Communicable Infections Guidance including COVID-19

Changes to Government Guidance for the control of COVID-19 means that there is no longer a legal requirement to complete and update COVID Secure Risk Assessments in the majority of work settings. In circumstances where employees come into contact with COVID-19 due to their work activities, such as health and social care workers caring for infectious patients, the risk must still be considered as part of the risk assessment process and appropriate control measures implemented.

Regardless of the work setting, it is important that we do not lose the good practice that COVID controls have allowed us to establish and use these to ensure our arrangements for reducing the risk from all communicable infections are robust.

This guidance outlines the control measures necessary to help maintain an infection free workplace. It is expected that all *managers will adhere to the principles. Where necessary local arrangements should be developed in line with the guidance; the action plan template at the end of this document can be used for this purpose. Alternatively, managers may prefer to incorporate control measures into their existing service or school related risk assessments.

Further guidance on maintaining a covid secure workplace can be found on the HSE website.

*Where the term manager has been used this includes all managers, supervisors and headteachers.

Potential hazards and guidance on how to control them
Ventilation
The amount of respiratory virus in the air can build up in poorly ventilated areas. The risk of spreading respiratory infections increases if there are more infected people present. The virus can also remain in the air after an infected person has left the area. Premise Managers must follow LCC's Simple Steps for Good Ventilation guidance (DILUTE) (Intranet / Schools Portal) and complete and regularly review a Ventilation Checklist (Intranet / Schools Portal) for the building. Steps must be taken to implement any actions identified in the ventilation checklist. Specialist advice on ventilation concerns identified through the completion of the Ventilation Checklist can be obtained from the Building Services Engineers duty.engineer@lancashire.gov.uk. Staff must be made aware of the ventilation controls and be provided with instructions on how to adhere to ventilation measures, for example, the use of CO_2 monitors to measure the ongoing suitability of ventilation and the opening and shutting of windows or vents. There is further advice on the HSE website.
Crowded Enclosed Spaces
There is no government requirement or recommendation to limit capacity in the workplace. The county council has adopted a flexible approach to where to work. Managers will take the decision, based on business need, as to whether teams or individual members of staff must come into the workplace.

Potential hazards and guidance on how to control them

Where necessary staff should discuss their individual needs with their line manager. If you have specific issues such as mental or physical health difficulties, or a particularly challenging home working environment, your manager can consider what support and/or reasonable adjustments may be appropriate. Where necessary an individual risk assessment (Intranet / Schools Portal) should be completed.

Hand & Respiratory Hygiene

Washing your hands regularly is one of the easiest and most effective ways to protect yourself and others from illnesses such as COVID-19, colds, flu and norovirus by removing dirt, viruses and bacteria to stop them spreading to other people and objects.

Public Health England provides guidance on how to wash your hands. An LCC poster is also available to promote good hand washing practice.

Coughing and sneezing increases the number of particles released by a person, the distance the particles travel and the time they stay in the air. Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. Put used tissues in a bin and immediately wash your hands or use hand sanitiser. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.

Cleaning

Infections can be spread through the touching of contaminated surfaces and it remains especially important to clean surfaces that people touch frequently. Staff can help to reduce the spread of infection by wiping down their workstations or any touchdown facilities on a regular basis where cleaning products are available and/or washing their hands or using hand sanitiser throughout the day.

Personal Protective Equipment and Face Coverings

Wearing a face covering or face mask can reduce the number of particles containing viruses that are released from the mouth and nose of someone who has a respiratory infection, including COVID-19. Face coverings can also protect the person wearing the face covering from becoming infected by some viruses.

When to consider wearing a face covering:

- when you are coming into close contact with someone at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from respiratory infections, including COVID-19.

- when COVID-19 rates are high and you will be in close contact with other people, such as in crowded and enclosed spaces.

- when there are a lot of respiratory viruses circulating, such as in winter, and you will be in close contact with other people in crowded and enclosed spaces.

In some services such as adult social care, face masks continue to be a recommendation for some settings and activities. See Government guidance Infection prevention and control: resources for adult social care and COVID-19 supplement to the infection prevention and control resources for more information.

The safe donning, doffing and disposal of PPE are critical considerations to avoid the spread of infection. Staff should familiarise themselves with the Government guidance on the use of personal protective equipment.

People at Higher Risk of Becoming Seriously Unwell

Potential hazards and guidance on how to control them

The Government provides guidance for [people previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19](#) and for [people whose immune system means they are at higher risk](#).

The HSE provides guidance [protecting those who may be at higher risk from COVID-19.](#)

Consideration needs to be given to workers facing mental and physical health difficulties.

An individual risk assessment ([Intranet](#) / [Schools Portal](#)) must be completed for any staff member who has significant risk factors or who is experiencing mental health issues in relation to COVID-19.

A New and Expectant Mothers Checklist & Risk Assessment form ([Intranet](#) / [Schools Portal](#)) must be completed for individuals who are pregnant to identify any additional control measures or support required.

Vaccination

Vaccines are the best defence against respiratory infections such as flu and COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

To book a seasonal flu vaccination please contact your GP, visit the [NHS website](#) or speak to your manager to identify if you are eligible for this vaccination through LCC

To book a COVID vaccination, please visit: [Book or manage a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination](#) – NHS ([www.nhs.uk](#)).

Testing and Isolation

Employees are advised to stay at home if they feel unwell or if they are displaying any COVID-19 or flu like symptoms to help prevent the spread of communicable viruses.

Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.

For information on public health recommended exclusion periods for infections in schools please refer to the [UKHSA exclusion table](#).

For more information, refer to the Government guidance [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](#).

In some services such as adult social care, regular LFD testing continues to be a recommendation. Refer to the Government guidance [COVID-19 testing in adult social care](#) for more information.

Employees who have a positive COVID-19 test are advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 days after the day they took their test and until they no longer have a high temperature and feel unwell. Employees are advised to avoid contact with people at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19 for 10 days after the day they took their test.

Communication with Customers, Visitors, and Contractors

Provide clear guidance on any local arrangements for reducing the risk of COVID-19 and other communicable infections.

Potential hazards and guidance on how to control them
Co-ordinate and co-operate with other occupiers where the site and facilities are shared including landlords and other tenants.

Local Arrangements

Where additional service or local arrangements are required in specific settings, to increase or reduce general control measures and principles, these should be recorded in the following action plan or incorporated into existing risk assessments.

Any service or local arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis or in the event of any significant changes.

Service/Team:	
Address:	
Completed by:	
Date:	
Proposed review date:	

ACTION PLAN Local Arrangements/Action required					
Hazard	**Local Arrangements/Action required**	**Person(s) to undertake action?**	**Timescale**	**Notes / comments**	**Date completed**