

# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

## Guidance for home visits for care, equipment or maintenance.

### Introduction

Personal Protective Equipment or PPE provides enhanced protection for workers and the public in certain environments and situations. It should only be used by trained individuals alongside broader infection control measure.

The most effective methods of reducing the risk of infection are **regular and effective handwashing and social distancing**.

This document is based on national guidance<sup>1</sup> and provides advice on whether and when PPE should be used when visiting homes to provide care, install or provide equipment or to carry out emergency maintenance or repair work.



### What you need to know

- Not everyone needs PPE to carry out their roles safely. PPE is only one of several important measures to prevent infection, the most important are handwashing, social distancing, and catching coughs and sneezes.
  - Everyone should follow good hygiene practices.
  - If you are using PPE, it is vital that you are properly trained, incorrect use of PPE can increase the risk of infection. The government website provides useful information to help [here](#)
  - Where PPE is required, a risk assessment needs to be undertaken to assess whether eye protection is required see section 7 of the PPE guidance (link below).
  - In some instances eye protection and surgical masks can be subject to sessional use. A single session refers to a period of time where a worker is undertaking duties in a specific care setting or environment. A session ends when the care worker leaves the care setting or environment (see section 6 of the national PPE guidance (link below)).
  - When visiting a household, new personal protective equipment must be used for each episode of care. It is essential that used personal protective equipment is stored securely within disposable rubbish bags.
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## **Before you visit**

Consider if the visit is necessary, can it be deferred? you must only visit a person's home when there are no possible alternatives.

Can the reason for the visit be simplified, e.g can equipment be left on the doorstep and conversations held at the door

Let your manager know if you are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (see national guidance on [shielding of vulnerable people](#)).

You need to confirm the status of the household prior to the home visit to assess whether and what PPE will be required. Initial risk assessment where possible should take place by phone, other remote triage, prior to entering the home or at 2 metres social distance where this is not possible.

### **You will need to ascertain:**

- 1) if anyone in the household has symptoms of Covid19 and
- 2) if anyone in the household is shielding because they are vulnerable.

If you are unsure, assume that symptoms are present in the household.

## **About Covid-19 coronavirus**

Covid19 is transmitted from person to person through droplets from coughs and sneezes and by touching objects and surfaces that have been touched by other infectious people.

Most people are asymptomatic (no obvious symptoms) which means that they may not know that they are infectious. This is why it's important that everyone follows good hygiene practices at all times.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- **new continuous cough and/or**
- **high temperature**

## **How can I protect myself and others from Coronavirus?**

- Stay more than 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people in the household where possible
- Ensure that you wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after your visit and before and after using PPE. Handwashing is one of the most important ways to reduce infection.
- It is acceptable to ask to wash your hands at the resident's home. You should take soap and paper towels with you to dry your hands.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or bent elbow and then immediately dispose of the tissue
- Please do not shake hands with the person and explain that this is to prevent spreading coronavirus.

## **When should I use PPE?**

<b>You do not need PPE if:</b>
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- You are helping clients who have symptoms of COVID-19 but **NO close personal contact** (maintain >2m social distancing).
- Nobody in the household has symptoms of Covid-19 and no one is shielding.

**You ONLY need PPE if:**

- Someone in the household has symptoms of COVID19 and I cannot remain at a safe distance of 2 metres (6 feet)  
and/or
- Someone in the household is shielding because they are extremely vulnerable

**If PPE is required, what PPE should I use?**

Situation when PPE is required	Minimum PPE requirements Good hygiene practices must always be followed
<p><b>The individual receiving care and support is ‘shielding’ because they are vulnerable or/ someone in the household is ‘Shielding’ because they are vulnerable (see guidance below)</b></p>	<p>If someone in the household is clinically vulnerable due to existing health conditions that place them at greater risk of Covid-19, PPE is required to protect them.</p> <p>As a minimum, single use disposable plastic aprons, surgical mask and gloves must be worn for the protection of the patient.</p>
<p><b>The individual receiving care and support or any member of the household has symptoms of COVID-19 as described above or has tested positive</b></p>	<p>As a minimum, single use disposable plastic aprons, gloves and <u>fluid repellent</u> surgical masks and eye protection if risk of getting droplets in the eyes e.g. from coughing/sneezing/spitting</p>
<p><b>Someone in the household has symptoms and you cannot maintain a distance of 2 metres</b></p>	<p>As a minimum, single use disposable plastic aprons, gloves and <u>fluid repellent</u> surgical masks and eye protection if risk of getting droplets in the eyes e.g. from coughing/sneezing/spitting</p>

**When you arrive home**

Your uniform/clothing should be machine washed separately from other household linen, in a load not more than half the machine capacity, at the maximum temperature the fabric can tolerate (ideally 60 degrees).

*Written on 24 March 2020. Updated 3 April 2020 to reflect national guidance published on the 2 April 2020.*

## **Guidance sources of information:**

### **COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

Last updated: 2<sup>th</sup> April 2020

### **Covid-19: Guidance on home care provision**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-home-care-provision>

Last updated: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### **Covid-19: Guidance on residential care provision**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-residential-care-provision>

Last updated: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### **Guidance on shielding vulnerable people**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Last updated: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020