiarise yourself with the detail in the **Working in or from vehicles guidance**, as well as the guidance in Subsections

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7.2.1 and 7.2.2 below.

### 7.2.1 Cars, accommodation and visits

Objective: To avoid unnecessary work travel and keep people safe when they do need to travel between locations.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- minimising non-essential travel – consider remote options first
- encouraging those travelling for essential journeys to consider walking or cycling as an alternative to vehicles if that is possible
- minimising the number of people outside of a household or extended household (if permitted at current alert level) travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed travel partners, increasing ventilation when travelling if possible and avoiding sitting face-to-face
- cleaning shared vehicles between shifts or on handover
- where workers are required to stay away from their home (including outside of Wales), centrally logging the stay and making sure any overnight accommodation meets physical distancing guidelines
- **alert level restrictions** can place limitations on travel allowed to, from and within Wales - see **Border rules for people travelling to and from Wales: coronavirus (COVID-19)**
- **job exemptions apply** and should be checked before departure and return

### 7.2.2 Deliveries to other sites

Objective: To help workers delivering to other sites such as branches, or suppliers' or customers' premises to maintain **social** and **physical** distancing and hygiene practices.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- putting in place procedures to minimise person-to-person contact during deliveries to other sites
- maintaining consistent pairing where two-person deliveries are required

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- minimising contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example, by using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents

Wearing face coverings when entering other premises (such as reception areas) to deliver goods,

## 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
- engaging with workers (including through trade unions or employee representative groups) through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements
- developing communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work. Consider referring to the [Welsh Government's Tool Kit](#), or relevant Trade Union training

### 7.3.2 Ongoing communications and signage

Objective: To make sure all workers are kept up to date with how COVID-19 safety measures are being implemented or updated.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Ongoing engagement with workers (including through trade unions or employee representative groups) to monitor and understand any unforeseen

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impacts of changes to working environments.

- Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The Welsh Government has published [guidance on the mental health and well-being aspects of COVID-19](#).
- Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration for Welsh language standards, groups for which Welsh and English may not be their first language and those with protected characteristics such as hearing or visual impairments.
- Using visual communications, for example, whiteboards or signage, to explain changes to schedules or breakdowns without the need for face-to-face communications.
- Communicating approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.

## 8. Inbound and outbound goods

Objective: To maintain physical distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Revising pick-up and drop-off collection points, procedures, signage and markings.
- Minimising unnecessary contact at gatehouse security, yard and warehouse. For example, non-contact deliveries where the nature of the product allows for use of electronic pre-booking.
- Considering methods to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger quantities less often.
- 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.
- Enabling drivers to access welfare facilities when required, consistent with other guidance.
- Encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise their safety and existing safe working practice, such as preventing drive-aways.

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- Requiring the wearing of face coverings when entering premises.

## More guidance

[COVID-19: what you need to do](#)

[Support for businesses during COVID-19](#)

[General guidance for employees and employers during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

## Definitions

### Common Areas

The term 'common area' refers to areas and amenities which are provided for the common use of more than one person including canteens, reception areas, meeting rooms, areas of worship, toilets, gardens, fire escapes, kitchens, fitness facilities, store rooms, laundry facilities.

### Extremely vulnerable people – Individuals who have been “shielding”

Extremely vulnerable people will have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales telling them they are in this group, or will have been told by their GP. Find out more in the [guidance on shielding](#).

### People at Increased Risk

People at [increased risk](#) include those aged 70 or over and those with some underlying health conditions. All members of this group should closely follow the [social distancing guidance](#).

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## Additional information

### UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced a short guide called [Working Safely during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#).

The Health and Safety Executive has also produced [useful advice for employers and their staff about how to work safely from home during the pandemic](#).

### Support for Business

[Business Wales](#) provides further support for businesses in Wales – including details of the Financial Support and Grants available.

### In-Work Support

There are a number of Welsh Government funded programmes ready to help people returning to work and facing urgent issues affecting their well-being and welfare. The In-Work Support Project provides support to employed and self-employed people with mental health conditions. The Project also has a package of support available to SMEs in North Wales delivered by [Rhyl City Strategy](#), and delivered in South West Wales by [Swansea Bay University Health Board Well-being through Work](#).

### Healthy Working Wales

The Healthy Working Wales website brings together advice on a wide range of useful topics, including self-isolation, shielding and protecting vulnerable people, medical certification, close working with others, critical workers requiring PPE and testing, and more. The website also signposts to links through to Public Health Wales [How are you doing?' campaign website](#) and the Society of

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## **Time to Change Wales**

**Time to Change Wales** helps people who face difficult conversations about mental health and stigma in the workplace, with a strong focus on how to show kindness during COVID-19. In their words: “Now, more than ever, it’s important we show kindness to one other. Giving and receiving acts of kindness can help to improve mental well-being by creating positive feelings.”

## **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has also produced COVID-19 guidance for employers, which assist them when making difficult decisions to take account of their obligations under the Equality Act. More information can be found at **COVID-19 Guidance for Employers.**

## **Restarting or operating your business**

The **Coronavirus Regulations** impose a number of restrictions on businesses and other services – these are continually reviewed as we gradually unlock our economy.

If you are permitted to operate your business you must do so safely in a way that complies with any restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus Regulations, in addition to other legal obligations imposed on employers (such as health and safety legislation).

Where it is reasonably practicable you should allow all or some of your staff to work from home, some or all of their time.

# Physical Distancing in the workplace

The **Coronavirus Regulations** impose a legal requirement on those responsible for open premises, or work carried out at any other premises where a person is working to **take all reasonable measures to minimise the exposure to coronavirus**.

Guidance has been produced to help people understand what “taking all reasonable measures” means. You must have regard to this to ensure you take all reasonable measures to minimise exposure to coronavirus in workplaces and premises open to the public.

Failing to comply with this duty in Wales is an offence, which on conviction may lead to a fine.

## Appendix 1: hierarchy of controls

### 1. Elimination

Redesign the activity such that the risk is removed or eliminated. E.g. Stop a work activity if it is not considered essential. This may be just one part of a job (e.g. travelling to meetings in another part of the country), but other aspects could continue where the risk is acceptable.

### 2. Substitution

Replace the activity with an activity that reduces the risk. Care is required to avoid introducing new hazards from the substitution. E.g. work at home; use of alternative transport to get to work; online meetings.

### 3. Engineering controls

Design measures that help control or mitigate risks, such as barriers, guards,

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etc. Priority should be given to measures that provide collective protection rather than those that just protect individuals or a small group of people. E.g. use of screens and barriers; automatic doors; effective ventilation and sanitation systems.

## **4. Administrative controls**

Identifying and implementing the procedures to improve safety, such as undertaking risk assessments, preparing and communicating mitigating procedures, and increasing signage. E.g. spacing marked out on floors; cleaning regimes; signage to encourage behaviours; provision of hand wash stations.

## **5. PPE**

Personal Protective Equipment: local kit to mitigate the risks to those exposed to the hazard. People must be familiar with the function and limitation of each item of PPE for this to be an effective measure. Ideally, PPE is only considered after all previous measures higher in the hierarchy are identified as not being fully effective in controlling the risks. E.g. gloves; facemasks.

## About this document

This document is a copy of the web page [Offices and contact centres: coronavirus workplace guidance](#) downloaded.

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