

# **Covid-19 Guidelines**

Version 1.4 – Live from October 2024

## **Introduction**

The following guidance is for staff, volunteers and others who may be affected by the Trust's activities. This information will help you to understand how to reduce the spread of respiratory infections such as COVID-19 in the workplace. This is especially important where people in the workplace whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

## **Know which symptoms to look out for**

The symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections are very similar so it is not possible to tell if you have COVID-19, flu or another infection based on symptoms alone. Most people with COVID-19 will have a relatively mild illness, especially if they have been vaccinated.

Symptoms of COVID-19, flu and common respiratory infections include:

- a new, continuous cough
- high temperature, fever or chills
- loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted
- an aching body
- not wanting to eat or not feeling hungry
- a headache
- sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
- diarrhoea, feeling sick or being sick

More information about symptoms can be found on the [NHS Website](#).

## **Suspected Covid – stay at home where possible**

Stay at home if you are unwell - If a staff member or volunteer has COVID-19 type symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19, they are requested to share this with their line manager or their Principle Contact within the Trust. Staff and volunteers are requested not to enter the workplace or engage in face-to-face activity if they, or anyone in their household, believe they have symptoms of COVID-19. Instead, they should immediately inform their line manager or staff primary contact of their situation. An assessment will be made on a case-by-case basis and reasonable steps agreed in consultation with the persons concerned.

People who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 are at the highest risk of becoming infected because they are most likely to have prolonged close contact. If you are a household or overnight contact of someone who has had a positive COVID -19 test result it can take up to 10 days for your infection to develop. It is possible to pass on COVID-19 to others, even if you have no symptoms.

If you are a contact of someone with COVID-19 but do not live with them or did not stay in their household overnight, you are at lower risk of becoming infected.

If you've been in close contact with **someone in your household** who has tested positive you are encouraged to share this with your manager and consideration will be given to working from home on a case-by-case basis where this can be accommodated, returning to work thereafter if you do not develop symptoms.

Further government guidance is available from: [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](#)

### **Responding to an infection at work**

Where a member of staff or volunteer becomes unwell whilst undertaking a work activity and believes they have symptoms of COVID-19 they are strongly encouraged to tell their line manager or primary contact and return home as soon as practical, avoiding contact with others where possible. Where possible, they should not use public transport. If they are unable to drive due to their symptoms, they should arrange for a member of their household or supporter to collect them. Where practical, consider wearing a close-fitting surgical mask.

Reasonable steps will be taken to clean or quarantine any immediate areas where the individual had prolonged contact for more than 30 minutes.

There is no specific guidance in respect of Covid and first aid. Follow good practice infection control guidelines from your first aid training.

### **People at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from Covid**

People who are at higher risk from COVID-19 and other respiratory infections include:

- older people
- those who are pregnant
- those who are unvaccinated
- people of any age whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness
- people of any age with certain long-term conditions

The risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19 and other respiratory infections is very low for most children and young people.

You will not always know whether someone you come into contact with outside your home is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell. This means it is important to follow the advice in this guidance to reduce the spread of infection and help to keep others safe.

### **Actions to reduce the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19**

**Getting vaccinated** - although having a vaccination to protect against COVID-19 is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended that all individuals are fully vaccinated, including boosters and additional doses where eligible. This helps slow the spread of the virus and lessen the effects if an individual is infected with COVID-19. Staff are encouraged to share their vaccination status with their manager where they feel able to do so.

**Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meet outside** - The amount of respiratory virus in the air can build up in poorly ventilated areas. This increases the risk of spreading COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, especially if there are lots of infected people present. The virus can also remain in the air after an infected person has left.

Bringing fresh air into a room by opening a door or a window, even for a few minutes at a time, helps remove older stale air that could contain virus particles and reduces the chance of spreading infections

Meeting outdoors greatly reduces this risk, but this may not always be possible.

***Further advice about effective ventilation during colder weather is given below in the Covid Office and Vehicle Guidelines***

**Maintain a clean workplace** - Keeping workplaces clean reduces the risk of infection and can reduce sickness in a workforce. It's especially important to clean surfaces that people touch a lot. Staff are supported to maintain a clean working environment by providing wipes, soap and hot water, and/or sanitiser. Regular hand cleaning is encouraged.

**Vehicle sharing** - It will often be impractical not to share vehicles but where possible keep vehicles well ventilated and clean.

**Face coverings** - The Trust will support anyone who chooses to wear a face covering. The wearing of face coverings within the office or in vehicles is optional at this time.

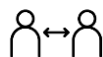
**Working outdoors** - There are no specific guidelines for working outdoors other than following good practice hygiene and other principles outlined in this document.

## COVID-19 Office and Vehicle Guidelines

To help avoid the spread of Covid-19, we respectfully request that you follow these simple safety measures.



If you feel unwell or have Covid-19 symptoms, you are strongly encouraged not to attend the office and notify your manager immediately



Please be considerate to other people's space



Consider wearing a face covering in crowded, enclosed places.



### **Effective ventilation during colder weather:**

- Keep windows shut downstairs where there is increased air circulation anyway due to the size of the spaces. Open the high window to the lobby area (**Grebe House**).
- Close windows in rooms upstairs if they are occupied, but open them slightly when they are not in use, and turn radiators off in that room.
- Keep all internal doors open to aid airflow **but make sure all doors and windows are shut and secured when the building is closed for fire safety and security**
- When any room is not occupied, open windows and turn radiators off



Regularly wash your hands or use hand sanitiser



Consider wiping down high touch surfaces

Adhere to the **suggested room capacities** for face-to-face meetings:



### **There are currently no suggested room capacities**

*This position is subject to review dependent on Covid rates and subsequent government guidance.*



Face-to-face meetings with external contacts can be conducted in Trust buildings but ensure you follow our good practice guidelines.



Vehicle sharing is permitted but ensure good ventilation by opening windows and keep vehicles clean.