

PPE In Domiciliary Care

COVID-19

June 2020

This factsheet is for home care staff to help them understand the updated guidance on PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic.





How is Coronavirus spread?

COVID-19 is the disease caused by the Coronavirus. It is a new disease and not everything is known about it yet.

The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth. These are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or breathes out. These droplets land on objects and surfaces.

Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

This is why it is important to stay more than 2 metres away from people and wash your hands. This is tricky if you are providing care in someone's home.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

You will have been told about PPE in your training and in your induction. During the COVID-19 pandemic, PPE is important to keep you safe.

It can help to protect you from COVID-19 if it is used properly. It can also help protect your service user too.

If you have service users, or there are others in their house, who are in the 'highly vulnerable' group, PPE is going to help protect them. The Government has said

they must self isolate for 12 weeks and be shielded from COVID-19. This is because if they get COVID-19, they may not recover and get better.

Your company will have an infection control policy and have information on PPE. Because there is a high risk of coronavirus spreading, Public Health England has given information on PPE to help care workers working in people's homes.

Risk Assessment

Before you visit your service user, your company will need to check if your service user is unwell. The symptoms are a fever of 37.8°C, a new or persistent cough and/or a loss or change in your normal sense of smell or taste.

This is an important step as it's a risk assessment and will help decide what PPE you will need.

This can be done by phone. If a service user can't use a phone, you will need to use PPE until you know they have no symptoms of COVID-19.

Service Users may not have the same symptoms as someone who is young and healthy. The symptoms may include confusion or diarrhoea, sore throat, loss of appetite or shortness of breath. It's important you know about these and tell your manager if you are worried.

What PPE do you need to wear?

If you are providing close personal care in direct contact with a service user or are within two metres of someone who is coughing, you must wear disposable gloves, a disposable plastic apron, a fluid-repellent (Type IIR) surgical mask and eye protection.

Where no personal care or contact is made with a service user or there is no one within two metres coughing, it is recommended that a Type II surgical mask is worn.

You will need to put on (this is called donning) the PPE before you provide care for the service user. Once you have opened the front door, say 'Hello'. If the service user opens the door, stay 2 metres away. Try not to take your bag or coat into the home. If you do need to, put it in a plastic bag that can be disposed of after you leave the home.

Wash your hands before donning PPE. If you can't wash your hands, use antibacterial hand gel. You do not need to wear 2 pairs of gloves.



When to change PPE

It is difficult to get hold of enough PPE now. You need to think about the order you carry out the activities in the care plan so that you can avoid having to change PPE as often in the service user's home.

A surgical mask must be changed if:

- It gets wet
- It gets damaged or is visibly soiled
- You touch it
- It becomes uncomfortable to wear

Masks are uncomfortable to wear. Don't pull it down and wear it round your neck. You will need a new mask every time you do this.

This is the order to remove your PPE:

- Gloves - the outside of gloves are contaminated
- Clean hands with alcohol gel
- Apron – the front of the apron will be contaminated
- Eye protection - the outside will be contaminated
- Mask - Clean hands with alcohol hand rub. Do not touch the front of the mask as it will be contaminated
- Wash hands with soap and water



Extremely Vulnerable Service Users

If your service user is well but is in the 'extremely vulnerable' group or someone in the house is being shielded, you will need to wear PPE. Your manager will tell you if the service user is extremely vulnerable.

You must wear a surgical mask, a pair of gloves and an apron to protect these service users.

It's important to follow your Infection Control policy. You need to be 'Bare below the elbows', this means:

- No watches
- No bracelets
- No false or acrylic nails
- Only 1 plain ring (no stone)

Your manager will tell you if you need to wear gloves and masks if your service user is fit and well. If you are worried, talk to your manager. If you don't understand what you need to do, talk to your manager



Looking after yourself

It's ok to be worried or scared. It's scary for everyone and you are doing an important job.

Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family. Your manager is also there to help too.

Make sure you eat healthily. Make sure you rest and get sleep. Although you have a busy job, take time to do some exercise that makes you feel good.

The most important thing to remember is to wash your hands lots of times in the day, even if they do not look dirty.

Keep Up to Date

Regularly log on to the policies and procedures at QCS. We are updating daily as things are changing so quickly. We have fact sheets and easy reads too in the resource centre.

There is also an app for your phone so you can check out information when you are out and about. It works for apple and android devices.

Our website www.QCS.CO.UK has blogs and additional resources.

We have a new Facebook discussion group that anyone can join.

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