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Protective measures in childcare settings: Keep Childcare Safe

How to get your childcare service ready to allow more children to attend and protect them and your staff from coronavirus.

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Introduction

Childcare is provided in a wide range of settings and cates for children of different ages. This guidance is for childcare providers who are not registered in the guidance are aimed at registered settings and environments primarily caring for pre-school aged children, many of the same principles apply to providers who care for children of school age, including those who provide holiday schemes - both attended and unregistered. Registered childcare providers in childcare for older children are also advised to refer to the guidance for providers of out of school activities and holiday schemes. Providers who are required to and have applied for a temporary exemption from meeting the Ofsted 13 outlined on the ages of children in their care.

The measures set out in this guidance are to be considered over and above those required by the Ofsted guidance for the **National Minimum Standards for Registered Childcare**.

This guidance may be updated in light of medical and scientific advice and as we learn more about the practical implications of the measures.

Changes to current practice can be stressful for children. Providers should consider how they introduce new routines in a joyful way and provide reassurance to children.

Key messages

- Social distancing measures should be employed so far as is reasonably practicable, in line with the risk assessment, to minimise the number of adults settling where parents are present again children are being cared for in their or other settings. Therefore, infection prevention and control measures are important.
- Read and consider the guidance before re-opening or expanding your provision.
- Ofsted and childcare registration settings have legal obligations under engagement with them. They should carry out risk assessments and take steps to manage appropriately for individual circumstances.
- Childcare providers should find the number of contacts that children and adults have.
- Follow **Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Childcare Providers**.
- Thorough and regular cleaning and disinfecting of the environment, for example, at a minimum, daily cleaning and disinfection of toilets, taps, sinks, door handles, and other touch points, and at least weekly for wooden toys should be disinfected after use.
- effective personal hygiene procedures, especially frequent handwashing, should be maintained.
- Follow **Public Health Wales guidance** if a childcare setting has a member of childcare/staff member's family is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or is in a quarantine period. Children who are a member of the family of the child should be cared for away from other children and staff. Consideration should be taken of the vulnerability and the child collected and taken home by a family member who is not showing symptoms. Risk assessments and arrangements for implementing protective measures, and how you are going to review the criteria.
- Consider the mental health rights and experiences of all children at the setting should remain a key consideration when planning and operating activities in response.

Purpose

This guidance is intended to ensure provision in childcare settings is as safe as possible for all and children. Social distancing, hygiene and other measures of those showing symptoms, or living with someone showing symptoms/ self-isolating because they have been contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service, or returning from a country where they are required to self-isolate, will reduce the risk of transmission of infection. While staff may feel apprehensive about the risks, it is important to remember that with adherence to guidance, childcare is a low risk.

Risk assessment

Every setting must carry out a risk assessment to ensure children and staff are kept safe prior to reopening or expanding their provision and on a weekly basis thereafter. The assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) and how the risks will be managed. It should be a control those risks for children and staff.

All employers have a duty to consult employees on health and safety, and they are best placed to understand the risks in individual settings. Childcare providers are able to select a person representative to engage in the risk assessment process, such as a health and safety lead, or a member of staff who has a lead activities. In the case of settings that should be questioned after each event and before COVID-19 vulnerable workforce risk assessment tool

All Wales COVID-19 workforce risk assessment tool

The **All Wales COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment** Tool has been developed to support employers to undertake risk assessments for their workforce at risk, regardless of ethnicity. The tool addresses individual risk factors.

Work is underway to adapt this Tool to support the childcare/education workforce. Ahead of that work the Tool can also be used to support workforce risk assessments in childcare settings, including childcare settings and helps to identify and address risks, and mitigate the risks associated with the actions they can to mitigate risks.

Social distancing and mixing in childcare settings

Social distancing is another childcare settings with young children will be harder to maintain than in other settings. Settings should therefore implement the measures that are practicable in their setting, and should be reasonable and adults have, while ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for.

Settings should:

- risk assess approximately to evidence their approach to social distancing which may mean limiting the number of children they can safely care for at any one time and staff where possible and by one a small, consistent group.
- children should be cared for in consistent groups of no more than 5, while ensuring children are safe.
- sessions/ a session that have different circuits of children and different of the day may wish to consider having smaller group sizes to limit the number of children and adults in the setting.
- as far as possible, the same members of staff should be assigned to each group and these should stay the same during the day and on subsequent days.
- keep your staffing arrangements as consistent as possible. Where it is need to use staff from other settings or agency staff, ensure this is agreed and they are fully briefed on the arrangements in place.
- ensure groups of children separate from other groups where practicable.
- stagger interaction between different groups of children and consider the use of outdoor space to ensure that children do not mix with other groups.
- could systems where possible to reduce large groups of children gathering to ensure that only essential visitors attend the setting and encourage parents/carers to use the outdoor areas, parking and outdoor areas to transport or pick up.
- consider staggering children arriving and leaving the childcare setting to avoid congregating at the entrance to the setting.
- consider setting mealtimes in outside spaces for parents to space out for drop off and collection if possible
- ensure that the risk assessment accommodation children those must be demarcated and managed accordingly to keep groups individuals separate per social distancing requirements.
- consider staggering the sharing of food, drink, utensils, and where possible equipment and toys.
- consider how your emergency evacuation procedures might need to be adapted to take account of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- inform parents about the measures you are taking and ask them to help implement them.
- make sure you are aware of the available outdoor space for activities

For children and young people who require additional support – such as children with disabilities or those who need to be cared for in a small group, learning needs or disabilities - work with the local authority as well as parents to decide how best to continue supporting these children to stay healthy.

Use of outdoor space

Childcare should speak as much time outdoors as possible as this can limit transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) and is healthier for children. Outdoor equipment should not be used unless the setting is able to ensure it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children using it, and that multiple groups don't use it simultaneously.

Infection prevention and control measures

The present advice is that it not necessary to screen children's temperatures. The child's parent/carer should check their temperature before bringing their child if they suspect the child is unwell. In any case, parents should be encouraged to keep their child at home if they feel their child is unwell. Staff should of course be vigilant to signs of fever and other symptoms. No child with symptoms should be sent to the provision and all it is vital that parent/carers are encouraged to act accordingly.

Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is essential before and after all direct contact with a child and after touching any surface or item that may be contaminated. Ensure thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and water. An alcohol-based hand rub can be used if hands are not visibly dirty. Ensure hand hygiene is carried out before and after eating, handling food, preparing and wash and water is more effective than the use of hand sanitisers.

Hand washing/sanitising should be done for example:

- on arrival at the setting
- after use of the toilet
- before and after eating
- after handling food or feeding children
- after being in physical contact with other children
- after sneezing or coughing

Encourage staff and children not to touch their face.

For sneezes and coughs - Catch it, bin it, kill it way. Disposable single use tissues should be used to cover the nose and mouth when sneezing, coughing or blowing the nose. Tissues should be disposed of in a bin and hands washed. A separate double bagged waste bin and disposal should be used for tissues emptied. Cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day. Consider how children will be reminded and encouraged to follow these personal hygiene habits through games, songs and reading.

Some children with additional learning needs (ALN), and disabilities may require additional support in following public health messages and in hand hygiene handwashing disinfecting. Staff will know where this is likely to be the case and will be able to provide the support needed.

Stay safe week, better understanding tough and cookery and other meals you can make with leftovers, Hygiene and Nutrition, Food Hygiene, Food poisoning, around hygiene and cleaning in the **Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Providers Guidance** for further information on hygiene.

Wipes and other disinfectant can be used to clean surfaces and equipment between children. Equipment, toys and surfaces, including those in outdoor areas, should be cleaned and disinfected frequently. Cleaning of toys, tables and handles should be cleaned and disinfected frequently in line with **Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Guidance**. Soft toys should be washed in line with manufacturer's instructions. Items such as those with intricate parts, surfaces and equipment and gloves should also be cleaned and disinfected frequently.

Cleaning routines including rotas, dates, and name of person responsible for cleaning should be recorded. Cleaning should be in line with **Public Health Wales guidance** and **Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Guidance** for further information on keeping equipment clean.

We realise that children staff will be required to provide close support for small children, including toileting, **nappy changing and feeding**. In these circumstances, follow **Public Health Wales guidance** and **Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Guidance**.

The guidance on **LinkLearn/LearnIn** in **Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Guidance** should be followed. These also will need to be should change the main unfamiliarities clothes in the childcare setting, and then washing the clothes. Disposable aprons and gloves should be worn when caring for the children. Work clothing should be laundered after each use and employers should consider whether staff have sufficient sets of uniforms to enable this.

Ideally, parents/carers should be encouraged to provide clothes for their children to change into. Parents/carers should be encouraged to provide sanitising solutions or use of ventilation units.

Settings should prevent, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter the premises if they are or displaying any symptoms of coronavirus.

Settings should ensure all visitors spaces are as well ventilated as possible, by opening windows or use of ventilation units.

Face coverings

The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has been clear that there is no evidence to support the widespread wearing of non-medical face coverings in the community. Non-medical face coverings are very recommended where social distancing is difficult, such as on public transport or in shops, but are effective measures such as social distancing and hand hygiene.

Social distancing is not always possible in child care settings, especially with the youngest children and that is why infection prevention and control measures must be increased. No-one who may not able to handle face coverings for health, or other reasons, should be expected to do so. Exceptions include needs or disabilities should wear them as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

Guidance for Health and Social Care made a **statement about face coverings** on 8 June 2020.

This is based on **scientific advice** which also acknowledges that some people such as young children cannot wear these safely.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in childcare settings

The below information is based on current advice. We will keep this under review and update if required based on scientific evidence.

- Gloves and aprons should be used when providing intimate care to a child, including hands-on care such as washing, toileting, or first aid certain activities, including those with close contact.
- Food-related (surgical mask and eye protection should wear in line with risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes. Face shields may be worn instead of goggles.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas or spaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions.
- Handwashing should always be prioritised before putting on and after removing PPE.
- Follow the correct donning/ doffing procedures such as aprons on, unbelievers, gloves, first equipment. PPE Fit tests are not protection are required.

Where there is suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) in a childcare setting

- Gloves, aprons and a fluid resistant surgical mask should be worn if a child or adult is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and cleaning the area/ equipment.
- Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as if the child is coughing or sneezing.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.

Please also refer to the paragraph below if a Child Shows Symptoms of COVID-19 in a childcare setting.

All staff should understand and be confident in PPE in order to ensure the safe use of ensure transmission of infection. Further guidance is available here in the **Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Providers Guidance**.

Childcare settings should not require children to wear face coverings as insomnia/ breathing may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

Face masks and implications for deaf children

The impact of wearing a face mask when caring for a deaf child should be carefully considered, as communication for many deaf people relies in part on being able to see someone's face clearly. The **National Deaf Children's Society** has produced guidance on communication tips, which **childcare staff may find useful in this regard**.

Symptomatic individuals

If a child or a member of their family is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or has continuous cough, high temperature, loss of smell or taste, they must self-isolate in line with **Public Health Wales guidance** and not attend childcare setting. Anyone with symptoms of Covid-19 should self-isolate for 7 days. All other household members must stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days from the date the first person in the household started to have symptoms. Children who are the first person in the house become ill.

Further advice is available here. **Self-isolation: stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus** and *Protect yourself and others from coronavirus*.

If a child shows symptoms of COVID-19 while in a childcare setting

Settings will need to have a clear, written procedure in place for the protection of staff and children if a child develops symptoms while at the setting. Their parents should be contacted to collect their child as soon as possible. If COVID-19 has been, including, lately, must be cleaned and disinfected. Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been. See section on Decontamination and Cleaning below.

In an emergency, call 999 if the child is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Settings should follow their emergency procedures in place, but should not ask the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital where a child is displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell, they do not need to send home anyone else who has been in contact with the person who felt ill. Temperature, loss of smell or taste themselves. They should remain their home. Rationally for 20 minutes after any contact with someone who is unwell and contact their manager to discuss the incident.

Should there be a delay in a parent/ carer collecting a child, childcare providers contact the local environmental health officer via your local council's website.

Test, Trace, Protect

The new Test Trace, Protect strategy published on 13 May sets implemented across Wales from 1 June.

This strategy sets out the next phase of our approach to tackling coronavirus testing people with symptoms in the community, tracing those who have come contact with those who have tested positive for coronavirus and protecting testing, theirs and our community by self-isolating.

Test, Trace, Protect works by:

1. Testing those people who have coronavirus symptoms, asking them to isolate from family, friends and their community whilst being a test and tracing those who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with coronavirus. Those tests are carried out, whilst, known under 5. If you are displaying symptoms, you can apply for a coronavirus test online.
2. Tracing those who have been in close contact with people who have tested positive for the virus, requiring them to take precautions through self-isolation and testing if they develop symptoms themselves.
3. Providing advice and guidance, particularly if the person tests positive for the virus, **symptoms or their contacts are in shielding or other groups or vulnerable groups**.
4. Ensuring that the contacts are not due to coronavirus, and those who and their contacts can get back to their normal routines as soon as possible.

Further information and Q&A Test Trace, Protect **Wales your questions**

Symptomatic individuals in childminder settings

In the case of a childminder who shows symptoms of COVID-19 or whose household members have symptoms of COVID-19, the childminder and household members would need to follow self-isolation guidance.

This would mean the setting would need to close until the childminder and household members have completed their self-isolation, or the childminder is tested and receives a negative result.

- **Information for Individuals Tested for COVID-19 Infection**
- **Self-isolation: stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus**

Vulnerable health groups

Shielding and clinically vulnerable children

For the very clinically of children coronavirus (COVID-19) is a risk stress. Children who have underlying health conditions, including those who have conditions have been advised to undertake specific shielding measures. These children have underlying health conditions which mean they are at higher risk of being seriously ill if they catch coronavirus (COVID-19). Children who are shielding should not attend childcare settings. Shielding measures are in place to protect these children. We do not expect these children to attend settings or schools.

Other clinically vulnerable children who are not shielding will need to be supported to attend school. Their risk of being seriously ill is thought to attend where parent/carers are satisfied that this is safe for them.

Shielding and clinically vulnerable adults

Shielding adults including staff from childcare settings should also follow the shielding guidance and therefore should not attend work. Clinically vulnerable adults are also advised to be very stringent in following social distancing and hygiene measures, and may need to work from home. Shielding information is available here.

Living with a shielding or clinically vulnerable person

If a child or member of their family with someone who is clinically vulnerable or shielding, the child can attend a childcare setting if hygiene and social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and children with additional learning needs or disabilities. If a child is living with someone who is those instances, we do not expect these children to attend a setting, childcare, we would not expect any staff who are current shielding to attend with children who cannot reasonably adhere to social distancing.

More advice can be found in the **guidance on shielding**.

Decontamination and cleaning

Cleaning of the setting must take place as set out in **Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Providers Guidance**. Thorough cleaning and disinfecting must be undertaken of areas that a symptomatic individual has come into contact with.

Except for public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time and are not visibly contaminated with body fluids, all areas that a symptomatic individual has been in should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the **Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Childcare Settings** once the individual has moved from the premises.

Follow advice for cases.

If areas/rooms/ etc. are visibly contaminated with body fluids or, all potentially contaminated high touch surfaces such as toilets, door handles, telephones, grab-rails in corridors and elements.

The clothes and bed sheets/ etc. should be washed in a hot wash in accordance with the symptomatic child should be washed on a hot wash in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Follow **Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Childcare Providers**. Wear disposable gloves if cleaning bodily fluids and a change of clothes in the setting.

Ventilation should be increased when using detergents or laundered, for example, by opening windows or use of ventilation units.

Waste

Waste generated from a symptomatic individual should be double bagged and kept aside for 72 hours before being disposed of in the normal waste. Waste generated from a symptomatic individual who is shielding should be double bagged and kept aside for 72 hours before being disposed of in the normal waste.

upholstered furniture and mattresses, steam cleaning should be used.

Any items that are heavily contaminated with body fluids and cannot be cleaned by washing should be disposed of.

In cleaning the areas where an individual with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) has been, disposable gloves and an apron should be worn as a minimum. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after the gloves and apron have been removed. All staff should understand how to put on/remove PPE (as required by Health and Safety Regulations) and to ensure staff limit the spread of COVID-19. Guidance is available at **appendix 6 of the Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Guidance.**

Waste

Waste from areas where possible cases of COVID-19 have been should be disposed of in accordance with the **Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Guidance**.

Waste should be stored safely and kept away from children. You should not put your waste in communal waste areas until negative test results are known or the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours.

If storage for at least 72 hours is not appropriate, arrange for collection as a Category B infectious waste either by your local waste collection authority if they currently collect your waste or otherwise by a specialist clinical waste contractor. They will supply you with orange or purple clinical waste bags for you to place your bags into so the waste can be sent for appropriate treatment.

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