



COVID-19 Guidance for education staff who carry out essential home visits

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Introduction and document updates

The health, safety and well-being of all colleagues is of utmost importance to NCC. We are keeping up to date with latest information from Public Health England on COVID-19 and will continue to put strategies in place to ensure that the risk is effectively managed on their advice.

This guidance follows on from *COVID-19 Your health and your safety when working in education* and should be read in conjunction with that guidance. It relates to all visits that are made by school staff who are delivering **critical** services to persons in their home setting.

A risk assessment must be completed for all home visits using the *COVID-19 Home Visits Risk Assessment Form* that accompanies this guidance.

For ease of reference, changes that are made to this document are detailed below:

Date of change	Section, Page and Change
22-04-20	New document
01-05-20	Updated planning information reflecting updated PPE requirements.
31-12-20	Page 4 – Updated planning information regarding face coverings Page 5 – Isolation for discharge from hospital remains at 14 days Page 6 – Car sharing – travel to and from work – essential journeys should be shared consistently with the same people

Key messages

- **Do not come to work if you or a member of your household have any symptoms of COVID-19 no matter how mild or you are self-isolating, due to contact tracing requirements.**
- **Go home quickly if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 while you are at work, no matter how mild.**
- **Follow testing arrangements if you have symptoms in order to establish if you have the virus**
- To reduce the risk of transmission, **all non-critical home visits should cease**
- Set a good personal example and always follow Government requirements both in and out of work to reduce the risk of virus transmission
- Ensure that you understand and follow the infection control measures that are required of you in order to reduce the risk e.g. increased hand and respiratory hygiene
- Request an individual assessment from your manager if you are in any of the individual risk categories identified in this guidance or you feel it appropriate for any other reason.

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- Ensure that you have all the relevant equipment with you before you visit (PPE, hand hygiene and cleaning materials (where appropriate to the role).
- If you wear glasses, you will also need alcohol wipes to clean these after using PPE
- Ensure that you know how to put on, use and take off the PPE to keep you and those you are visiting safe

Planning to visit a home setting

Before making a visit, a review of whether the activity can be suspended or delivered differently must be undertaken. Consideration must be given to:

- If there are elements of the activity that could be undertaken remotely e.g. via phone, video conference or through a family member
- If there are elements that could be undertaken without entering the home e.g. in a garden, observation or discussion through a window

Where it has been identified that a visit is critical you must plan the visit to reduce the risk to you and those you are visiting as much as is possible, therefore if you can, check the following by telephoning ahead:

- Is the household isolating because someone (whether it is the person you are visiting or someone else) has COVID-19 symptoms?
- Is anyone in the household isolating as a result of being instructed by the contact tracing service?
- Is anyone in the household at increased risk because they are extremely clinically vulnerable, clinically vulnerable or from a BAME background?

If you confirm that someone is isolating:

- discuss with your manager whether the visit can be postponed and if not, ways you might be able to minimise direct contact where practical, to further reduce risk to yourself.
- If you are conducting a number of visits, consider whether it may be appropriate to visit those households who are isolating at the end of your list where it is safe to do so

If you confirm that someone is in an increased risk group check in with your manager on the action to take. Can the visit be reallocated to someone who is working specifically with increased risk groups? Alternatively consider visiting them at the beginning of your list where it is possible and safe to do so and ensure that you stringently follow the requirements of this guidance.

Where households have confirmed that they are not isolating you must recheck the information on the day, so that you can consider the above if necessary.

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In all cases, ensure that you follow the [PPE Guidance](#) requirements and ensure that you:

- Wear the right PPE at the right time
- Are familiar with how to put it on, wear it and take it off.
- Are familiar with how you will dispose of used PPE immediately after removal.

Please put on your PPE before entering the property (avoid contact with touch points outside the property before putting gloves on), or as soon as you enter the property (if you can keep 2m distance from householders).

Even when you are wearing PPE you must plan your visit so that you can maintain social distancing as far as is reasonable to do so as well as ensuring general best practice infection control. Remember, PPE is only one part of reducing transmission (see PPE guidance). For example, can you:

- Ask if the windows can be opened while you are there (if it is safe for the householder and appropriate to do so)
- Ask for the meeting to be in the largest room in the house to enable you to keep your distance for as much of the interaction as possible
- Ask for others to leave the room so only the people necessary for the visit are present
- Use other reasonable means to ensure that a distance of two metres can be maintained, with the exception of very short duration closer proximity such as the person opening the front door
- Ask the person you are visiting and anyone also remaining in the room when you visit such as a parent or carer, to wear a face covering during your visit if they are able to and it does not cause them distress or difficulties and does not compromise the care being given

It remains important for your own and others safety, to maintain universal hygiene measures and remember that:

- Where undertaking care duties soap and water as well as hand sanitiser should be used wherever possible as long as the facilities are both in a suitable location and are clean.
- Where you need to wash your hands rather than use sanitiser, you are advised to supply your own soap rather than using the householders. If you run out of hand soap, other products with similar properties can be used, e.g. washing up liquid, shower gels etc.
- Do not use hand towels belonging to the householder, you are advised to purchase paper towels, but if these are not available kitchen roll, napkins or anything else that will work in place of a hand towel will suffice.

Taking your work equipment with you

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If you take items of equipment for use by both you and anyone that you are visiting, please ensure that:

- You have considered whether the equipment is suitable to use and how it can be cleaned and disinfected in line with *COVID-19 guidance for all educational settings*.
- You clean and disinfect all equipment used after the visit before you put it back in your car. You should follow the cleaning requirements of the above guidance.
- You do not share basic equipment like stationary with the household you are visiting.

Equipment needed

Please remember to ensure that you have:

- PPE
- Rubbish bags (tie handle or with separate ties)
- General-purpose detergent and chlorine based disinfectant solutions or disinfectant wipes as appropriate (if required for cleaning tasks)
- Liquid soap and disposable hand towels (if undertaking care duties)
- Alcohol based hand sanitiser
- Alcohol wipes if you wear prescriptions glasses and wear PPE

Washing clothing worn when making home visits

Where employees are carrying out visits to households, do not wear a uniform and are not carrying out a care role, they do not need to undertake anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothing worn for work.

Where you are providing care services, work clothing should be changed when you get home and washed:

- separately from other household linen
- in a load not more than half the machine capacity
- at the maximum temperature the fabric can tolerate, then ironed or tumble dried.

Visiting a household that is under the control of another organisation

If you visit a home setting that is under the control of another organisation such as a children's residential home, you will be required to follow their safe working arrangements for COVID-19. If the requirements of this guidance exceed them, you must also implement these requirements. If you are required to wear PPE that is provided by the setting, please ensure that it is at least the same standard of equipment detailed in this guidance. Use the waste facilities that are provided at the setting (even if you have placed them in a separate bag at the location where you removed them first).

Going into a household where someone has been discharged from hospital

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Service users who have been discharged from hospital with COVID-19 or are awaiting test results should be treated as possibly COVID-positive for 14 days following discharge.

Use of private vehicles and car pooling

When using a private vehicle to make a journey that is essential, cars should only be shared by members of the same household. Those who normally share a car with people who are not members of their own household for a journey that is essential, e.g. getting to work, should consider alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport where you maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.

Travel to and from work

If the journey is essential, such as travel to work or responding to an essential home visit, and there is no option but to share a car with people who are not part of the same household, journeys should be shared consistently with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time.

Travel to and from an essential visit

It is recognised that some teams work in pairs in close contact when they are in a household, such as those who carry out a two person assist. Other close contact should still be reduced as much as possible, for example, by taking two cars where possible.

General safety for journeys together

Ensure that the journey is absolutely necessary. Wash your hands before and after your journey (use hand sanitiser if you cannot access handwashing facilities) and ensure that you carry tissues and bin bags in order to follow universal hygiene arrangements.

Do not share a vehicle with people outside of your household or cohorted employee group unless absolutely necessary e.g. for other safety reasons. If a vehicle is shared for essential reasons:

- Windows should be kept open to ensure good ventilation,
- The passenger will sit behind and opposite the driver and will wear a face covering throughout the journey
- The driver should clean their vehicle before and after use using standard cleaning products or disinfectant wipes with particular emphasis on handles, steering wheel, keys, petrol card, seat belts and holder if used and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces

Ensure that all drivers:

- Are aware of changes to road layouts for additional pedestrian and cyclists



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- anticipate more pedestrians and cyclists than usual, ensure that drivers give cyclists space at traffic lights
- limit the time spent at petrol stations and apply social distancing, using hand sanitiser on arrival and leaving

Existing infection control arrangements

As outlined in *Your Health and Your Safety when working in Education Settings* there are 4 key elements required to help reduce the transmission of the virus:



The most effective way of reducing risk is to limit direct contact and ensuring excellent personal hygiene.

Where the work that you do already requires you to follow infection control practices during home visits such as: handwashing prior to and after undertaking specific tasks, wearing protective gloves, using disinfectant, you will need to replace those specific tasks with the arrangements that are set out in this and the PPE guidance documents.

Where the work that you do has not previously required you to apply specific control measures, please ensure that you clearly understand and follow the requirements of this and all other accompanying guidance documents.

Universal hygiene measures

Where it has been deemed essential to enter the home to conduct the activity you must:

- Clean your hands. Where you are providing care services you must wash your hands (and where baring forearms the whole forearm) thoroughly with soap and water often following the [NHS guidance](#). Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water isn't available or where care services are not being provided. Everyone should clean their hands, before eating, after coughing or sneezing, before and after they use personal protective equipment, after visiting the toilet as well as at other regular intervals throughout the day including when they return to the setting or their own home.

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- [Catch it, Kill it, Bin it](#) - Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing and put used tissues in the bin straight away. Always wash/sanitise your hands afterwards.
- Minimise touching hand contact surfaces with your hands as far as is reasonable and safe to do so.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth if you haven't washed/sanitised your hands.
- **Self-isolate if you or a member of your direct household has any of the symptoms or if you are instructed to do so as a result of contract tracing**
- **Go home if you develop symptoms, not matter how mild.**

Please note:

- if you wear prescription glasses you will need to have alcohol wipes with you so that you can clean them after wearing eye protection.
- Where it is known or possible that forearms have been exposed to respiratory secretions (for example cough droplets) or other body fluids, hand washing should be extended to include both forearms. Wash the forearms first and then wash the hands or use hand sanitiser by working down from the forearms.

Cleaning, disinfecting and waste

Please follow the relevant section of *COVID-19 General guidance for all educational settings* section where applicable.

- Ensure that you take disinfectant wipes with you to wipe down any small items of equipment that are necessary and touched by other people during your visit. You should do this before you leave the house (once it is no longer needed and you are not in close contact with household members). You do not need to wear protective gloves or clothing to use wipes.
- Assess how you will clean and disinfect larger items equipment that are touched by other people as well as you.

Cleaning products

Public Health England advise the use of chlorine-based disinfectants in the first instance.

- Normal household chlorine-based disinfectants and bleaches are as effective as commercial products so long as you follow the instructions for use.
- Always check the manufacturer's instructions for the correct dilution (to achieve 1000 parts per million available chlorine) and contact time for disinfectants or sanitisers, otherwise they may not be effective.
- Sanitising tablets or solutions such as Milton can be used to disinfect surfaces

Please note: cleaning products that are named as being an antibacterial often contain disinfectant that is chlorine-based. It is important that you check the labelling to confirm this.

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Always follow the instructions on containers about how to use spray disinfectant, for example, spray and leave for specified time in order for the product to activate and then wipe.

Disinfectant wipes are single use items, they should generally be used by working in an “S” shaped pattern, taking care not to go over the same area twice. When cleaning potentially contaminated areas think ***one site, one wipe in one direction***

If you do not have suitable cleaning products available, you can purchase household products rather than using an alternative that is not specified above.

Dedicated or disposable equipment must be used for environmental decontamination as far as is possible. Reusable equipment must be decontaminated after use with a chlorine-based disinfectant as described above.

Waste that is generated directly with a symptomatic person (for example PPE, disinfectant wipes and cleaning cloths) used in a symptomatic household should be double bagged. Both bags should be tied securely and kept separate from other waste at the premises. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin.

First aid and CPR

Detailed guidance on how to carry out first aid safely during the sustained transmission of COVID-19 in the community is provided in [COVID-19 First Aid guidance for schools](#)

Did you know that

- [Public Health England](#) update their information for the public on daily basis and so do NCC where it is required.
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 have been put in place to reduce the risk of further human-to-human transmission in this country by keeping individuals in isolation where public health professionals believe there is a reasonable risk an individual may have the virus
- NCC has produced a number of guides relating to COVID-19 and they can all be found on both [Norfolk Schools](#) and [InfoSpace](#) (for schools and academies who use this service)
- You should talk to your manager if you have any concerns

Please ensure you only refer to information from all of the reputable sources that are referred to in this guidance.