

Health and Safety Bulletin

Date of first issue: 14th February 2020

Latest update 15th March 2022

Issue: Coronavirus COVID-19

Background

From 28th February face coverings remain legally required only in retail, public transport and health and care settings. They are encouraged but not legally required in publicly accessible areas of indoor areas. Employees must continue to self-isolate if they have symptoms or a positive test for covid-19 and workplaces premises must continue to conduct and implement specific risk assessments relating to controlling the transmission risk.

From 28th March, if the current public health situation remains stable, all remaining restrictions will be removed

Although the law has changed in relation to working from home, the official guidance from Welsh Government and view of CCBC's Corporate Management Team continues to encourage home working where possible. Therefore, any staff wishing to work from any CCBC workplace for specific reasons must continue to seek the permission of their respective Head of Service.

Key points on staying safe and protecting others from covid-19 infection remain as:-

- Get vaccinated
- Limit contact with others
- Outdoors is safer than indoors
- Keep indoor areas well-ventilated
- Wear a face covering in congested enclosed spaces Whilst face coverings are not a legal requirement CCBC still encourage staff and visitors to wear face coverings where distancing cannot be maintained

Staying safe in the workplace

Staff should continue to work from home where possible, however the stepping down of alert levels allows staff more flexibility to attend offices. Any changes to current working arrangements will need to be agreed directly with Heads of Service and staff who need to come into work within a CCBC corporate office must obtain permission from their Head of Service.

Any employee who is feeling unwell, particularly with a high temperature (fever), a new continuous cough (a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours) or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste should get a PCR test and self-isolate until they get their test result, even if symptoms are mild.

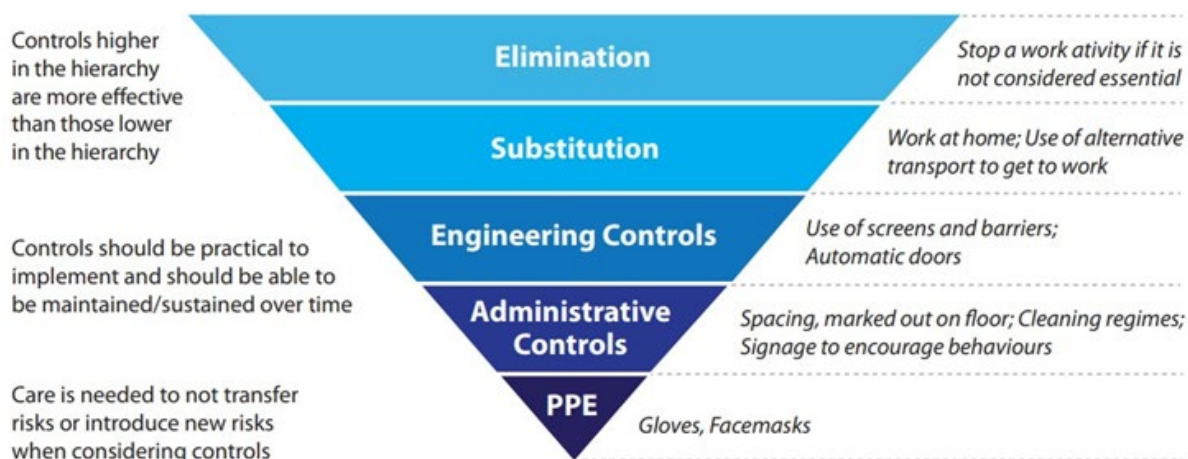
Risk assessment

To assist Service Managers and those that manage CCBC premises guidance and template risk assessments are available from the [Covid-19 topic page of the health and safety intranet portal](#). Support, advice and guidance on how to improve mental and physical wellbeing when working from home and log in details to Care First's internet page may be found from the HR intranet portal - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Support, advice and guidance for staff](#)

Although Covid-19 risk assessments will require updating following the latest changes, the following workplace controls remain unchanged:

- Adequate ventilation
- Cleaning
- Good hand hygiene
- Face coverings in enclosed public areas or crowded areas

There are five main ways to control risk known as the 'hierarchy of controls.'



The use of multiple different independent controls can give defence in depth through different layers of protection

In addition to the above, the well-established guidance on infection risk control measures, particularly the following all still remain as well-established and proven effective risk control measures:-

- social distancing,
- Room ventilation,
- Self-isolating in line with Welsh Government guidelines - <https://gov.wales/self-isolation>
- Limiting number of persons you come into close contact with,
- Wearing of 3-layer face coverings,
- Regular cleaning,
- Good hand hygiene (washing supplemented with alcohol-based gel),
- Use of one-way systems to manage congested areas where practicable.

Further information on employers' responsibilities can be found on the Welsh Government advice for employers website. <https://gov.wales/your-responsibilities-employer-coronavirus>

The Health and Safety Executive website <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/> also provides risk assessment guidance and technical advice on reasonable steps required to protect employees and others from Covid-19, such as workplace ventilation.

Testing for covid-19

Lateral flow tests (LFTs) are used to identify people with COVID-19 who are not showing symptoms. Around 1 in 3 individuals with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms. If left undetected they will continue to spread the virus.

Staff who are unable to work from home are encouraged to test regularly in accordance with Welsh Government advice – <https://gov.wales/lateral-flow-testing-people-without-symptoms>

LFTs are available for everyone free of charge. You can get lateral flow tests by:

- collecting from a pharmacy or local collection point - <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>
- ordering online <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>
- calling 119
- Through a school, college or nursery (for staff) during term time, although these are intended only for school staff and secondary-school aged pupils
- Your line manager may also be able to supply them, depending on your workplace setting.

Once you have done your LFT, you should report the results within 24 hours, whether positive, negative or void. This helps assess current COVID-19 rates and identify new outbreaks. Test results by be entered online at <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> or by calling 119

If you have any symptoms, you should book a PCR test - <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Enforcement

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) enforce the law regarding occupational safety and health, including implementation of 'covid-secure' measures. Managers should contact CCBC's Health and Safety Division immediately if anything other than positive feedback is given from the HSE following a visit or telephone call so that further support can be provided (see below for contact details)

The Environmental Health department of local authorities now have new powers to impose localised restrictions to manage outbreaks, rather than all-Wales rules.

Self-isolation

If you, or anyone in your household, have any suspected coronavirus symptoms you should self-isolate at home in accordance with the latest Welsh Government's self-isolation guidelines - <https://gov.wales/self-isolation>

Vaccination

Staff are encouraged to get vaccinated, and managers should consider flexibility to enable employees to attend their vaccination appointments.

Further information can be found at <https://gov.wales/vaccine-coronavirus>

Travel

What you must do depends on where you have travelled from. The rules are subject to rapid change. The most current guidance may be found at <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-travel>
Please note that rules for foreign travel to and from Wales may differ to the law applicable in other parts of the UK.

Social media

All employees are reminded of their obligations under the Council's Social Media Policy regarding any social media posts. Particular care should be given to the spreading of mis-information and posts that may cause unnecessary increased anxiety to recipients.

Additional information

CCBC have a dedicated Covid-19 coronavirus topic page providing information, advice and support for employees at all levels that will be kept under regular review –

<http://sc-aptdken1/KENTICO/Departments/HR/Health-Safety/Topics/Covid-19.aspx>

Staff without access to the IT network to access the intranet may find the above information on a newly created page of the CCBC internet using their home PC or smartphone at:

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Covid-19/Care-first-coping-with-Covid-19/Health-and-safety>

Further information and health and safety advice regarding the reopening of CCBC premises, returning to work, agile working and other work-related queries can be obtained from Health and Safety Officers of CCBC's Health and Safety Division – Tel. 01443 86 4072,

or e-mail:- healthandsafety@caerphilly.gov.uk