

## COVID-19 Risk Assessment Guidance

Risk assessment for COVID-19 will focus on the questions that need to be asked so that you can create the appropriate risk assessment.

Before you complete the risk assessment, you must ask who is doing what and how, where are they doing it, why are they doing it and what are they using? Understanding the tasks or activities is vital to assess the exposure and to qualify any subsequent control decisions.

### Risk assessment

#### Hazard

The risk assessment must recognise the virus as a hazard. Your risk assessment must reflect that the virus is spread through coughing, sneezing, talking and breathing. The virus can be transferred to the hands and from there to surfaces. It can survive on surfaces for a period after transfer depending on the surface type, its moisture content and temperature. The conclusion that if the virus is passed from one person to another, while some will survive infections, some with underlying health conditions may die. It should be regarded as a high hazard.

#### Likelihood of Exposure

You must consider how people are exposed to the virus. There are a number of questions you may want to consider:

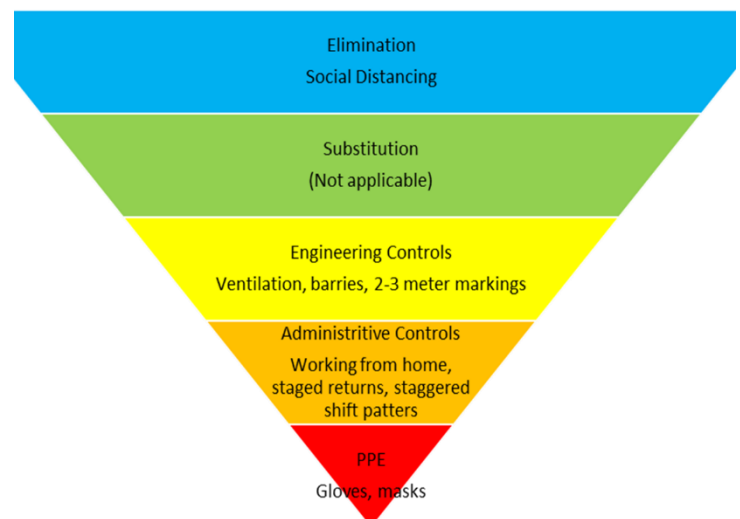
- While at work, how might employees meet people with the disease such as contractors, deliveries, how long might they be exposed?
- How do your employees travel to work – do they rely on public transport?
- Which employees are vulnerable – who have underlying health conditions? How can you capture this information?
- Which of your employees live with vulnerable people?

Once you have the answers to your questions and are understood, control measures to mitigate them can be considered and put in place.

### Control

#### Hierarchy Control COVID-19

Hierarchy of control can help you to consider what can be done. Your overall aim is to reduce exposure to your employees, children, parents and anyone else who could be infected. You must include those who may have the disease, preventative measures and what to do if you find an employee has the disease.



**Elimination** is the best form of control; however, until a vaccine is available, then social distancing is the best form of elimination.

**Substitution** – in this case this is not possible.

**Engineering Controls** are things such as barriers, marking the pavement outside the nursery entrance, receiving children at the door. Ventilation – can we open windows to allow ventilation into the rooms. Outdoor activities – can we take indoor activities outside (weather dependent).

Where possible work from home, stagger returns of staff and children.

The risk assessment must also consider how you will keep the workplace clean, adjust your practices and make sure people are safe.

**Consider the following:**

- How can you maintain social distancing?
- Can you use alternative rooms to spread staff and children out?
- Where are your staff and children more likely to find it difficult to avoid one another such as the toilets, staff rooms, office? Can you phase break times?
- Can you place additional sanitising units in areas where most people commonly touch, such as handrails, doors, doors entry systems, keypads, iPads, phones, desks, kitchen equipment.

**Cleaning is a vital control and must be high on your priorities.**

- Have you considered how you keep commonly touched surfaces sterile and how more frequently they need to be cleaned?
- Are you using an effective strength of cleaner to kill the virus? Such as Selgiene Ultra.
- Have you updated the cleaning schedule to ensure all areas are being frequently and thoroughly cleaned?
- You must consider the impact on cleaners; how will you protect them? PPE?
- Do you have enough cloths as viral loading will increase and will need to be changed frequently?
- Where and how will you dispose of contaminated cloths?

**Work equipment:**

- Can equipment be allocated to an individual rather than shared?
- If equipment must be shared, then how will it be cleaned between uses, i.e. phones, iPads?
- If someone falls ill with COVID-19 what cleaning processes will be necessary on the equipment they have been using?
- How frequently should employees wash their hands to reduce potential viral load and spread on equipment and environment?

**Safe systems of work:**

- Can work sequencing be reorganised to avoid employees being in close contact with others? When this is not possible, can the time they are in contact be minimised (10-15 minutes) or can they work facing away from one another?

- What adjustment to contractor control may be necessary? For example, complete questionnaire/ declaration?

### **Safe people:**

- How will you keep staff informed about the disease, about reducing exposure?
- What advice can be provided to those travelling by public transport?
- What process have you got for employees to report possible infection or exposure, and what you then require them to do?
- Advice on COVID-19 is constantly changing, how will you keep current with advice and how will you update your employees?

### **PPE**

The last resort in the hierarchy control is PPE. It is considered the weakest control because it relies on people using it correctly. It introduces many possibilities for error: storage, replacement, availability.

Considerations include:

- If gloves are provided, the virus can still be transferred to the surface. If the wearer then touched their face, they could contract the disease. Perhaps frequent hand washing, or sterilising is a better option. (Please note you must wear gloves for nappy changing)
- The wearing of a face mask may reduce the virus being spread from the wearer to others, but its effectiveness of protecting the wearer is debatable. In any case the longer it is worn, the greater the potential viral loading in its surface. Touching the mask and then face may increase exposure if masks are not changed regularly. If they are left lying around, potentially increases exposure to other who may come into contact with it. How will you dispose?
- Plastic aprons will provide some protection for clothing, but rarely cover the sleeves which may come into contact with the face.