**Safeworking guidance for the VCSE**

This Safeworking guidance outlines the principles of infection control that are put in place to limit the spread of infection by breaking the chain of transmission.

For a VCS organisation or food bank, this may include food safety as well as Covid-19 safety.

**The three objectives of safe working guidance**

1. Reducing risk to staff from clients being Covid-19 positive
2. Reducing risk to clients from staff being Covid-19 positive
3. Reducing transmission via staff from Covid-19 positive clients to negative and shielded/vulnerable clients or staff.

If you follow the guidance included in this document, your risk of picking up Covid-19 from working in any VCS organisation is extremely low. Your risk of passing Covid-19 to isolated residents at risk is also extremely low.

**About COVID-19:**

The coronavirus (covid-19) causes an unpleasant flu like illness that lasts 7-10 days in healthy adults.

The main symptoms are cough and or fever. Specifically:

* A new continuous cough (3 episodes of coughing in 24 hours),
* And/or a fever > 37.8C (feel hot to touch on back or chest),
* Other symptoms that may occur include a runny nose, sneezing, headache, diarrhoea (notably in children) and for those more severely affected, difficulty breathing.

In healthy children, Covid-19 causes very few symptoms. Symptoms are typically worse for older people (older than 70) and those with underlying health conditions. It can also cause severe pneumonia. This is especially the case for people with:

* Heart or lung conditions (heart failure, angina, COPD, asthma), or
* Diabetes and/or immune damaging conditions (cancer treatment, transplants).

People with symptoms of difficulty breathing, chest pain and or confusion require urgent hospital treatment. Use 111 online symptom checker: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/> . If you are not able to get the help you need online, please call 111.

**Principles of infection control and knowledge of the virus**

The following seven infection control principles should be applied on any type of volunteer role and work you are carrying out:

*Principle 1: Self-isolation*

* Staff with COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate for 7 days (14 if in a >1 person household) to avoid transmitting to colleagues and should NOT come to work or to a volunteering session. This is **Rule One**: Stay home for 7 days if unwell and until fever symptoms have ended.

### *Principle 2: Distance*

### Keep 2 m distance between yourself and the public, clients and colleagues

### This includes packing /delivery lines

### Delivery recipients and delivery teams

If you need to use a van for work, you should observe 2m distance in the back of the van/bus. Drivers should open a window to promote air circulation. If a driver or passenger feels unwell, a mask should be worn.

### *Principle 3: Delay*

* Use the 72 hour surface survival time of the coronavirus and leave contaminated (or presumed contaminated) objects 72 hours before touching/using

### *Principle 4: Zoning/segregation*

* Keep your VCS organisation areas COVID-19 Free
* All VCS teams to be symptom free

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### *Principle 5: Hand hygiene*

### Wash hands more frequently, or use hand sanitiser (60% alcohol) if away from a sink/water. Hands must be washed:

* + first thing at the start of a shift,
	+ after being out,
	+ before eating
	+ before and after any vaping breaks
	+ after touching face , clothes or other objects while packing or on delivery runs -
	+ after bathroom breaks
	+ first thing on entering your home
	+ Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitiser
	+ Use the technique in <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/866065/Handwashing_techniques.pdf> . Video is <https://youtu.be/bQCP7waTRWU>

Avoid touching objects outside the organisation place. Use elbows, knees, feet etc instead.

###  *Principle 6: Cleaning and Disinfecting*

### Areas within the organisation that become contaminated, or are at a high risk of contamination/contact need to be cleaned with detergent and disinfectant before being used again

### Disinfectant to have 1,000 ppm available chlorine (e.g. bleach at 0.01% hypochlorite – most commercial cleaners e.g. flash + beach are stronger).

### High frequency contact points should be cleaned at least 4 times per day, for example toilet doors and flushes, taps and door handles

If you use vehicles these should be cleaned at the change of driver and after each shift.

Clean high traffic point seat belts buckles steering wheel door handles

###  *Principle 7: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*

###  PPE is only required in any VCS organisation under very limited circumstances. It depends on the people you work with, the work you do and the places you do it.

* + When working with group who have difficulty following the national guidance on stay home , make sure social distance 2m, respiratory hygiene catch it bin it kill it and hand hygiene. If there is a higher risk and in high footfall locations masks should be worn.
	+ If working in a residential location where there are > 2 active cases, masks should be worn in general areas and handwashing should be frequent.
	+ For food preparation teams (hair nets, gloves)
	+ Food serving: It is better to set up a shield to place a barrier between yourself and the public, if one is not available a mask should be worn and workflow serving system set up to observe the 2m rules.
	+ To handle donations from individual members of the public
	+ If delivery teams do not have hand sanitiser gloves should be taken to be worn. Remove before handling the delivery - gloves should not be used to carry boxes/hand over deliveries. Please see Appendix C for instructions on how to put on and take off gloves. Dispose of used gloves in a tieable /sealable plastic bag.
	+ PPE is not needed to sit in a van or car with colleagues except in 3 specific circumstances. This includes:
* If the driver works with other non-HelpNewham delivery runs involving children or higher risk – see above cohorts)
* If the driver starts to feel unwell during a shift
* If requested by a manager
	+ When traveling in a vehicle, open a window to encourage air circulation/ventilation. Anyone with symptoms should NOT be on the delivery team and should be self-isolating at home.

If wearing gloves you still need to observe the same precautions you do when not wearing gloves, such as not touching your face. Please remove gloves for breaks and put on a new pair of gloves every time you start a new task. Do not use teeth to put on or take off gloves. See Appendix C for proper instructions.

#### If a volunteer becomes unwell during a shift, please do the following:

* If not an emergency – check 111 coronavirus online checker. <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>
* If the individual has Covid-19 symptoms they must be sent home immediately and by the most direct route
* If awaiting an ambulance, the volunteer must be placed on a chair near a door and at least 2m away from people, stock and process lines
* If there are masks available, the volunteer must wear one
* Using gloves, separate out to a labelled quarantine area the work boxes/work handled by the unwell volunteer. Mark the quarantine label with the time and date and cordon off. Leave aside for 72 hours
* Cordon off and close the work area and bathroom(s) used by the volunteer
* **Food Packing:** If your volunteering role involves food packing within a Food distribution hub or Food bank, you should follow mandatory handwashing guidance:
* Wash hands at start of shift, after breaks, after bathroom breaks, after touching face or clothes, before eating, after breaks and at the end of shift.
* Avoid touching face or clothes during shift. If you do, wash hands immediately
* Work at a distance of 2m from others.
* For the few occasions where gloves should be worn, please see Appendix C and/or visit this website, which describes how to put on and take of latex or nitrile gloves.

<https://www.yourglovesource.com/blogs/glove-knowledgebase/43943233-how-to-put-on-nitrile-and-latex-gloves>

* **Drivers and Delivery**: If the volunteering role involves working as Drivers to deliver food parcels or prescriptions, you must ensure hands are washed regularly, at least hourly, and that no packaging is handled after contact with objects like lift buttons, rails, faces etc. Carry hand sanitiser in case of hand contact with objects. If you do not have hand sanitiser carry a few pairs of gloves for unavoidable object contact and a sealable/tie-able plastic bag to put contaminated gloves in.

Delivery teams should avoid close face-to-face contact and stay at least 2 m away from residents at all times. To do this, you should:

* ring the bell using your elbow or knock and call the name of the resident
* ID yourself verbally
* Leave the package on the doorstep and step back 2m (3 large steps or 6 ft.)
* If asked, show your ID from at least 2m away
* Check the package is collected and leave
* If you touch the bell, lift buttons etc. with your hand, **you must wash or use hand sanitiser before** carrying out any other package handling
* Wash hands and face on return from the delivery. If not possible, use hand sanitiser.
* A mask is not needed when out in the street.
* **Errands and shopping**

If you are, running errands like collecting shopping or delivering essentials- Do not take unnecessary risks. Use shops, which are observing social distancing, and cleaning rules and spaces which are open and well-spaced.

If possible, ask the person you are helping to arrange for a shopping load to be prepacked and pre-paid in store, so you just have to collect bag/bags. If you have to enter a store, wash your hands before and after touching items in a shop if you need to collect items from the shelves.

For pharmacy delivery see delivery instructions above – if collection prescriptions form a pharmacy – use a mask to collect in store.

* **Exceptions**

If you are working with any of the vulnerable groups listed below, you will need PPE.

These are:

* People with an NHS shield letter – or with conditions listed at
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

This group are vulnerable to COVID-19 and to any other regular colds or infections. Therefore, hand hygiene is crucial when dealing with any of this cohort in your role. PPE is neded for close personal <2m care to this group ( eg bathing turning)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Hand Sanitiser/Hand washing** | **Disposable Gloves** | **Plastic Apron** | **Fluid Repellent surgical mask (Type IIR) (FRSM)**  | **Eye protection +**  | **Filtering face piece (class 3) (FFP3) respirator masks** |
| **Attending a household with an****asymptomatic extremely****vulnerable# person at >2m** | YES | You must be welland usehandwashing | You must be welland usehandwashing | You must be welland usehandwashing | You must be welland usehandwashing | You must be welland usehandwashing |
| **Attending a household with an****asymptomatic extremely****vulnerable# person (close****personal care <2 metre such****as washing and bathing,****personal hygiene and contact****with bodily fluids)** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |

* **Food handlers** should follow food hygiene and safety guidance – Please refer to Food Bank comprehensive checklist for all the Food safety guidance.

If you are serving food distributing to a large number of people , where you are in one place and a large number of people come to you - you may need limited PPE – preferably a screen between you and the public- If a screen is not in place, masks should be used

* **Cleaning**
* Make sure vehicles tools and spaces are cleaned frequently
* Vehicles should be cleaned after each shift change of driver and end of day
* Surface which have the most contact should be cleaned at least 2 hourly or between users or shifts.
* Clean using: Disinfectant to have 1,000 ppm available chlorine (e.g. bleach at 0.01% hypochlorite – most commercial cleaners eg flash + beach are stronger).
* **Your breaks - food and meals**

**Wash your hands** more frequently, or use hand sanitiser if away from a sink

* + after being out,
	+ before eating,
	+ before and after any vaping breaks,
	+ while packing or on delivery runs - after touching face or other objects,
	+ after bathroom breaks,
	+ Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
	+ Use the technique at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/866065/Handwashing_techniques.pdf>

Avoid touching objects outside your home. Use elbows, knees etc. instead

* **Your clothes ( only for homelessness, addiction, SEND and MH work)**
* Your uniform or work clothes should be removed at end of day/shift and washed at 60C.
* Do not shake excessively.
* It is better to change clothes at work after your shift.
* Put your work clothes into a bin bag.
* Wash your hands, tie the first bin bag, and place in a second bin bag to transport.
* Wash at 60C when you return home.
* If you are unable to change at work, go straight home, remove clothes into a bin bag then tip into the washing machine- or bag as above and take to a laundrette in two bags.
* Clothes may be washed with other household laundry providing the temperature is 60C or above.
* Ordinary household laundry detergent is effective.
* **Your PPE**

Personal protective equipment is designed to protect you at work. It is one part of a safe system for working. Other parts include, distancing – 2m, hand hygiene, delaying of work and risk assessment.

You will probably be familiar with using an apron and gloves but masks and eye protection may be new to you.

PPE is only effective in protecting you and your client if it is put on (donned) and taken off (doffed) in the right order with the right technique. You should familiarise yourself with the order and technique. Masks may initially feel uncomfortable.

Donning and Doffing videos

These videos summarises the detail and technique well. You should watch until you can follow exactly. Keep the video to hand to act as a guide.

[PHE – Donning and doffing](https://youtu.be/j3hfEpjAx0E) Video which is Covid specific

This one is particularly helpful on [apron donning](https://youtu.be/j3hfEpjAx0E)-

This [fact sheet](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877658/Quick_guide_to_donning_doffing_standard_PPE_health_and_social_care_poster__.pdf) is a quick guide

See Appendix B as well

You must not adjust your mask once on or touch your face

You must not let your mask dangle below your nose or around your neck if wearing sessional

If you have supplied your own mask you must follow the correct procedure in using it – you are representing your charity or community and the Help Newham teams – so demonstrating safe and sustainable PPE use and social distancing is one of your responsibilities.

*Disposing of PPE and laundry*

* Remember to dispose of used PPE safely – in two sealed refuse bags
* Remember to wash your work clothes at least 60C
* Take a change of clothes to work and refuse sacks to safely transport soiled work clothes/used PPE.
* Remember to wash your hands **and** arms

Hyperlinks expanded – Print versions

PHE <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GncQ_ed-9w&feature=youtu.be>

Apron technique : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3hfEpjAx0E&feature=youtu.be>

**Appendix A** Handwashing techniques

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**Appendix B**

**Putting on (donning) PPE**



**Apron**

* Pull over your head
* Fasten/tie the apron around the back of your waist



**Surgical Mask/respirator**

* Secure ties or elastic bands at the middle of head and neck
* Fit the flexible band to the bridge of your nose
* Make sure it is snug on your face and sitting below the chin



**GLOVES**

* Check gloves are the correct size
* Make sure the gloves cover your wrist
* Wash and dry hands before putting on

**Removal of (doffing) PPE**

1. **APRON**

Remove apron and immediately place in plastic refuse bag

1. **GLOVES**



* The outside of your gloves will be contaminated
* Grab the outside of the glove with the opposite hand, as shown in the figure
* Peel off



* Hold the removed glove in the hand that is still in a glove
* Slide an ungloved finger under the wrist of the remaining glove, then peel it off from the inside, creating a “bag” for both used gloves.
* Immediately discard both gloves into a lined waste bin. If you know you won’t have access to a bin, bring a sealable bag with you and place them into this. Dispose of this bag as soon as you find a lined bin.
* Finish by washing your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If not possible, use sanitiser.
1. **REMOVE MASK**



* The front of your mask is contaminated. Do not touch.
* Unfasten the bottom tie of your mask
* Unfasten the top tie of your mask
* Holding the ties, pull the mask away from your face. Do not touch the front of the mask
* Immediately put the mask in a lined bin. If you know you won’t have access to a bin, bring a sealable bag with you and place it into this. Dispose of this bag as soon as you find a lined bin.
* For reusable respirators, place it in the designated receptacle for decontamination.