Keep Wales Safe – at work in construction and other outdoor work

COVID-19: Workplace guidance for employers, employees and the self-employed
23 July 2020
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The Welsh Government introduced the Coronavirus Regulations imposing strict restrictions on gatherings, the movement of people, and the operation of businesses (some of which have been required to close temporarily). Incrementally, as a result of regular review of the Regulations, an increasing number of these have been allowed to open again.

Businesses that are permitted to operate, or premises that are allowed to open, 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 working in construction and other outdoor work to understand how to work safely, taking measures to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus.

How to use this guidance

The Welsh Government has issued Statutory Guidance on taking all reasonable measures to minimise exposure to coronavirus in workplaces and premises open to the public. This document builds on these requirements 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 have regard to the Coronavirus Regulations and 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 to 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 the relevant public health legislation could result in enforcement action by the relevant authorities.

This document contains guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations. When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors and other people, as well as your employees and anyone else on premises.

To help you decide which actions to take, you must carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other Health and Safety related hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with the recognised trade union or, if there isn’t one, a representative chosen by workers.

We expect that this document will be updated over time. This version is up to date as of 23 July 2020. You can check for updates at Keep Wales Safe - at work.
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1. Thinking about risk

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

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19 and take measures to minimise exposure to the virus. As an employer or business operator, you also have a legal responsibility to protect employees and contractors; and anyone else on the premises from risk to their health and safety. This means you need to think about the risks they face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your business addresses the risks of COVID-19, having regard to the Coronavirus Regulations and the Statutory Guidance and using this document to inform your decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your premises. 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.

Employers have a duty to consult the workforce on health and safety. 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 workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of your workers creates a culture where relationships between employers and workers are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, workers should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues. If concerns still cannot be resolved, see below for further steps you can take.

If an individual is concerned about the safety measures in any premises where a business is carried on or the service provided, then they can report this to the Public Protection services of the relevant local authority (which include environmental health and health and safety). Where the enforcing authority, such as your local authority, identifies employers or business operators who are not taking action to comply with the 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. For example, this would cover businesses not taking all reasonable measures to ensure the 2m distancing requirements.

How to raise a concern:

- Contact your employee representative.
- Contact your trade union or association if you have one.
- Use the HSE form available at https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm
- Contact HSE by phone on 0300 790 6787.
1.1 Managing risk

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Employers and business operators have a duty to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures.

A person responsible for carrying on a business or providing a service must work with any other employers or contractors sharing premises so that everybody's health and safety is protected.

All risks must be assessed, with meaningful discussion with staff and/or their recognised trade union, before re-commencing work. Risk assessments should include those working from home. If you are required by law to have a written risk assessment (where there are 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.

In the context of minimising exposure to the virus this means implementing these steps in order:

1. The most effective way to minimise exposure is to enable some or all of your staff to work from home, some or all of their time. There is an expectation that employers should be flexible as possible and make adjustments wherever that is possible. This may include issuing staff with laptops or mobile phones and facilitating communication from wherever members of staff may be.

2. Where working from home is not reasonably practicable, you should take all reasonable measures to ensure that:

   • a distance of 2 metres (2m) is maintained between any persons on the premises;
   • that persons only enter the premises in sufficiently small numbers to make it possible to maintain that distance; and
   • where persons are required to wait to enter the premises, that a distance of 2m is maintained between them.

The requirement to maintain 2m distance does not apply to persons from the same household or an extended household, or between a carer and the person being assisted by the carer.

You should undertake an assessment of what reasonable measures can be taken and keep this under periodic review. Your assessment should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

There is more information on vulnerable groups and social distancing here: COVID-19 social distancing guidance for everyone in Wales. 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 (BAME) backgrounds.
1.1 Managing risk (continued)

**Objective:** To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

3. Where closer working is required and the 2m distancing rule cannot be observed, take all reasonable measures to minimise exposure to coronavirus, for example by:
   - Limiting the level of face-to-face interaction.
   - Using physical barriers.
   - Increased 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 personal protective equipment where sector specific guidance says it is necessary.
   - Recording the provision of lead names and contact details to support Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) and undertaking any necessary TTP actions required by employers.
   - Ensure that those with coronavirus symptoms are not present on the premises.

4. Provide information to those entering or working at the premises about how to minimise the risk of exposure.
1.2 Sharing the results of your risk assessment

You are required by the Coronavirus Regulations to provide information to those entering or working at premises about how to minimise exposure to coronavirus. We would also encourage all businesses to demonstrate to their workers and customers that they have properly assessed their risk and taken appropriate mitigating measures. If possible, you should publish this information on your website particularly where you are an employer with over 50 workers. Below you will find a notice that you may wish to display in your workplace or on your premises to show that you have followed this guidance.

![Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020](image)

We confirm we have complied with the Welsh Government’s guidance to managing the risk of COVID-19

- **FIVE KEY STEPS TO KEEPING SAFE AT WORK**

  - We have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and shared the results with the people who work here
  - We have taken practical measures to protect your workplace by implementing cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures
  - We are ensuring that where it is reasonably practicable people work from home
  - We have taken all reasonable measures to ensure that a 2m distance is maintained in the workplace
  - We will actively implement the Test, Trace, Protect programme in the workplace

Employer: _________________  Date: _________________

Who to contact: _________________

Your Health and Safety Representative

(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.tse.gov.uk or 0300 000 1647)
## 2. Who should go to work

**Objective:**
To minimise exposure to coronavirus by allowing staff to work from home where it is reasonably practicable.

<table>
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<th>Steps that will usually be needed:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Consider who is needed on site, for example, support staff must work from home if it is reasonably practicable for them to do so.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning for the minimum number of people needed to be on site to operate safely and effectively, for example, workers deemed necessary to carry out physical works, supervise work, or conduct work in order to operate safely.</td>
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<td>Monitoring the well-being of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to those operating in an outdoor environment, especially if the majority of their colleagues are on-site.</td>
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<td>Keeping in touch with off-site workers on their working arrangements including their welfare, mental and physical health and personal security. Other businesses to which employees may need to travel will be subject to a similar duty to ensure 2m distance is kept between people on premises when work is being carried out.</td>
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<td>Providing equipment for people to work from home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems.</td>
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2.1 Protecting people who are at higher risk

**Objective:** To protect extremely vulnerable and vulnerable people.

- Currently **extremely vulnerable individuals** (shielded) have been strongly advised not to work outside the home.
- **Vulnerable people, who are at higher risk of severe illness** (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions, see definition in Appendix), have been asked to take extra care in observing physical distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.
- If vulnerable (but not extremely vulnerable) people cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to stay 2m away from others. If they have to spend time within 2m of others, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. 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 extremely vulnerable people.

**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 who is in the extremely vulnerable and vulnerable groups.
- See current guidance for shielded individuals that need particular consideration.

2.2 People who need to self-isolate

**Objective:** To make sure individuals who need to self-isolate because they have symptoms of COVID-19, or because they live in a household, or are part of an **extended household** with someone who has symptoms, or they are advised to self-isolate as part of the Welsh Government's **Test, Trace, Protect** programme, do not come to the workplace.

**Steps that will usually be needed:**

- Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate.
- See current guidance for employees and employers relating to **statutory sick pay due to COVID-19**.
- See current self-isolation guidance for people who have symptoms and those who live with others who have symptoms.
- Workers who develop 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.
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 disabled workers 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 might make any steps you are thinking about 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 the 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 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. Physical distancing at work

Objective:

To take all reasonable measures to maintain 2m distancing on premises while anyone is working, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites.

You must take all reasonable measures to minimise exposure to coronavirus by ensuring:

- a distance of 2m is maintained between any persons on the premises;
- that persons only enter the premises in sufficiently small numbers to make it possible to maintain that distance; and
- where persons are required to wait to enter the premises, that a distance of 2m is maintained.

The requirement to maintain 2m distance does not apply to persons from the same household or extended household or between a carer and the person being assisted by the carer.

Where people are unable to observe the 2m distancing rule and where closer working is required, take all reasonable measures to minimise exposure to coronavirus, for example by:

- Limiting the level of face-to-face interaction.
- Using physical barriers.
- Increased 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.
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.

- Limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, for example, work minibuses. This could include leaving seats empty.

- Limiting the number of entry and exit points into and out of the premises. Consider having separate entrance and exit points if possible.

- Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points and main thoroughfares through the workplace.

- Providing sufficient handwashing facilities, and/or alcohol based hand gels where possible, for example, at entry and exit points.

- 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](#).
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 the premises, for example, restricting access to some areas, and encouraging use of radios, telephones, emails, or electronic devices, where permitted, and cleaning them between use.

- Reducing job rotation and equipment rotation, for example, single tasks for the day.

- Where possible, implementing one-way systems on walkways.

- Using signage such as ground markings, or being creative with other objects to mark out 2m to allow controlled flows of people moving throughout the site.

- Reducing occupancy of vehicles used for onsite travel, for example, shuttle buses, and when needed, physical distancing measures should be followed within the vehicles.

- Separating sites into working zones to keep different groups of workers physically separated as much as practical.

- Planning site access and ‘area of safety’ points to enable physical distancing.

- Reducing the number of people in attendance at site inductions and consider holding them outdoors with physical distancing.

- Managing use of high traffic areas including corridors, lifts, turnstiles and walkways to maintain physical distancing.
3.3 Making the main workplace safe for people who work statically

**Objective:** To maintain physical distancing between people who work in one place.

- It is recognised that in outdoor workplaces it might be rare to have a fixed or static place of work. However, there may be some situations where this is the case.

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

- Workstations should be assigned to an individual as much as possible. If they need to be shared, they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people and a frequent system of cleaning key touch points adopted.

- Where closer working is required you should have undertaken an assessment of what reasonable measures could have been taken and keep this under periodic review. In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are at increased risk of serious illness if they contracted COVID-19.

### Steps that will usually be needed:

- Reviewing layouts and processes to allow staff to work further apart from each other.

- 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

- Using a consistent pairing system if workers have to be in close proximity, for example, during two-person working, lifting or maintenance activities that cannot be redesigned.
3.4 Meetings

**Objective:** To reduce or eliminate transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain physical distancing in meetings.

**Steps that will usually be needed:**

- Using remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.
- Only absolutely necessary participants should physically attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.
- Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example, do not share pens and other objects.
- Providing alcohol based hand gel in meeting and encourage its use.
- Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms if possible.
- For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain 2m physical distancing.
- Providing signage outside meeting rooms stating maximum occupancy and the need to observe the physical distancing layout within the room.

3.5 Common areas

**Objective:** To maintain physical distancing while using common areas.

**Steps that will usually be needed:**

- 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.
- Using safe outdoor areas for breaks with physical distancing measures in place.
- Creating additional space by using other parts of the premises freed up by remote working.
- Reconfiguring seating and tables to maintain spacing and reduce face-to-face interactions.
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.
- 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.
4. Managing your customers, visitors and contractors
4.1 Manage contacts

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

**Steps that will usually be needed:**

- Where site visits are required, site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival.
- Checking visitors are COVID-19 symptom free.
- Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.
- Limiting the number of visitors on the premises at any one time.
- Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people.
- Collecting and retaining a record of all visitors to support the Test, Trace, Protect programme.
- Encouraging visitors to use alcohol based hand gel or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises.

Managing visitors to site
4.2 Providing and explaining available guidance

Objective: To make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety.

- Ensuring public notices are visible and help inform workers, customers, visitors, contractors and anyone else on the premises to maintain 2m physical distancing.
- There is a high likelihood in some areas that working outdoors will draw the attention of the public. Visible signage may be used to inform the public of the type of work that is being performed.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Providing signage to inform the public on what work you are doing.
- Providing signage at entrances to the premises to remind everyone to maintain physical distancing.
- Providing signage on rights of way that cross your workplace to remind everyone to maintain physical distancing.
- Establishing host responsibilities relating to COVID-19 and providing any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.
- 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.
5. Cleaning the workplace

5.1 Before reopening

**Objective:** To make sure that any site or location that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart, including:

- Conducting a risk assessment for all sites, or part of sites, that have been closed, before restarting work.
- Carrying out cleaning procedures and providing alcohol based hand gel, before restarting work.
- Checking water supplies. 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 COVID-19 outbreak](https://www.gov.uk).
### 5.2 Keeping your premises 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 buckets, site equipment and control panels, 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.
- Cleaning of all hand tools, controls, machinery and equipment after use.
- 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.

### 5.3 Hygiene – handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets

**Objective:** To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day.

**Steps that will usually be needed:**

- Providing additional handwashing facilities, for example, pop-ups, particularly on a large site or where there are significant numbers of personnel on site.
- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards.
- Providing alcohol based hand gel in multiple locations, particularly key entry and exit points, in addition to washrooms.
- 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.
- Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets.
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.
- Providing hand drying facilities – either paper towels or electrical dryers.
5.4 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.

5.5 Handling equipment, materials, waste, 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 the parts of shared equipment you touch after each use, thinking about equipment, tools and vehicles, for example, pallet trucks and forklift trucks.

- Encouraging increased handwashing and introducing more handwashing facilities for workers handling goods and merchandise or providing alcohol based hand gel where this is not practical.

- Regular cleaning of vehicles that workers may take home.

- Regular cleaning of reusable delivery boxes.
6. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings
6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

PPE 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.

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. This includes working from home if that is possible, or taking all reasonable measures to maintain 2m physical distancing on your workplace premises. When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not recommended. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through physical distancing, good hygiene routines and fixed teams or 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 at:


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: Coronavirus and personal protective equipment (PPE).
There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where physical distancing is not possible. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. A face covering 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 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.

It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and 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 on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. A three-layer face covering is recommended for the public for short-term use where other controls, such as social distancing, are not possible. Effective from 27 July 2020, it will be mandatory to wear a face covering on public transport. If worn, effective face coverings should have a water repellent outer layer if possible, and are comprised of 3 layers of different fabrics, which are non-stretchy. They should fit well with no air gaps around sides and under chin. They are not a substitute for other preventative measures, such as social distancing. Where 2m physical distancing can be maintained in Wales we do not recommend wearing a face covering. We do not recommend that they are compulsory; however, we do support the public’s right to choose whether or not to wear them.
Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means reminding them of the following:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, (or use 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 face covering as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Avoid touching a face covering and do not hang it 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. If it’s not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste and help keep Wales tidy.
- Practicing physical distancing is the most effective way of reducing the transmission of COVID-19.

You can make face-coverings at home and can find guidance on how to do this and use them safely on [Face coverings: COVID-19](#).
7. Managing your workforce
7.1 Shift patterns and working groups

**Objective:** To change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each worker has.

**Steps that will usually be needed:**

- As far as possible, fixing teams or shift groups so that where contact is unavoidable it happens between the same people.
- Identifying areas where people have to directly pass things to each other, such as shared tools, materials or job instructions, and finding ways to remove direct contact, for example, by using drop-off points or transfer zones.
- For those workers who are required to travel and stay away from home in onsite accommodation, creating fixed groups of workers so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.
- Minimising worker congregation at bottlenecks such as timeclocks, entrances and exits and maintaining physical distancing during shift handovers.
7.2 Work-related travel

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 if that is possible.
- Minimising the number of people outside of a household or an extended household 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.

7.2.2 Deliveries to other sites

Objective: To help workers delivering to other sites such as markets or customers’ premises to maintain 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.
- Minimising contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example, by using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents.
Objective: To make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures.

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 trades 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 Communications and training

7.3.2 Ongoing communications and signage

Objective: To make sure all workers on site are kept up to date with how 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 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 safe working practices around the working site 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 especially in high volume situations, for example, builders’ yards or dispatch areas.

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.
Where to obtain further guidance
COVID-19: what you need to do
https://gov.wales/coronavirus
Support for businesses during COVID-19
General guidance for employees and employers during COVID-19
COVID-19: HSE guidance on gloves
COVID-19: HSE guidance on mask fittings

Appendix
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. |
| Extreme vulnerable people | Extremely vulnerable people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group, or will have been told by their GP. Find out more in the guidance on shielding. |
| Vulnerable people | Vulnerable people include those aged 70 or over and those with some underlying health conditions, all members of this group should strictly follow social distancing guidance. |
## Appendix

### Additional Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE)</th>
<th>The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced a short guide called <a href="#">Working Safely during the COVID-19 Outbreak</a>. The Health and Safety Executive has also produced <a href="#">useful advice for employers and their staff about how to work safely from home during the pandemic</a>.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for Business</td>
<td><a href="#">Business Wales</a> provides further support for businesses in Wales – including details of the Financial Support and Grants available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Work Support</td>
<td>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 <a href="#">Rhyl City Strategy</a>, and delivered in South West Wales by <a href="#">Swansea Bay University Health Board Well-being through Work</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Working Wales</td>
<td>The <a href="#">Healthy Working Wales website</a> 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 <a href="#">Public Health Wales How are you doing?’ campaign website</a> and the Society of Occupational Medicine <a href="#">Returning to the Workplace after the COVID-19 Outbreak Toolkit</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Change Wales</td>
<td><a href="#">Time to Change Wales</a> 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 another. Giving and receiving acts of kindness can help to improve mental well-being by creating positive feelings.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality and Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>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 <a href="#">COVID-19 Guidance for Employers</a>.</td>
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</table>
# Appendix

## Additional Information

| 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 some or all 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 for work carried out at any other premises where a person is working, to take all reasonable measures to minimise exposure to coronavirus.

Guidance has been produced to help people understand what “taking all reasonable measures” means, that you must have regard to.

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