

Covid-19 Staff Risk Reduction Summary Document

The Department of Health and Social Care has produced: [COVID-19 Adult Social Care risk reduction framework: Assessing and reducing the risk to your workforce](#). People with certain characteristics are at increased risk of infection or adverse outcomes from COVID-19, including people who:

- are over the age of 70; (risk of adverse outcomes increases with age)
- are male;
- are pregnant;
- are obese;
- are from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background; and
- have certain underlying health conditions.

More information on who is more at risk is available from the NHS: [here](#).

[The COVID-19 Adult Social Care risk reduction framework](#) states that “as an adult social care employer, you have a duty of care to secure the health, safety and welfare of your workers and the people who use your service, as far as possible. You should have a process in place to assess and reduce risk for everyone in your care, regardless of characteristics or vulnerabilities. This should include ... the risk to your workers, including volunteers, considering any individual characteristics which may put them at increased risk.”

The Council has spoken with some of its contracted providers to understand best practice approaches to risk assessments and the additional mitigations for workers at high risk. Providers should utilise the Adult Social Care risk reduction framework, and public health guidance when reviewing risks to your workforce. However the Council is also providing some of the information below which was generated from the review of these providers approaches for your information.

Staff

- Ensure that all members of staff have had a COVID-19 risk assessment completed to identify staff at high risk. The process should be reviewed regularly and in particular repeated if the staff member changes role, moves site or develops new health risks.
- Encourage staff to have a conversation with their line manager following any self-assessment.
- Provide clear, consistent and regular communication to staff, ensuring that both managers and staff are clear on the reasons for risk assessments.
- Listen to people’s feelings as well as considering the more objective risks.
- Engage staff with specific risk plans and measures to allay anxieties and include staff in the design process.
- Engage staff with risk planning and support them to work in a different way where possible. Consider increasing the number of 1:1s with staff to support consistent communication.

Risk assessments

- Proactively review and adapt risk assessment processes and documents to respond to changes in guidance (e.g. use the information, guidance and links within [the Covid-19 Adult Social Care Risk Reduction Framework](#))
- Regularly review risk assessments and consider the changing environments when planning and scheduling reviews.
- Ensure that risk assessments are repeated when the worker changes role, develops a further health risk or changes site.
- Keep the risk assessment form clear and as simple as possible to use, avoiding web links that provide too much information.

Providers & mitigating risks

- The types of mitigating measures used by providers include: effective PPE, social distancing, providing remote support, redeployment, working at home on admin. Information is available within the Adult Social Care Risk Reduction Framework which highlights: [what steps you can take once workforce members at risk are identified](#).
- Include risk assessment related to COVID-19 as a standing agenda item at regular management team meetings and develop/adapt processes alongside government guidance.
- Develop an action plan and staff guidance to mitigate risk and ensure continued best practice.
- Enable, where possible, staff to work at home.
- If individual issues prohibit the person complying with appropriate level of PPE, other roles as near to their original that could be undertaken should be discussed. If there is not an alternative, look at other roles they may be able to adapt/train, with further adjustments.
- Regular and clear communications to reaffirm messages including; to wash hands, wear a face mask, keep 2m apart where possible, avoid large groups, wash surfaces, work from home where possible and stay home if unwell.
- Consider risk ratings of customers in case of staffing shortages to identify who is highest priority and review business continuity plans.
- Review procedures for recruitment and training of staff to ensure safety, e.g. can aspects of recruitment and training be undertaken remotely.
- Consider operating in staff bubbles.
- Ensure equipment is available for staff to be supported should they need to fulfil duties from home and that a home environment risk assessment completed.
- Ensure that all employees are treated equally and that all at risk groups/conditions are identified and considered. This does not mean that all staff should have the same response and mitigations to their assessment – the outcome should be based on individual situation and risks identified.

Observations and considerations

- Being mindful that there are rapid changes in government guidance and responding to these changes.
- Respond quickly to updating paperwork, systems and processes to keep staff safe.
- Communicate with people that are in high risk groups to help inform behaviour and support safe working.
- Ensure compliance of advice and policies by implementing checks and corrective measures.
- Continue to review practices and processes and respond to any changing demands.
- Ensure that the working environment is considered and adapted to mitigate risks.
- Be aware that staff may feel more nervous with increasing prevalence and ensure that this is reviewed as part of risk assessment regularly with mitigations in place to ensure staff are protected and feel safe.
- Awareness of data security if a staff member is working from home on any customer or patient data.

Guidance & Further information

[Disparities in the Risk and Outcome of COVID-19.](#)

The Health and Safety Executive produces a guide to [workplace risk assessments](#) which you may find helpful.