

# COVID 19 FAQ Sheet for clients



## Latest updates in green

It is hoped that these FAQ's will answer your questions but if not then we advise that a referral is made to Occupational Health so that a bespoke assessment can be undertaken and a management report provided. Please view this document alongside the risk assessment in the OHIO COVID 19 portal. At the end of this guidance sheet are algorithms to support your decision making for both vulnerable and non-vulnerable employees.

Businesses and workplaces should make every reasonable effort to ensure their employees can work safely. From 1 August 2020, this may be working from home, or within the workplace if COVID-19 Secure guidelines are followed closely. When in the workplace, everyone should make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable).

### Making your workplace COVID secure:

- Advice from the HSE <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm>
- Advice from Society of Occupational Medicine: <https://www.som.org.uk/return-to-work/>
- Advice from ACAS <https://www.acas.org.uk/working-safely-coronavirus/returning-to-the-workplace>
- Government advice for different organisations found here: [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm\\_source=d29d21d1-b3c3-41d8-b2ea-09b9273b69a1&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=d29d21d1-b3c3-41d8-b2ea-09b9273b69a1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)
- Please also view a COVID 19 point checklist built for employers: <https://www.atworkpartnership.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/13-14-covid-1-1.pdf>
- CIPD have made all their COVID resources including webinar's free <https://www.cipd.co.uk/news-views/coronavirus>
- The government has published guidance on working work safely here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely> and the HSE have also published advice on working safely <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>
- New guidance on ventilation found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services#close-contact-2-2>

**Ask for PAM's PREP plan to support returning employees back to work which includes a COVID 19 needs review undertaken by an Occupational Health Physician, risk assessing your workplace.**

Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of COVID-19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law. The actions the enforcing authority can take include the provision of specific advice to employers to support them to achieve the required standard, through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements. Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to 2 years. There is also a wider system of enforcement, which includes specific obligations and conditions for licensed premises.

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## 1. Reporting an outbreak using an action card

The [action cards](#) provide instructions to anyone responsible for a business or organisation on what to do in the event of one or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your organisation <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/reporting-an-outbreak/>

## 2. If an individual develops symptoms what should they do

If an individual develops symptoms then they should alert those people they have had close contact with over the last 48 hours to let them know (including work colleagues). At this stage, those people should not self-isolate but should take extra care in practising social distancing and good hand and respiratory hygiene. They can also be more alert to any symptoms they might develop. Should the individual test positive then it is likely those who have been in close contact will be contacted by the test and trace team and will need to self-isolate.

## 3. Temperature checks

The government advises businesses not to rely on temperature checks for detection of coronavirus [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dont-rely-on-temperature-screening-products-for-detection-of-coronavirus-covid-19-says-mhra?utm\\_source=85281642-c80a-4f56-8cf8-0855812de819&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dont-rely-on-temperature-screening-products-for-detection-of-coronavirus-covid-19-says-mhra?utm_source=85281642-c80a-4f56-8cf8-0855812de819&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

You may wish to read the ICO guidance on thermal checks <https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/coronavirus-recovery-data-protection-advice-for-organisations/surveillance/>

## 4. Travel advice and corridors

Includes which countries no longer require a 2 week isolation upon return

[https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors?utm\\_source=91917810-4dd7-4ba6-b40a-62f29c1d3f5d&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors?utm_source=91917810-4dd7-4ba6-b40a-62f29c1d3f5d&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

## 5. Industry specific guidance

EU-OSHA has a list of industry specific guidance. [https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/COVID-19: Back to the workplace - Adapting workplaces and protecting workers#Sector-specific guidance related to COVID-19](https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/COVID-19:_Back_to_the_workplace_-_Adapting_workplaces_and_protecting_workers#Sector-specific_guidance_related_to_COVID-19). Society of Occupational Medicine has a toolkit with a number of resources here <https://www.som.org.uk/return-to-work/>

- **Manufacturing HSE:-** <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/manufacturing/machinery-building-safety.htm>; <https://www.gov.uk/business-and-industry/manufacturing>
- **Food businesses including canteens** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>
- **Guidance for prisons** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-prisons-and-other-prescribed-places-of-detention-guidance/covid-19-prisons-and-other-prescribed-places-of-detention-guidance>
- **Guidance for health professionals --** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance#guidance-for-health-professionals>
- **Guidance for those working in other people's homes** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes> and

domiciliary care <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-domiciliary-care>

- **Guidance for Councils** <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/coronavirus-information-councils>
- Guidance for **care home settings** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan/covid-19-our-action-plan-for-adult-social-care> - <https://workforce.adultsocialcare.uk/login> – dedicated app
- Guidance for those supporting adults with **learning difficulties** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-supporting-adults-with-learning-disabilities-and-autistic-adults/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-care-staff-supporting-adults-with-learning-disabilities-and-autistic-adults>
- Guidance for **First Responders and ambulance personnel** and attending a potential case - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders/interim-guidance-for-first-responders-and-others-in-close-contact-with-symptomatic-people-with-potential-2019-ncov>
- Guidance for **offices and contact centres** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>
- Guidance for the **Transport Sector** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators> and Guidance for those working in **vehicles** - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles>
- **Guidance for construction** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>
- **Guidance for schools** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19> **Universities** <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/covid19>

## Questions

### 1. Masks for NHS:

All hospital staff will be required to wear Type 1 or 2 surgical masks, and this will cover all staff working in hospital. Should an employee not be able to wear a mask due to anxiety then a referral to Occupational Health can support with specific psychological treatment to overcome this concern. Should your employee feel they are unable to wear a mask, trial different masks for comfort. Enabling regular breaks for relief from wearing the mask can be helpful as long as correct donning and doffing procedures are followed.

Although there is no evidence that masks can exacerbate asthma, if an employee feels the mask aggravates their respiratory concerns such as asthma and COPD, then you may wish to consider a type 1 mask and/or more frequent breaks for relief. If this is not feasible then redeployment to those areas designated as COVID-free workplaces if feasible is advised (not in hospitals). Face shields are not a substitute.

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If skin issues are aggravated or commence then it is advisable to check whether the product has any sensitizers by looking at the product contents; advising individuals to keep their skin lightly moisturized and ensuring the skin is dry before donning the mask. Guidance from eczema UK is to avoid applying ointment emollients to the face shortly before you put on a covering, as they might make the face too hot.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/892465/Domiciliary\\_guidance\\_v2\\_15\\_Jun.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892465/Domiciliary_guidance_v2_15_Jun.pdf)

Primary and community health care providers must provide masks for employees and visitors where it is not possible for them to maintain the 2 m distance. Where a setting cannot be delivered as COVID-19 secure through all other means, a local assessment may conclude that primary and community healthcare staff (both in clinical and non-clinical roles), when not otherwise required to use personal protective equipment, should wear a face mask; worn to prevent the spread of infection from the wearer

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/new-recommendations-for-primary-and-community-health-care-providers-in-england>

### 2. Should I provide masks to high risk individuals or just in general

If the risk assessment identifies your employee as at higher risk and/or you cannot maintain a 2M distance then it is advised that a fluid resistant or repellent mask is provided. Government guidance is for distancing of 1 meter + (from the 4<sup>th</sup> of July) which means if the 2 M distance cannot be maintained then consider alternate protection such as masks. Please provide guidance to your employees on how to put this on and take off as well as how to dispose of it.

Individuals must wear a face covering when using public transport to get to work, or are visiting a busy enclosed space where you can't social distance such as a crowded shop.

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

The HSE have developed guidance on PPE here [https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/using-ppe-at-work-coronavirus.htm?utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=coronavirus&utm\\_term=ppe-2&utm\\_content=digest-28-may-20](https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/using-ppe-at-work-coronavirus.htm?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=ppe-2&utm_content=digest-28-may-20)

**Even if you never develop symptoms, you can still be infected and pass the virus on without knowing it**

### 3. Mask Exemptions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>. It is not compulsory for shop or supermarket staff or transport workers to wear face coverings, although employers may consider their use where appropriate and where other mitigations are not in place. Employers should continue to follow [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#) to reduce the proximity and duration of contact between employees

### 4. Distancing guidance is changing.

1 M + from the 4<sup>th</sup> of July means maintain a "2 M distance where possible and if you are not able then consider some other protection unless you are in Scotland then the 2 M rule continues to apply. Guidance found here which includes work

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

The government has produced guidance on reopening different industries with advice on how to remain safe here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>. PAM can undertake an RTW needs risk assessment for those who are re-opening and/or bringing people back from furlough/home working. Please ask your account manager for our PREP plan

## 5. Ventilation indoors

- Evidence suggests that the virus is less likely to be passed on outdoors and in well-ventilated buildings.
- In good weather, try to leave windows and doors open in areas where people come into contact
- Use external extractor fans to keep spaces well ventilated and make sure that ventilation systems are set to maximise the air flow rate.
- Heating and cooling systems can be used at their normal temperature settings

## 6. My employee is required to handle post and packaging – some is sent to their home

There is no extra risk in handling post or packages. The risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) cross-contamination to food and food packaging is very low.

## 7. My employee has a safety concern

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us/report-concern/report-concern-if-you-are-member-staff> - CQC is encouraging staff members to speak up

## 8. Disinfecting workplaces

CDC (America) have developed this set of guidelines which can very usefully be used in the UK

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html?deliveryName=USCDC\\_10\\_4-DM27264&mc\\_cid=598cf72700&mc\\_eid=1de2943a2a](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html?deliveryName=USCDC_10_4-DM27264&mc_cid=598cf72700&mc_eid=1de2943a2a)

## 9. Testing for Coronavirus

- Employers can request a test for essential workers. Essential and key workers and their families can have priority testing and this may include where they do not have symptoms. The list of key/essential workers has been published on this web link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#essential-workers>.

To get a login to the employer referral portal, employers of essential workers should email [portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk) with the following information:

- organisation name
- nature of the organisation's business
- region
- names (where possible) and email addresses of the 2 users who will load essential worker contact details

Employers can refer essential workers for testing if they are self-isolating because either they or member(s) of their household have coronavirus symptoms.

Referred essential workers will then receive a text message with a unique invitation code to book a test for themselves (if symptomatic) or their symptomatic household member(s) at a regional testing site.

Once employer details have been verified, 2 login credentials will be provided for the employer referral portal.

- Individuals must be tested if they have symptoms of continuous cough or fever (37.8) or anosmia i.e. loss of smell and taste. This is best undertaken between day 1 and 5 although a home test cannot be arranged after day 4. Anyone with symptoms must request a test by calling 119 if they do not have internet or booking a test here [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) . for

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yourself, if you have coronavirus symptoms now (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)

- for someone you live with, if they have symptoms
- if you live in England and have been told to have a test before you go into hospital, for example, for surgery
- if you live in Leicester, Luton or Blackburn where there are coronavirus outbreaks

If they test positive, they will be contacted by the NHS test and trace team who will advise them on next steps in relation to reporting who they have been in contact with and what places they have attended.

Individuals can have a swab test to check if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) now. They can choose to take the test:

- at a test site near you today and get your result tomorrow
- with a home test kit

Employers are encouraged to follow this guidance in relation to **test and tracing**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance?s=09>. Individuals will be contacted by email, text or phone from the NHS. Calls will come from 0300 0135000. Children under 18 will be contacted by phone wherever possible and asked for their parent or guardian's permission to continue the call. An individual will be asked to sign in to the NHS Test and Trace contact tracing website at <https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk>. If the individual cannot use the contact tracing website, they will be called.

We in PAM can help with provision of results and follow up of those tested

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19-tests-and-testing-kits>

### 10. Antibody testing

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests>. This antibody test is a blood test which is sent off to the lab and looks to see if an individual has had the virus. As immunity is still unknown; individuals who test positive will still need to remain alert and follow social distancing rules. It is being rolled out to the NHS and care sector before being made available to the wider population. As immunity is not yet fully understood; that testing positive are advised not to relax their guard and to remain alert and follow social distancing guidance.

Antibody tests using a finger prick test can no longer be used as they are not yet validated

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-taken-to-halt-sales-of-fingerprick-coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-testing-kits?utm\\_source=bf96df9d-bd02-4543-b018-6c56fe49e0d5&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-taken-to-halt-sales-of-fingerprick-coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-testing-kits?utm_source=bf96df9d-bd02-4543-b018-6c56fe49e0d5&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### 11. My employee has symptoms and has been tested – when can they return to work

Pathway for return to work following SARS-CoV-2 test - PAM can provide advice and support on a return to work: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>

Symptomatic or positive for COVID 19 staff can return to work on day **11** after the onset of symptoms if clinical improvement has occurred and they have no temperature (48 hours for health care workers). If a cough and anosmia (loss of smell and taste) is the only persistent symptom on day **11**, they can return to work. Post-viral cough is known to persist for several weeks in some cases



## 12. Contacts

If anyone is contacted by the tracing team then they will need to isolate for 14 days if:

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to **10** days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). For example, a contact can be:

- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- sexual partners
- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), including: being coughed on, having a face-to-face conversation, within one metre, or having skin-to-skin physical contact, or any contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- A person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a vehicle whether small or large or a plane with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19); this does not exclude those who were wearing PPE unless in a health care setting
- Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.
- The contact tracers will not consider the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) as a mitigation when assessing whether a recent contact is likely to have risked transmitting the virus. Only full medical-grade PPE worn in health and care settings will be considered.
- Medical-grade PPE should not be purchased to circumvent self-isolation, as this risks disrupting critical supplies needed by the NHS and social care
- Even if you never develop symptoms, you can still be infected and pass the virus on without knowing it

## 13. If your employee previously tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and has another episode of symptoms, do they need to self-isolate again?

If they had symptoms and isolated for 7 (now 10 days), then they will need to self-isolate again if symptoms reoccur and request a further test.

## 14. What do I do about health surveillance for my employees?

The HSE guidance plus other specialist groups such as UK OG; MCA for ENG medicals have enabled health discussions to be telephonic during the current crisis <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/health-surveillance-coronavirus.htm>.

Please discuss with your contract manager. We will be phasing a return as soon as it is feasible to do so.

The DVLA has updated the guidance for D4 medicals and as long as the driver is well; the licence can be extended for 12 months without a D4 medical.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-takes-further-action-to-support-bus-and-lorry-drivers-who-are-keeping-the-country-moving>

For anyone commencing working with lead; lead testing must be undertaken 4 to 6 weeks later. The follow up with each individual can be by telephone.

## 15. I need advice on my employee's fitness for work?

Create an OH management referral for bespoke advice or chat to your account manager about our return to work assessment

## 16. My employee has symptoms of a cold or respiratory infection – is this Coronavirus?

If they have a fever  $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  and / or a persistent cough and/or anosmia (a loss of smell and taste) they need to contact **NHS 111 online** <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> for a test

## 17. Covid-19 as a notifiable disease and RIDDOR reporting

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-listed-as-a-notifiable-disease>.

However please review this advice from HSE on **RIDDOR** reporting

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-coronavirus.htm>

Read about RIDDOR [regulation 9 \(b\) on legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukreg/2015/119/section-9)

The Chief Coroner has published Guidance No 37 on Covid 19 deaths and possible exposure in the workplace. It states that if a medical practitioner suspects that a person's death was due to an injury or disease attributable to any employment held during the person's lifetime there should be a report to the coroner. This may include front line NHS staff as well as those working in public transport, care homes and emergency services. If the medical cause of death is Covid 19 and there is no reason to suspect that culpable human failure contributed to the particular death there will usually be no requirement for an investigation to be opened.

## 18. Data protection

The ICO recognises the unprecedented challenges we are all facing during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. They know you might need to share information quickly or adapt the way you work. Data protection will not stop you doing that. It's about being proportionate - if something feels excessive from the public's point of view, then it probably is.

And the ICO is here to help. If you need more help, call on 0303 123 1113. <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-coronavirus/> . The purpose for which the government is

processing personal data is to operate the department's response to the coronavirus (Covid-19) public health epidemic. This will involve the dissemination and gathering of information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/privacy-notice-for-covid-19-response-activity/privacy-notice-for-covid-19-response-activity>

## 19. My employee doesn't want to come in to work

Some people might feel they do not want to go to work if they're afraid of catching coronavirus. This could particularly be the case for those who are at higher risk.

An employer should listen to any concerns staff may have and should take steps to protect everyone. For example, they could offer extra car parking where possible so that people can avoid using public transport. If an employee still does not want to go in, they may be able to arrange with their employer to take the time off as holiday or unpaid leave. The employer does not have to agree to this.

If an employee refuses to attend work without a valid reason, it could result in disciplinary action.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others#going-to-work>

## 20. My employee has underlying health conditions however I need them to attend work; what shall I do?

Undertake a risk assessment (found in the COVID Portal in OHIO); if you continue to have concerns please refer to OH for an assessment

## 21. I think my employee is a vulnerable person and I am unsure about them being at work?

Consider a referral to OH as the way we assess vulnerability has changed



### 22. I believe my employee may be very high risk

Those in the *very* high-risk group (Shielded group) are advised to stay at home until the **16<sup>th</sup> of August for Wales**. Leicester; Luton and Blackburn with Darwin also require very vulnerable individuals to shield at this time. Thereafter shielding will be paused and individuals can go to work, if you cannot work from home, as long as the business is COVID-safe including those who have been shielding up to now

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-ease-guidance-for-over-2-million-shielding?utm\\_source=0877461d-6c5d-40c2-855e-5a236ee877a1&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-ease-guidance-for-over-2-million-shielding?utm_source=0877461d-6c5d-40c2-855e-5a236ee877a1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

The most vulnerable group includes:

- Solid organ transplant recipients.
- People with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
  - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
  - 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 such as cystic fibrosis
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as Severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell).
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

However, with more complex conditions you may wish to obtain an OH opinion via a management referral to inform your risk assessment

<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>

Those that have been shielding are likely to be reassessed with a new algorithm which is being developed. However, Occupational Health already have an algorithm which assessed risk category using COVID age and therefore please refer to OH if you wish to understand which category your employee is in and you have been unable to ascertain this with your current risk assessment.

### 23. My employee is very vulnerable and wishes to return to work

They are strongly advised to continue to shield till the end of July; however, the government is clear that it is an individual choice. A risk assessment is advised

### 24. My employee lives with a vulnerable person and I am unsure whether they should be in work?

If feasible, the person should work from home but if not feasible then stringent social distancing should apply both in the home and at work. A risk assessment is advised. Please note that those shielded are likely to be reassessed for vulnerability using an updated algorithm. Consider a referral to OH for further advice. Evidence from their GP should be obtained if they are in the extremely vulnerable or shielded group. <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>

### **25. What support could I provide to higher risk employees where I am unable to provide home working (Social distancing in the work place)**

Please read the risk assessment guidance found here <https://www.pamgroup.co.uk/covid-nineteen> under 'risk management' and have a look at the algorithms below. Other than the suggestions in paragraph 6. Consider changing start and finish times to reduce the risk of coming into contact with people less than 6 feet apart; use of separate cups and utensils; different break times so as to avoid people; desks 6 feet apart; a different entrance; access to hand gel and cleaning materials for surfaces; a separate office; video meetings etc. HSE guidance on hygiene steps here <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/cleaning.htm>  
Government guidance on social distancing in the workplace was updated on the 7<sup>th</sup> April <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance> which includes advice on shift working and staggering work processes

### **26. What PPE (Personal protective equipment) should I provide**

Those most at risk within the UK are professionals working in health and social care sectors. This updated guidance gives an overview of infection prevention and control; PPE to use in aerosol generating procedures and non-aerosol generating procedures plus secondary; social; primary community; ambulance etc. settings as well as in ANY setting  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe?> .  
Home care workers now have clear guidance on PPE use  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/881296/Domiciliary\\_care\\_guidance\\_final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881296/Domiciliary_care_guidance_final.pdf)

### **27. What if my staff member was exposed at work?**

HCWs who come into contact with a COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patient while not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) can remain at work. This is because in most instances this will be a short-lived exposure, unlike exposure in a household setting that is ongoing. Should they be contacted as part of contact tracing and it be deemed they were in contact for less than 1 minute at less than 1 meter; or 15 minutes at less than 2 M without PPE then they are likely to need to isolate  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>. HCWs should: not attend work if they develop symptoms while at home (off-duty) – see section 21 for self-isolating periods. For Non health care workers - If you think you have been in contact with someone who has the virus, you no longer need to take action, unless you start to feel unwell yourself.

### **28. My employee is anxious and worried about the current situation**

Does your organisation have an EAP (Employee Assistance program) service? This may be **PAM assist; CALL 0800 019 8988**; however, it may be another EAP and therefore provide the details to your employee. If you do not have an EAP service then you can refer to PAM for a Well Check which is a discussion with a psychotherapist for support. Or you may wish to contact a charity such as MIND <https://www.mind.org.uk/> ; Heads together <https://www.headstogether.org.uk/> Samaritans **116 123** or [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or online programs like Mood Juice <https://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/> ; Headspace <https://www.headspace.com/> which is free during the current crisis.

The British Psychological Society have produced an excellent document on looking after the health of healthcare staff affected by the Covid-19 crisis.  
<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/News/News%20-%20Files/Psychological%20needs%20of%20healthcare%20staff.pdf> . The NHS has commenced a new

mental health hotline for NHS staff <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/04/nhs-launches-mental-health-hotline-for-staff-tackling-covid-19/>

### **29. My employee is concerned about finances?**

Your EAP if you have one includes financial and debt advice but if you do not have access to an EAP service then look at Martins Money Saving Website <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/> or consider Citizens Advice Bureau

### **30. I am concerned about my workforce because as essential workers they are under great strain?**

Speak to your account manager about a mini mental health and fatigue assessment for your employees or a wellness check

### **31. My employee is concerned about attending work and I am not sure they should be in work?**

Have you looked at our corporate risk assessment which can be found here <https://www.pamgroup.co.uk/covid-nineteen>.

If your answer cannot be found within the risk assessment or on the PAM COVID page then you can make a referral to Occupational Health for a COVID 19 risk assessment

### **32. My employee is pregnant and I feel I am unable to comply with social distancing at work?**

In the light of the limited evidence, pregnant women can only continue to work in direct patient-facing roles if they are under 28 weeks' gestation and if this follows a risk assessment that recommends, they can continue working, subject to modification of the working environment and deployment to suitable alternative duties. Guidance here found at the [RCOG](#) and [RCOG OH Advice](#).

Added clarity on advice <https://www.rcm.org.uk/advice-for-pregnant-healthcare-workers/>

For pregnant women from 28 weeks' gestation, or with underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease at any gestation, a more precautionary approach is advised. Women in this category should be recommended to stay at home. For many healthcare workers, this may present opportunities to work flexibly from home in a different capacity, for example by undertaking telephone or videoconference consultations, or taking on administrative duties.

Health care workers Pregnant woman can choose whether they wish to be patient facing – see revised guidance All pregnant women should comply with social distancing in and out of work. Those with cardiac conditions are especially vulnerable and should work from home where feasible.

### **33. I want to discuss my employee's medical record and obtain an individual plan in relation to risk?**

This requires a referral to OH

### **34. My employee is diabetic**

All diabetics regardless of type 1 or 2 are at higher risk; however if you are unsure what this means for you then ask your manager to make an OH COVID 19 risk assessment referral [https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about\\_us/news/coronavirus](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/coronavirus)

### **35. My colleague is obese (BMI > 40)**

Follow social distancing advice <https://www.obesityuk.org.uk/covid19>

### **36. My employee has chronic kidney disease (CKD); may be on dialysis or may have chronic liver disease**

They are advised to follow the advice of their clinicians who should be contacting you – you are at a higher risk. <https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-health-advice-for-people-with-liver-diseaseand-liver-transplant-patients/>

### **37. My employee has MS**

DMTs affect the immune system, which can make chances of infection, or complications from infection higher. These risks are different for different DMTs, but generally they are moderate. If your employee is taking a DMT and think they have coronavirus, they should be able to continue taking it if their symptoms are mild. <https://www.mssociety.org.uk/about-ms/treatments-and-therapies/disease-modifying-therapies/covid-19-coronavirus-and-ms>

### **38. My employee has HIV**

There is currently no evidence that all people with HIV are considered at increased risk. Those on HIV treatment with a good CD4 count and an undetectable viral load are not considered to have weakened immune systems. A 'good' CD4 count means anything over 200. If the CD4 count is less than 200, if they are not on treatment or if they have a detectable viral load, then it's particularly important that they follow the guidance on social distancing.

<https://www.tht.org.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19> <https://www.bhiva.org/coronavirus-and-HIV-responses-to-common-questions-from-BHIVA>

### **39. Immunosuppressants**

The following immunosuppression therapies are sufficient to significantly increase the risk of infection: Azathioprine; Mycophenolate (both types); Cyclosporin; Sirolimus; Tacrolimus and therefore strict social distancing is required.

### **40. Sickle cell trait or problems with the spleen**

Those with sickle cell trait need to follow the guidance given to the general public (as trait doesn't fall into the at-risk category) but they need to check the full vulnerable groups list in case they fall into another category such as if the spleen had been removed, they are pregnant or are over 70).

<https://www.sicklecellsociety.org/coronavirus-and-scd/>.

### **41. Asthma?**

those people with severe asthma will be followed up by the NHS; however the risk with asthma has decreased. Guidance can be found here <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

### **42. Heart disease?**

Anyone with a heart condition is considered high risk of more severe complications of COVID 19 coronavirus. An OH management referral can provide bespoke advice

### **43. A rheumatological condition**

Guidance on the management, including risk stratification for rheumatological conditions can be found here: <https://www.rheumatology.org.uk/news-policy/details/Covid19-Coronavirus-update-members>. Should you remain concerned, please refer to OH

### **44. Antihypertensive medication**

Those with hypertension have now been found to be at a higher risk [Council on Hypertension of the European Society of Cardiology](#).

### **45. Ibuprofen**

## COVID 19 FAQ Sheet for clients



There is no evidence ibuprofen make COVID worse; however Ibuprofen is not advised for asthmatics and other groups so ensure they read the medication leaflet before taking  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ibuprofen-use-and-covid19coronavirus>

### **46. how does my employee get a certificate to provide to me?**

if evidence is required by an employer, those with symptoms of coronavirus can get an isolation note from [NHS 111 online](#), and those who live with someone that has symptoms can get a note from the [NHS website](#)