

**Public Health Measures for the Workplace**

**Information for Managers and Employees**

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Action** |
| Version 1 | 10th June 2022 | Developed in line with the 7 control measures recommended by Public Health Wales  |
| Version 2 | 30th September 2022 | Amended in line with new advice in Welsh Government guidance 13th September 2022 |

1. **Introduction**

This guidance has been based on the Welsh Government’s document ‘Public Health Advice for Employers, Businesses and Organisations: coronavirus’ (31 May 2022) and with reference to the Welsh Government’s ‘Guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19’ (13 September 2022).

Our guidance follows the 7 Control Measures suggested in Welsh Government’s guidance.

These measures are intended to help mitigate against the most common communicable diseases (including Flu, Norovirus and Coronavirus) risks which we will face on an ongoing basis.

Staff are encouraged to use a common sense approach at work in order to keep each other as safe and well as possible in the workplace.

A revised risk assessment ([available here](https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/17709/risk-assessment-post-pandemic-june-22.docx?v=20220712150208)) has been developed jointly with the Trade Unions based on the arrangements in place at the three Civic Centres.  Managers in other buildings should consider and tailor this risk assessment to suit their location.

This risk assessment will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and reviewed in line with any changes to Public Health and Welsh Government guidance.

A blank risk assessment form has been provided [here](https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/17340/blank_risk_assessment_form.docx?v=20220411150504) for Managers wishing to complete a new risk assessment.

Managers are asked to ensure that they and their employees continue to follow the control measures identified in either the corporate risk assessment, or the risk assessment relevant to their workplace/work activities. These measures are to limit the spread of COvid-19 and will also help reduce the risks from other communicable diseases and respiratory infections.

1. **Face Coverings**

Face coverings may still be worn by individuals in buildings if they so wish but this is no longer a mandatory requirement in any part of any building.

1. **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing is particularly relevant to minimise the spread of respiratory illnesses like Flu and Coronavirus.  Therefore, Public Health guidance still suggests that physical distancing should be encouraged where reasonably practicable to do so.

Although no longer a mandatory requirement, the wearing of facecoverings in indoor public areas and where social distancing cannot be maintained indoors is still recommended.

1. **Hand Hygiene**

There are hand sanitisers available throughout Council buildings, employees are encouraged to use these at regular intervals during the day, together with regular hand washing to ensure good hand hygiene. Individual hygiene packs are available from the Concierge / security desk at the 3 civic buildings, if required.

1. **Workspace Hygiene**

The hygiene packs mentioned in 5 above can also be used to clean workstations, shared touch points and shared equipment before and after use. We have a clear desk policy and employees must clear personal workspaces and remove waste and belongings from their work area before leaving.

The cleaning of buildings is undertaken using anti-virucidal cleaning products including Premier Screen disinfectant, with strong anti-virus and anti-bacterial properties.

1. **Ventilation**

It is advised that windows be opened all year round in all occupied spaces.

The ventilation system is on at **The Quays**, but the thermal wheel has been switched off so there is no cross contamination. The ventilation system has a warm air heater battery which is being utilised to heat the building at present.

1. **Vaccinations**

All employees are encouraged to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and time off with pay is provided for all employees. See Vaccination Policy for Coronavirus [here](http://umbraco.npt.gov.uk:700/media/4896/vaccination-policy-coronavirus-v1-april-2021.pdf).

1. **Support for Vulnerable Employees / Employees at increased risk**

People previously placed on the **Shielding Patient List** are no longer considered at substantially greater risk than the general population, and they are advised to follow the same guidance as everyone else on staying safe and preventing the spread of coronavirus as well as any further advice they may have received from their Doctor. Managers are encouraged to use the employee [workforce risk a](https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/17348/covid-19-workforce-risk-assessment-tool.pdf?v=20220412142131)ssessment tool to support these employees in the workplace.

Managers should discuss any requirements, including reasonable adjustments that may be required for **disabled workers** and workers with health conditions to return to or remain safely in the workplace.

1. **Pregnant Employees**

An individualised approach should be adopted for pregnant workers through the pregnancy risk assessment process - available [here](http://umbraco.npt.gov.uk:700/2641).

Discussions with pregnant workers should take place at an early stage so you can co-produce the risk assessment, keeping it under review throughout the pregnancy to ensure appropriate mitigations are put in place in a timely manner.

In undertaking the risk assessment process, alongside the employee’s vaccination status, the pregnancy risk assessment process will need to consider the relevance of any underlying health conditions, and the employee’s specific role.

If as part of this process, it is determined that a pregnant employee could not continue in their current role or reasonably be assigned other duties, or redeployed, consideration should be given to suspending pregnant workers on full pay. This is in line with normal requirements.

[See further advice on health and safety for pregnant workers from HSE.](https://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/index.htm)

1. **Meeting Rooms**

When booking and using meeting rooms, consider the size of the room, the means of ventilation in the room and the number of people who need to be at the meeting.  If large numbers need to attend, consider whether some attendees can join via Microsoft Teams. You should also consider limiting the length of time needed to be in the room.

**11**. **What to do if individuals are symptomatic or COVID-19 Positive**

The most effective way of preventing the spread of any communicable disease in the workplace is to prevent the virus being present in the first place.

If an individual is displaying any symptoms of a communicable disease (such as Flu, Coronavirus or Norovirus) or has tested positive for Coronavirus, they should not come into their workplace and where possible, work from home.

If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, they should not return to the workplace for up to 5 days following a positive test or from the day symptoms start (whichever is the earlier).

All employees should contact their manager/supervisor to inform them of their situation and should continue to keep in touch with their manager/supervisor if they are still unable to return after the initial 5 days.

Managers should be mindful that some people may be infectious for up to 10 days from the start of their infection and individuals should therefore avoid meeting **anyone who is at higher risk** for 10 days.This includes older people, those who are pregnant, those who are unvaccinated, people of any age whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness, people of any age with certain long-term conditions.

If an employee who is displaying symptoms or has tested positive is likely to come in contact with an individual/s at higher risk during their day-to-day duties, managers must undertake a risk assessment and put in place the necessary measures to ensure the safety of those at higher risk.

Employees who work from home should continue to do so if they feel well enough.

All employees will receive their normal pay whilst isolating, even if they feel well enough to work and they are unable to work from home.

**Employees in roles which mean they are unable to work from home** should download a self-isolation note - <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note> and provide this to their manager.

For employees who are **unfit to work due to the symptoms of COVID-19**, the normal Maximising Attendance at Work Policy applies. There is no requirement for employees to obtain a self-isolation note as normal self-certification rules apply when an employee is off sick for up to 7 days. Where an employee is still not fit for work from day 8, then they will need to obtain a fit note from their GP.

**Social Care and Special Schools**

Please note that there are additional requirements for social care and special school settings. Further information can be found in the Welsh Government’s guidance called ‘Covid-19 testing for health and social care workers’ (8 September 2022).