



# Community Services

## COVID-19 Guidance & Checklist

JUNE 2020

## Why do we need new Operational Guidance for Community Services?

With lockdown restrictions easing, national policies are being created every day to keep the spread of Covid-19 and its impact to a minimum.

And because of the new policies, changes are happening really quickly and things are starting to look very different in every community. It's really important that NHS services can respond in a practical and safe way to work with these changes. We also need to ensure that any new approaches to delivering a service are sustainable.

Please remember the Staff Covid Website is your go to place for all the latest Covid related information. This can be accessed from any device Trust or personal, desktop or mobile:

**WEBSITE:** [covid.sthk.nhs.uk](https://covid.sthk.nhs.uk)  
**PASSWORD:** STHKcovid19

### Our promise to you

As a Trust, our staff will always be our top priority.

And we'll continue to support you throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though we have a legal responsibility to protect you and others from risk, we want to make sure you stay safe and well regardless.

Now more than ever, we'll need to be even more flexible and ready to adapt to changes, even with a moment's notice, than we already are.

To help you do this, we need to put the right things in place so you can get on with your job safely. This way we'll be able to keep services running as smoothly as possible and we can keep our patients safe too.

### Just one more really important thing...

**...if you have any coronavirus symptoms, you need to self-isolate immediately.**

No matter your job role or place of work, you must follow the latest government advice to prevent spreading the virus. Stay safe. Protect everyone.



## What We Need to Do

### 1. Risk Assessment

#### Risk Assess your Staff

We need to take extra measures to protect staff who are:

- extremely vulnerable
- vulnerable/at risk

**Extremely vulnerable staff** have specific underlying health conditions that make them extremely vulnerable to severe illness if they contract COVID-19. Those defined as extremely vulnerable are:

- Solid organ transplant recipients.
- People with specific cancers:
  - People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
  - People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
- Women who are pregnant (at any stage) with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.
- Women who are pregnant over 28 weeks.

They have been strongly advised not to work outside their home and will have received a letter telling them they are in this group, or will have been informed by their GP.

Once a line manager has been made aware that a staff member is extremely vulnerable and must isolate in their home, a two-step process must be followed to accurately triage and record the absence:

1. The line manager must complete a "[COVID Extremely Vulnerable Staff Member Risk Assessment](#)" and send it to [covidstaff@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:covidstaff@sthk.nhs.uk). The risk assessment will identify the next steps that need to be taken. This can take between 24 and 48 hours please bear with us; there are times at present, where demand is exceeding our capacity to triage. We are hopeful this will reduce over the next 7 days
2. The line manager must log the absence in either ESR or e-Roster. User guides to do this can be found [here](#).

**Vulnerable/at risk staff** are at higher risk of severe illness. Those defined as vulnerable/at risk are:

- Under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
- Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis Chronic heart disease, such as heart failure Chronic kidney disease Chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis Chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- Diabetes Problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- Being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- Those who are pregnant (less than 28 weeks)

They have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing measures and should be helped to work from home (either in their current role or in an alternative role).

Once a line manager has been made aware that a member of staff is vulnerable/at risk the "[At Risk Assessment Form](#)" must be completed and submitted to [covidstaff@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:covidstaff@sthk.nhs.uk).

This will help us identify groups of staff who are at increased risk of catching Covid-19 and who need to be redeployed.

If after reading this you still have any questions about staffing or recording absence please email [covidstaff@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:covidstaff@sthk.nhs.uk)

## Risk Assess your Workplace

It's really important to carry out a risk assessment of work places. Use the [Covid Secure Risk Assessment](#) available on the [Covid Secure Workplace](#) page of the Staff Covid Website

### Tips for carrying out the Risk Assessment

- Do it collaboratively with your team and / or co-workers.
- Keep a copy on file and revisit it as new national and local guidance is published.

Once your area is classed 'Covid Secure' you MUST download a Covid Secure Certificate and clearly display this in your area.

Certificates are available on the Staff Covid Website <https://covid.sthk.nhs.uk/covid-secure-workplace/>

**Stay Safe**

**NHS**  
St Helens and Knowsley  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS TRUST

**WE ARE COVID SECURE**

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

**Five steps to safer working together**

- We have carried out a **Covid-19 risk assessment** and shared the results with the people who work here
- We have **cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures** in line with guidance
- We have taken all reasonable steps to **help people work from home**
- We have taken all reasonable steps to **maintain a 2m distance** in the workplace
- Where people cannot be 2m distance apart, we have done everything practical to **manage transmission risk**

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Working from Home

As an organisation, we have agreed to do everything we can to support staff to work safely at home.

### Remote Working Readiness

We understand how important it is for you to have the right tools to do your job. So, staff members will be given remote working equipment and access to all required system applications. For all information and details to ensure you're set-up and supported with working from home, visit the [remote working](#) page on the Staff Covid Website.

Working from home is very different from 'going to work', and can impact on individuals in different ways. Some staff may adapt very quickly and others may find it more taxing. That's why it's really important that you all stay in regular contact.

This will enable everyone to:

- stay up to date with all corporate communications and guidance
- share and support work plans
- check in on the physical and mental wellbeing of each other

To help you stay in touch, you'll find a helpful [Skype guide](#) on the Remote Working page of the Staff Covid Website

If you or your staff are finding the new changes tough, or you're just having 'one of those days', you are not alone!

Here's some handy advice to help you through, please remember:

1. You are not "working from home" you are "at your home, during a crisis, trying to work"
2. Your personal physical, mental and emotional health is far more important than anything else right now.
3. You should not try to compensate for lost productivity by working longer hours.
4. You will be kind to yourself and not judge how you are coping based on how you see others coping.
5. You will be kind to others and not judge how they are coping based on how you are coping.
6. Your team's success will not be measured the same way it was when things were normal.



### 3. Review Cleaning, Handwashing and Hygiene Procedures

The importance of good handwashing to keep you safe can't be emphasised enough.

We know that effective cleaning, hygiene, and handwashing procedures are already in place across the Trust, but the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning needs to be maintained, or even increased, where possible.

Every member of staff must continue to follow the Trust's guidance on hand washing and hygiene.



#### To help you, we will:

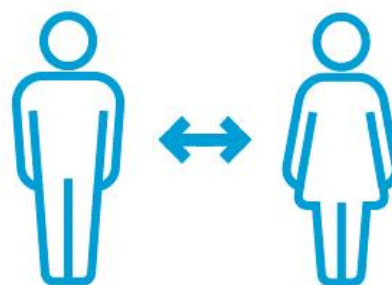
- Provide hand sanitiser within all clinical and public areas, as well as office environments.
- Maintain our high standard of cleaning within staff and patient washrooms
- Provide paper towels to dry your hands, if electrical dryers are not available.

#### To help us, we need you to:

- Let the domestic services team know if you're concerned that cleaning standards or supplies are inadequate
- Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, especially within shared staff kitchens/ rest areas/offices
- Wear a face mask when required

#### 4. Maintain Social Distancing

Social distancing recommendations have played a key part in reducing the spread of Covid-19. As the risk is still present, we must continue to stay apart whenever it is possible.



In non-clinical workspaces e.g. offices staff rooms, and other communal staff areas

Managers should perform a Covid Secure Risk Assessment (see step 1. Risk assessment).

If the department is 'Covid Secure', staff DO NOT have to wear a face mask in this area.

If the department is NOT 'Covid Secure', staff MUST wear a face mask in this area. If this is a clinical area, staff MUST wear a face mask AND gloves and apron.

In clinical areas including patient waiting areas

- Use signs and floor markers to remind staff and visitors of social distancing guidance and infection control measures. The community building landlords have undertaken building risk assessments and provided social distancing signage. If you need further advice please contact the estates and facilities team who can help with signage requests and seating layouts. Please email [estates.facilities@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:estates.facilities@sthk.nhs.uk) or



call extension 1355 regarding your particular building needs.

- If clinical and waiting area space allows, adopt a one-way traffic system
- Where possible implement an appointment only system and request that the patient attends alone or with only one carer if needed.





### In public areas

- Restrict the number of people travelling in lifts and encourage the use of stairs.
- Keep corridors clear to allow of staff and visitors to pass each other at a safe distance.

### Travelling to work

- Team managers can help to ease demand on public transport by staggering working hours.
- For staff who travel to work using their own transport, they should not car share with anyone outside of their household
- If this is not possible, they should:
  - only travel with the same individuals and limit the number of people
  - maintain good ventilation, e.g. keep windows open
  - clean the vehicle regularly, use disposable and focus on handles and other frequently touched areas

## 5. Manage Transmission Risk

We can manage transmission risk by following social distancing guidance, wearing PPE, regularly cleaning our hands, and using shielding measures.

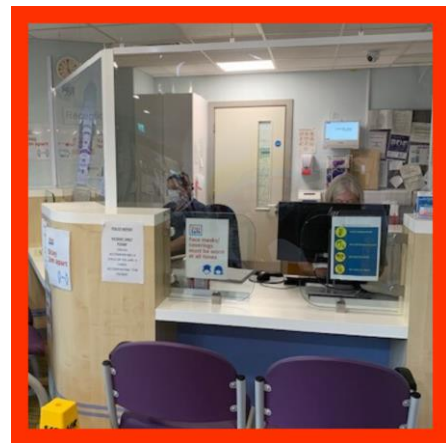


### Social Distancing Guidance when Providing Care:

#### In clinical settings

Where it's not possible for people to be 2m apart, you'll need to do everything you can to keep the risk of transmission low:

- Wear PPE
- Keep the activity time as short as possible
- Where possible, use screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- Use back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible
- Stagger arrival and departure times
- Reduce the number of contacts each person has by using 'fixed teams or partnering' and allocate set clinical rooms/workspace.



#### In patients' homes

Before visiting patients in their own homes, you should:

- Contact households to ask that they maintain a 2m distance from staff where possible
- Ask households to leave all internal doors open to minimise contact with door handles.
- Identify 'busy' areas in the property where people travel to, from, or through, for example, stairs and corridors. Minimise time spent and movement within these areas.
- Limit the number of workers/household members within a confined space
- Use a fixed pairing system if people have to work in close proximity.

If possible Team Managers are asked to consider allocating the same staff (fixed pairing) to a clinic /household where visits are repetitive.

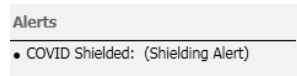
## Shielding Patients

Shielding is a measure to protect people who are extremely vulnerable by minimising all interaction between them and others.

The Trust has implemented a process for shielding for both extremely vulnerable and vulnerable patients:

### Shielding Alert

An alert has been added to MEDWAY for patients who are at the very highest risk from COVID-19 and have been advised by NHS Digital, their GP, or their secondary care consultant to “shield”.



If a shielded patient needs to attend hospital during the pandemic, further precautions must be considered:

### Inpatient areas

- The patient should be admitted to a side room and advised to remain in the room where possible
- If the patient leaves the room, e.g. for investigations, they must wear a surgical face mask
- Staff entering the room must wear single use PPE (apron, mask, gloves) in accordance with National guidance <https://covid.sthk.nhs.uk/what-to-wear-and-when/>

### Outpatient areas

Virtual or telephone appointments should be considered as a preferred option. But if this is not suitable and a face to face appointment is necessary, the following measures must be followed:

- Strict social distancing must be observed.
- The patient should wear a face covering/mask and regularly clean their hands
- During the Consultation, staff must wear single use PPE (apron, mask, gloves) in accordance with National guidance: <https://covid.sthk.nhs.uk/what-to-wear-and-when/>
- If a prescription is required, collection by a relative should be arranged. If this is not possible, delivery to the patient should be arranged.

### The Shielded Patient List

The Shielded Patient List continues to be updated, with any patients who have been inappropriately advised to shield being removed.

## PPE

- Staff must wear suitable PPE that reflects the level of risk of transmission in their workplace, in accordance with National guidance <https://covid.sthk.nhs.uk/what-to-wear-and-when/>



- Staff providing care in clinics or patients' homes, where maintaining social distancing is not possible, you **MUST** wear full PPE, in accordance with National guidance <https://covid.sthk.nhs.uk/what-to-wear-and-when/>

All NHS staff across all areas (clinical and non-clinical) must wear surgical face masks in public areas of our buildings. Masks must also be worn in all areas where social distancing cannot be achieved. In clinical

areas, staff must continue to follow the relevant PPE guidelines.

Staff must clearly document PPE use when visiting patients, especially those who are clinically vulnerable. Extra attention also needs to be paid to equipment, cleaning, and hygiene to reduce transmission risks.

Patients may attend appointments wearing their own face coverings and are not required to replace these with a surgical face mask.

If a patient does not have a face covering they must be given a surgical mask.

Managers should support staff in using and disposing of face masks safely, for further advice and FAQs see the Staff Covid Website <https://covid.sthk.nhs.uk/face-masks-coverings-for-staff-and-patients/>

Managers are reminded that the increased use of surgical face masks will generate more waste and waste collections may need to be increased. Please contact xxx

For details on how to order PPE stock including face masks and other equipment as well as hand gel and hand wipes please see the Staff Covid Website <https://covid.sthk.nhs.uk/stock/>

## Conclusion

We understand there is a lot of information to take in, so if in doubt here's a quick reference tool for you to check you are on track.

## The Five 'COVID Secure' Steps to Working Safely



If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here for you. Take care, stay safe, and look out for each other.

Mike Roscoe

**Assistant Director of Operations**

Jacqui Scott

**Head of Nursing and Quality**

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