



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# COVID-19 Resilience Plan for the post-16 sector

Guidance for safe operation from September 2020

Version 2.1

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## Version control

### Version 2.1 (2 September 2020)

Page 6	New section added on face coverings
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### Version 2 (20 August 2020)

Page 4	New paragraph added, indicating that providers should follow the principle of ensuring that robust control measures are in place, so that learners and staff are not exposed to a greater risk of COVID-19 in their learning setting compared to the ongoing background risk of COVID-19 in their local community Link added to the guidance to <a href="#">minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19</a> .
Page 5	Link added to the <a href="#">guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community centres</a> Link added to the latest guidance on <a href="#">social distancing</a>
Pages 6-7	Update and clarifications to sections on shielding and “increased risk” individuals, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarified wording on staff working from home and on medical certificates for staff who should not return to work at this time</li><li>• Clarification around social distancing requirements for learners and staff in “increased risk” groups</li><li>• Clarification that there are no special social distancing requirements for those living with someone at “increased risk” (as opposed to shielding)</li><li>• Added link to the new <a href="#">workforce risk assessment tool</a></li><li>• Link added to <a href="#">guidance</a> from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Guidance for pregnant women and employers.</li></ul>
Page 9	Clarification that Independent Living Skills who were shielding, and who cannot understand and comply with social distancing, should not attend college Clarification regarding blended learning for Independent Living Skills learners at higher levels
Page 10	Added reference to staff not moving between contact groups (unless they have strictly observed social distancing) Added clarification that members of the same household do not need to social distance
Page 12	New category added for HE learners in FE institutions

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## Introduction

This guidance sets out arrangements for the delivery of learning from 1 September 2020 onwards in the further education, work-based learning and adult learning sectors. It is part of our overall COVID-19 [Resilience Plan](#) for post-16 learning; we have also published our [“Renew” strategic framework](#) for post-16 learning from September onward, which sets out overall principles and expectations for the sector.

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, post-16 providers responded rapidly to move learning online and to ensure that learners were supported and safeguarded. From June 2020, limited reopening of colleges and training providers enabled the return of priority groups of learners to face-to-face learning; this included learners who needed to complete vocational assessments, and vulnerable learners.

From September 2020 all post-16 learners are entitled to expect a high-quality learning programme. For most, this will involve a “blended learning” model which combines elements of face-to-face and remote learning; our strategic framework and [blended learning guidance](#) set out more information on the key underpinning principles. The balance of face-to-face and remote learning will vary to meet the diverse needs of learners and their qualifications, with learning providers having flexibility to determine how this is managed in each case.

While remote and online delivery models can be of great benefit in delivering rich learning experiences, face-to-face learning is a vital part of the learner experience. It helps learners to develop team-working and social skills, gives them structure and routine, and ensures that every individual has the support they need to progress towards their learning goals. Learners will vary in their ability to work independently and to stay motivated, so for many that routine will be vital to staying engaged.

We recognise that in planning for the autumn and beyond, learning providers will have to strike a balance between meeting the educational needs of learners, and ensuring the health and safety of both learners and staff. We expect providers to follow the protective measures in this guidance and to prioritise actions that will help to minimise the transmission of COVID-19. For colleges and some other learning providers, this means applying a hierarchy of controls that will be different for different types of learning and learners.

It is not possible, even with the most careful planning, to eliminate the risk of operating learning settings. However, all workplaces and premises open to the public must take all reasonable measures to [minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19](#). In planning their delivery from September, providers should follow the principle of ensuring that robust control measures are in place, so that learners and staff are not exposed to a greater risk of COVID-19 in their learning setting compared to the ongoing background risk of COVID-19 in their local community. Following this guidance, and complying with their statutory health and safety duties, will help providers to identify and mitigate risks as far as they can. Providers should proactively inform learners, parents and staff of the measures they are taking, and be prepared to discuss individual concerns.

Some aspects of this guidance relate specifically to learning which takes place on college campuses, or in other learning centres (including community-based adult learning, “off the job” elements of apprenticeship programmes, and centre-based delivery of employability programmes). In these cases, learning providers have control over the learning environment and are responsible for ensuring that it is safe for learners and staff. For employed learners, including apprentices, whose learning takes place in the workplace, the responsibility for the safety of the learning environment rests with the employer; but the learning provider must satisfy itself of the safety of its staff who are undertaking workplace delivery. Where providers are arranging work placements for learners, they must carry out checks to help ensure the learners’ safety.

## Planning for the safe return of learners and staff

We recognise that a considerable amount of work is needed to plan and prepare for this, to ensure that risks are mitigated and that learners' needs are met. For colleges and those other providers that work on an academic year basis, this may mean a phased return with different start dates for different groups of learners. We expect colleges and providers to have made contact with all learners at the start of the academic year, with all full-time FE learners starting their new term by 14 September.

Each individual learning provider must put a plan in place for a return to face-to-face learning if it is safe and appropriate for the learner to do so. Providers must be able to articulate their approach to managing risks, and how it complies with the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020. Based on subject-level risk assessments, if it is not safe for an individual learner to return to face-to-face learning, the provider must put a plan in place for them to access their programme of learning remotely. We do not expect providers to undertake risk assessments for every individual learner (with the exception of Independent Living Skills learners, as set out in this guidance), but to give learners and staff the opportunity to identify their own risks and to discuss any concerns with their provider.

We expect providers to:

- Undertake and publish a full risk assessment and implement arrangements to manage health and safety risks, in order to ensure that workplaces are COVID-secure<sup>1</sup> before learners and staff are asked to return (see guidance below on risk assessments) and refer to the [Health & Safety Executive's guidance](#));
- Consult with staff, unions and stakeholders;
- Develop communication plans for staff, learners, parents/carers and employers, including clear ways for them to ask questions and raise concerns;
- For campus or centre-based learning, consider how the learning environments and communal areas are prepared to meet the "minimising contact" requirements set out in this guidance;
- For work-based learning, undertake a health and safety review of employer premises to assess whether it is safe for provider staff to undertake visits;
- For adult learning, undertake a health and safety review of community venues used for teaching and learning, following the Welsh Government's [guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community centres](#);
- Consider how learning areas can be ventilated to ensure circulation of fresh air where possible;
- Clearly communicate expected behaviours to learners including [social distancing requirements](#); hygiene requirements such as regular and thorough hand-washing; what to do if they feel unwell; what to do if they have concerns or anxiety; and what would happen if they do not comply with requirements;
- For programmes directly linked to a workplace setting, including apprenticeships, confirm with employers that appropriate hand washing and respiratory hygiene and social distancing arrangements are in place and that they accord with the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020;
- Consider how social distancing and handwashing and respiratory hygiene requirements should be reflected in disciplinary policies and ensure that learners are made aware of any consequences of non-compliance with social distancing requirements;
- Consider travel to and from learning centres, referring to the Welsh Government's [guidance on travel](#) and [guidance on face coverings on public transport](#);
- Determine cleaning and disinfection requirements and issues such as reconnection of water supplies prior to and after re-opening, referring to the UK Government's [guidance on](#)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

[decontamination in non-healthcare settings](#) and the [Health & Safety Executive's guidance on legionella risks](#);

- Consider requirements to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to learners and/or staff in line with the provider's risk assessments (refer to Section 6 below);
- Consider timetabling, including staggered opening hours and break times, as well as breaks for learners and staff during remote learning sessions to avoid screen fatigue; and
- Plan and prepare blended learning programmes, following the key principles in our [Renew framework](#) and [blended learning guidance](#).

## The use of face coverings

Based on [advice](#) from the Technical Advisory Group, providers must undertake risk assessments of their estates to determine if face coverings should be recommended for learners (of all ages) and staff in communal areas and in any dedicated transport. Risk assessments should consider any known increases in local transmission rates, and the extent to which the layout of the college or centre makes it possible to maintain social distancing in communal areas.

Providers should engage with staff, learners, parents/carers and unions in undertaking their risk assessments.

Although face coverings are not required in classrooms/workshops, learners and staff may choose to use face coverings to help minimise the risk to themselves and others, and should be encouraged to do so if this helps them to feel more confident about attending their college or learning setting.

## Safeguarding vulnerable learners and staff

### Extremely vulnerable or 'shielding' learners and staff

'Shielding' means protecting those people who are extremely vulnerable to the complications of COVID-19 because they have particular existing health conditions. People in this category will have received a shielding letter.

The Welsh Government has [announced](#) that from 16 August, there will be a pause to shielding for everyone on the shielding patients list (children and adults) and further [guidance](#) has been issued on what they should do next. This means that:

- Learners who were shielding can return to colleges and training centres (but please note the fourth bullet point below, and also the additional advice in the following paragraph about discussing their health condition, and risks of attendance, with their GP or hospital doctor).
- Employed learners who were shielding can return to work as long as the workplace is COVID-secure, but should continue to work from home if they can.
- Learning provider staff who were shielding can return to work as long as the workplace is COVID-secure, but should carry on working from home if they can. Providers should consider how they can make reasonable adjustments to staff's duties and working arrangements to accommodate this. For those whose work cannot be done from home, safety measures must be put in place as set out in this guidance.
- Extra care must be taken to ensure that learners and staff who were shielding, and those around them, adhere to strict [social distancing guidelines](#) when attending their college or learning centre. Providers should undertake individual risk assessments if necessary and may wish to consider arranging a meeting with the individual to discuss any concerns they may have. The Welsh Government's [workforce risk assessment tool](#) can be used by staff to undertake a self-assessment.

If in doubt about whether their health condition means they should not be attending their workplace or learning provider, staff, learners, parents and carers should take advice from their GP or hospital doctor. They may wish to discuss the risks of attending with their doctor and their provider before making a decision, and this may result in their doctor providing a medical certificate to indicate that they should not return at this time.

### **Learners or staff at 'increased risk'**

Individuals at '[increased risk](#)' are at a greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19. This category includes people aged over 70, those who are pregnant and those who have a range of chronic health conditions.

The advice to this group is the same as it is to the wider population. Learners and staff in this category can attend their college or centre, as long as safety measures are in place as set out in this guidance and the [reasonable measures guidance](#). Extra care must be taken to ensure that these staff and those around them, adhere to strict social distancing guidelines when attending their college or learning centre. Where possible, staff should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to maintain social distancing. Providers may wish to encourage individuals to undertake their own risk assessments, and offer to meet with the individual to discuss their concerns.

If in doubt about whether their health condition means they should not be attending their provider, staff, learners, parents and carers should take advice from their GP or hospital doctor. They may wish to discuss the risks of attending with their doctor and their provider before making a decision.

We would not expect any staff who are at increased risk but who are attending the workplace to be placed with learners who cannot reasonably adhere to the social/physical distancing measures.

Pregnant women are specifically advised to work from home after 28 weeks' gestation. Guidance for both pregnant women and employers is available from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists [website](#).

### **Living with an extremely vulnerable (formerly shielding) person**

If a learner or staff member lives in a household with someone who was previously [shielding](#), they should closely adhere to the social distancing measures when they attend their college or learning centre, and the learner should be able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for learners without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social/physical distancing. In those instances, we do not expect those learners to attend and they should be supported to learn at home. This should, however, be considered in the light of the most current advice around [shielding](#).

### **Learners and staff who are anxious about returning to face-to-face learning**

All other learners and staff should be expected to attend in line with their provider's own attendance policy and staff employment conditions. We would expect learners to be made aware of the requirements of their course when enrolling, including expectations around attendance at college or centres, and that in enrolling they are signing up to attend unless they are unwell.

Providers should bear in mind the potential concerns of learners and staff who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right communications and support in place to address this. This may include those who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is at increased risk, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from COVID-19, including those from BAME backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.



If learners or staff with significant risk factors (or learners' parents or carers) are concerned, we recommend the provider discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk of attending. It may be possible for providers to put arrangements in place for remote learning for some programmes.

Our [workforce risk assessment tool](#) can be used by staff in all education settings, to carry out a self-assessment of known COVID-19 risk factors and to plan mitigating actions.

### **Learners with additional learning needs (ALN)**

Our goal is to ensure that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not disadvantaged compared to their peers.

Learners with ALN will benefit from face-to-face learning and support, and this should be part of their learning programme unless risk assessments indicate that it is not safe for individual learners to return at this time. Where learners with ALN, including those on discrete Independent Living Skills programmes in FE, are unable to benefit from a blended learning approach, providers should plan to deliver a full programme of face-to-face teaching. Providers must make reasonable adjustments to meet learners' needs in line with their statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

In planning for the safe return of learners, providers need to consider that learners with ALN may struggle with:

- Returning to face-to-face learning after a long period away. Providers should work with learners and their families to put suitable arrangements in place to prepare them for the transition, which may include a phased return over the first few weeks of term, visits to college, and social stories.
- Changes to their learning environment or routines, where the provider has made adjustments (for example, by reconfiguring classrooms or reducing furniture or equipment).
- Social distancing. Where possible, learners should be supported and encouraged to maintain distance and not touch staff and other learners. This may not be possible for some learners with complex needs or at all times. Colleges should ensure that learners on ILS programme are kept in their contact groups and avoid mixing with other cohorts. Staff who provide close or contact support to learners should undertake risk assessments and be provided with PPE if the risk assessment shows that it is needed (refer to Section 6 below). Providers should provide guidance and information such as posters in accessible, "easy read" and visual formats, and make this available to learners and parents before they return so that they know what to expect.
- Following hand washing and respiratory hygiene requirements and the "catch it, bin it, kill it, wash your hands" protocol. Providers should consider what frequency of hand washing is best for learners, and incorporate time for this in timetables, with supervision if required. Increasing the frequency and thoroughness of hygiene routines will help to mitigate the risks of contact between learners. Some learners may also require personal care such as help with toileting; in these cases, PPE should be used as set out elsewhere in this guidance.
- Articulating their symptoms if they are feeling unwell.

Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for learners with additional learning needs can visit and provide interventions as usual. These visitors should be given clear [guidance](#) on site safety requirements including social distancing and hand washing and respiratory hygiene.

### **Independent Living Skills**

Our expectation is that learners studying Independent Living Skills (ILS) programmes in colleges should return to a full programme of face-to-face learning from September. This is because this cohort is not sufficiently able to learn remotely without significant family or carer support, and



needs the structure and support that the college environment provides in order to flourish and progress.

We recognise that this brings practical challenges for colleges, given that some ILS learners have underlying health conditions and that it may not be possible to fully maintain social distancing for this group. Learners may have difficulties in understanding and complying with distancing requirements, and some may require personal care such as help with toileting. We expect colleges to do all they can to mitigate and manage risks, in line with this guidance. This may include increasing the number of rooms available for ILS, and adapting the structure of learning programmes in order to help ensure learners' safety (for example, by scheduling activities that involve more physical contact to a later stage of the programme). ILS learners who were previously shielding (see above) should not attend college at this time if they are not able to understand and comply with social distancing requirements.

Where learners are able to follow a blended learning programme, with appropriate support from staff and with the agreement of their parents or carers, colleges can deliver on this basis. This may be possible, for example, for learners on Entry Level 3 programmes. We would expect the majority of the programme to be delivered face-to-face and for learners' progress, engagement and wellbeing to be closely monitored, so that the pattern of delivery can be adjusted if required.

## Protective measures

Learning providers must continue to follow the system of controls set out below.

### *Prevention:*

1. Minimise contact between individuals wherever possible.
2. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 [symptoms](#), or who have someone in their household or extended household who does, do not attend their college or training centre.
3. Clean hands thoroughly, more often than usual.
4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it, wash your hands' approach.
5. Continue [enhanced cleaning](#), including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach.
6. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

### *Response to any infection:*

7. Comply with the Welsh Government's and NHS' [Test, Trace, Protect strategy](#) and under GDPR rules staff and parents, carers, guardians will need to be informed of the learning providers' obligations under the TTP strategy.
8. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

## Prevention

### 1. Minimise contact between individuals wherever possible.

We know that minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces the transmission of COVID-19. The diversity of the post-16 sector, in terms of the learning environments, provision and learners involved, means that in order to reintroduce face-to-face teaching a tailored, risk-based

approach needs to be adopted; this is why our guidance differs from the operational guidance for the schools sector, but we have aligned it as far as possible for similar groups of learners. A key aim of this guidance is to ensure that there is clarity on how providers may resume face-to-face teaching for different groups of learners.

We have worked with Public Health Wales to outline requirements for different types of learning and groups of learners, as set out below. These reflect the higher transmission rates for COVID-19 in adults compared to children; the need to ensure parity between similar types of learning in different settings; the practicalities of limiting contact between individuals; and the relative risks of learners and staff moving between different settings. The overarching principle to apply across all groups is to reduce the number of contacts between individuals.

Outside classrooms and other teaching environments, colleges and other providers should avoid large gatherings and must apply the required social distancing measures of two metres. This applies to communal areas such as refectories, sports halls and reception areas. Staff should also maintain social distancing in their interactions with one another, including in staff meetings and non-teaching environments. If this is not possible, then appropriate [mitigating measures](#) should be put in place such as screens, reorganising work areas, staggering start and finish times, and/or industry-standard PPE. This is because staff-to-staff transmission risks widespread transmission throughout the institution, putting colleagues at risk.

Staff are required to strictly observe social distancing from learners and their colleagues at all times, irrespective of whether they move between different contact groups.

Individuals who are part of the same household or extended household do not need to social distance from one another.

#### **(a) Full-time learners in FE colleges**

This cohort of learners, including those studying A level, vocational and Access programmes, should be assigned to contact groups. This approach is consistent with that for schools, and should help colleges to ensure that the experience for young people in colleges is equivalent to that in schools.

As learners will be studying a number of different subjects, it is likely that clusters in many colleges will be large – potentially the size of the entire cohort studying AS levels and A2 levels respectively on a campus. Nonetheless, restricting contact to within A level cohorts and minimising contact with other learners and staff will help to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

For vocational programmes, colleges must comply with any appropriate [workplace guidance](#) for the relevant industry to ensure that their workplaces are COVID-secure when planning and managing delivery. In particular, for “close contact” industries like hairdressing or care, where learners require physical contact with clients or with one another in order to learn skills and carry out assessments, industry-standard PPE must be worn. Learners must have training on the safe use of PPE.

Social distancing remains the most effective way of reducing transmission, and therefore even within contact groups, where distancing of two metres can be achieved through classroom reconfiguration, it should be implemented.

Colleges do not need to differentiate their approach for groups aged 16-19 and those aged 19 and over. However, older learners joining groups which are predominantly made up of 16-19 year olds, such as A levels, are likely to readily adhere to social distancing requirements and may wish to use face coverings in order to help protect themselves from infection, and they should be supported in doing this.

If someone within a contact group has [symptoms](#) of or is tested positive for COVID-19 and the group has not been observing social distancing at all times, all members of the group (including members of staff) will be defined as “contacts” for the purposes of the [Test, Trace, Protect](#)

strategy and contact tracing, and will be asked to [self-isolate](#). Therefore no-one (staff or learner) who has symptoms should attend, but stay at home, self-isolate and apply for a [test](#) as soon as possible. As more than one contact group may have used the same classroom (at different times), there may be broader implications in terms of closing areas for deep cleaning and wider contact tracing.

**(b) Part-time learners and employed learners on college- or centre-linked programmes, including apprentices**

Learners in this category will have a wider range of contacts with colleagues and customers, which are beyond the providers' control. This means that the contact group model is not sufficient to control the risk of transmission.

Providers must undertake risk assessments at subject level and put appropriate safety requirements such as PPE, recognising the increased risks around delivering "close contact" subjects. Social distancing should still be used as the primary control measure where this is possible in addition to all reasonable measures to [minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19](#).

Learners who are interacting with clients or in a "hands-on" way with one another to practice techniques, and learners who spend time on employer premises, are at greater risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 and this should be reflected in risk assessments and ensuing actions.

Colleges must comply with any appropriate [workplace guidance](#) for the relevant industry when planning and managing delivery as well as the reasonable measures guidance.

Assessors may undertake workplace visits to apprentices, subject to the risk assessment requirements set out in this guidance. Assessors must maintain a two-metre distance from other people during visits.

**(c) Adult learners in community settings**

Adult learners must maintain social distancing of two metres. Where this is not possible because of insufficient space or other constraints, face-to-face learning should not resume at this time.

**(d) Learners on Independent Living Skills programmes**

Learners in this group are likely to interact with relatively high numbers of teaching and support staff, and the nature of the cohort and of their learning means that distancing is unlikely to be an option. Colleges should operate contact groups for ILS learners and should avoid them mixing with learners from other cohorts at this time. Colleges should consider undertaking individual risk assessments for learners to identify their specific health and safety risks and needs, and should liaise with parents and carers to help them decide whether learners with complex health needs should return to college at this time. Separate [guidance](#) is available for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, (which although is for a different age group), provides information on managing social distancing and PPE in the context of people with additional needs.

**(e) Traineeships**

For traineeship learners who are fully centre-based, providers can operate a contact group model as set out in (a) above.

Traineeship work placements that have been disrupted as a result of COVID-19, and new placements, can commence from 1 August, subject to up-to-date health and safety and risk assessments being carried out. The provider must be assured the workplace is safe and the employer is complying with regulations and relevant sector workplace and reasonable measures guidance. The employer's safe working practice policy should be considered as part of health and safety checks. The provider should make sure the learner understands safe working practices around social distancing and hand washing and respiratory hygiene, and that they know to inform the provider if they have any concerns about safety in the workplace.

Under no circumstances should a learner, or an employer, feel under any pressure to commence a work placement if they have health, safety or well-being concerns. As part of the regular progress review that the provider will hold with each learner, the provider should check

the learner's understanding of safe working practices, and where possible the work placement provider should be involved in the review.

Trainees whose programme comprises a mix of centre-based and work-based provision should maintain social distancing of two metres, both in their centre and workplace. Where this is not possible, and before commencing centre based activity, providers must undertake a risk assessment and put mitigating measures in place accordingly. Work placements must not be arranged where the provider cannot meet these requirements.

#### **(f) Higher education students in FE institutions**

FE institutions should apply the same approach to their HE students as set out for other groups of learners in this guidance, ie contact groups for full-time learners and social distancing for part-time learners.

For all groups of learners, enrichment and extra-curricular activities can be delivered where that is possible within the guidance on minimising contact. For activities such as sports academies the relevant governing body and Sports Wales guidance should be consulted and followed. There is also [guidance](#) issued by Welsh Government on a phased return to sport, recreation and leisure activities.

## **2. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household or extended household who does, do not attend their college or training centre.**

Under no circumstances should learners or staff attend their college, training centre or workplace if they:

- feel unwell and have any of the identified COVID-19 [symptoms](#). If this is the case, they must [self-isolate](#) immediately and book a COVID-19 [test](#); or they have tested positive to COVID-19
- live in a household with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19, or has tested positive for COVID-19 (in which case they should be aware of the need to self-isolate immediately)
- have been asked to self-isolate by the NHS Wales [Test, Trace, Protect](#) service.

Providers should have a clear escalation policy and procedures in place if learners or staff begin to show symptoms of COVID-19 while at their college or centre. These need to be fully understood by staff, learners (where able) and parents/carers.

Surfaces that learners or staff with symptoms have come into contact with should be carefully and thoroughly cleaned according to this guidance.

Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home and [self-isolate](#) while also making arrangements to be tested. If the test result is negative the individual with symptoms will not be required to complete the full self-isolation period. Anyone who lives with someone displaying COVID-19 symptoms, or is in an extended household arrangement with someone displaying symptoms must undertake a self-isolation period from the day the first person became ill or until the outcome of the COVID-19 test is known if that test result is negative. The Welsh Government's [self-isolation guidance](#) sets out the periods of isolation required for those with possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19, and their household members.

## **3. Clean hands thoroughly, more often than usual**

Washing hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and running water or hand sanitiser is an effective way of minimising the risk of contracting COVID-19. Providers should, via messages, signage and notices, remind all learners of the need to clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating. More information on correct handwashing procedure is included in the social distancing [guidance](#).

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Points to consider and implement include:

- whether the site has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all learners and staff can clean their hands regularly
- supervision of the use of hand sanitiser given the risks around ingestion. Learners with complex needs should continue to be helped to clean their hands properly
- building these routines into the organisational culture, supported by behaviour expectations and helping ensure everyone understands the need to follow them.

#### **4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it, wash your hands' approach**

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it, wash your hands' approach continues to be very important, so providers must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available to support learners and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, providers must ensure that learners with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all learners understand that this is now part of how your provider operates.

Some learners with complex needs may find it difficult to maintain good respiratory hygiene effectively. This should be considered in risk assessments in order to support these learners and the staff working with them, and is not, on its own, a reason to deny these learners face-to-face education.

#### **5. Continue enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach**

Providers should follow the latest [cleaning guidance](#) for non-healthcare settings. Points to consider and implement include:

- putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:
  - more frequent cleaning of rooms/shared areas after they have been used by different groups
  - frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
  - consideration of providing cleaning products and encouraging learners to clean their own desks before and after use
- where possible, providing separate toilets for different contact groups. Where this is not possible, using hand sanitiser before entering the toilet and ensuring toilets are cleaned regularly will help. Learners must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet.

#### **6. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**

It is important to remember that social/physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (catching a cough or sneeze in a tissue or covering the mouth and nose with an elbow or sleeve then washing your hands) remain strongly evidenced to be the most effective ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus. There is therefore no need to use PPE when undertaking routine educational activities in colleges or centres. Exceptions are set out below.

*Suspected cases of COVID-19*

- Gloves, aprons and a fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn if someone becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care.
- Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when [cleaning](#) the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.

#### *Intimate care*

- Gloves and aprons should continue to be used when providing intimate care to a learner. This can include personal, hands-on care such as washing, toileting, or first aid and certain clinical procedures such as assisted feeding.
- Fluid-resistant surgical masks and eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
- Gloves, fluid repellent gowns, FFP3 masks and eye protection are indicated when undertaking aerosol generating care procedures such as suction.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions.

#### *Vocational learning*

- As set out in Section (1) above, providers should carry out risk assessments for vocational and work-based delivery and should use appropriate industry-standard PPE to help reduce the risk of infection. This will be necessary for “close contact” industries in particular, and for employed learners such as apprentices. Learners and staff must have training on the safe use of PPE for their industry.

The use of PPE by staff within providers should be based on a clear assessment of risk, taking into account needs of the individual learner. Following any risk assessment, where the need for PPE has been identified, it should be readily available and provided. Further information has been provided by the [Health and Safety Executive](#). All staff should understand how to put on or remove PPE in the right order, safely dispose of the waste and use correct hand hygiene steps to reduce the risk of onward transmission of infection. In any case, hand washing should always be practiced before putting on and after removing PPE.

## Response to any infection

### **7. Engage with the Test, Trace, Protect strategy**

The [Test, Trace, Protect strategy](#) published on 13 May was 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 into close contact with people who have tested positive for coronavirus, and protecting family, friends and our community by self-isolating.

Test, Trace, Protect works by:

- testing those people who have coronavirus symptoms, asking them to isolate from family, friends and from their community, or requiring that they, their household and extended household self-isolate while they take a test and wait for the result. People with symptoms can apply for a test for themselves, or someone in their household with symptoms can apply for a



test. This includes adults and children including the under 5s. Information and [guidance](#) for staff and how to apply for a test can be found [the Welsh Government website](#).

- tracing those people who have been in close contact with people that have tested positive for the virus, requiring them to take precautions through [self-isolation](#). Further information on contact tracing and how it operates can be found [on the Welsh Government website](#).
- ensuring that if the symptoms are not due to coronavirus, individuals and their contacts can get back to their normal routines as soon as possible
- providing advice and [guidance](#), particularly if the person who has symptoms or their contacts are in the 'shielding group' or the [increased risk](#) group.

By reducing transmission in our communities, and quickly identifying and isolating those at risk of developing COVID-19 following their close contact with a positive individual (e.g. a known contact or family member) we will support the wider opening of schools, colleges and early years settings.

Providers should reinforce these messages and in particular, remind all those who show any of the virus symptoms to self-isolate immediately and book a test. Those living with someone showing symptoms should also self-isolate.

In the event of a positive test, a contact tracer will contact the person tested to help identify potential contacts. A second contact tracer will then get in touch with those contacts and advise them to self-isolate. These people will only be required to take a test if they develop symptoms.

A contact is defined as someone who has had **close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19**, specifically:

- within one metre of the person who has tested positive and has been coughed on, had a face-to-face conversation, had skin-to-skin physical contact, or been in other forms of contact within one metre for one minute or longer;
- within two metres of the person testing positive for more than 15 minutes
- having travelled in a vehicle with the person who has tested positive.

Where staff have maintained social/physical distancing rules and adhered to hand washing and respiratory hygiene measures during work and where required have used personal protective equipment (PPE) or worked behind an appropriate screen or partition, they would not be regarded as part of a contact tracing exercise for these purposes. It is important, however, to remember that even where a provider has all of the appropriate controls in place, employees may not always remember incidences where they have failed to follow these controls.

A positive test on site therefore does not require closure of that site. The process of testing and contact tracing is part of the 'new normal' and where providers follow these guidelines carefully, there is no cause for alarm. The latest information can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#).

The Welsh Government has published [guidance](#) on keeping records on staff, customers and visitors, in order to help track COVID-19 infections and contain outbreaks. This applies to certain sectors including hospitality, tourism and leisure, close contact services, and facilities provided by local authorities. Colleges and training providers are not required to keep these records, but the guidance **does** apply to some services run by colleges which are used by the public, such as hairdressers, beauty salons, leisure facilities and restaurants, which should follow the sector guidance to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

## **8. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice**



Building upon the Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales (2020), Public Health Wales has provided [specific advice](#) regarding the investigation and management of clusters and outbreaks of COVID-19 in educational settings. The advice outlines what steps should be taken to protect individuals and communities where outbreaks are occurring, as well as reducing spread to other communities.

## Provider operations

### Risk assessments

Providers must take all [reasonable measures](#) to protect staff, learners and others from COVID-19 within their sites.

As part of planning for full return in the autumn term, it is a legal requirement that providers should revisit and update their risk assessments by building on the learning to date and any practices they have already developed. This will enable them, to consider the additional risks and control measures to put in place for delivery in the autumn term.

Individual campuses, centres and specialist areas may require their own risk assessments, or a COVID-19 focused update to existing risk assessments. Risk assessments should be published either on the provider's website, staff intranet or shared drive.

For guidance on carrying out risk assessments, see the Health & Safety Executive's website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

Learning providers are subject to and must follow the requirements of the [Management of Health and Safety in the Workplace Regulations 1999](#).

For learners, including apprentices, whose learning takes place in the workplace, the responsibility for the safety of the learning environment rests with the employer; but the learning provider must satisfy itself of the safety of its staff who are undertaking workplace delivery. Apprenticeship providers must undertake a health and safety review of employer premises to determine how assessors can safely undertake visits, and must confirm with employers that appropriate hygiene and social distancing arrangements are in place that accord with the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020. Where providers are arranging work placements on behalf of learners they must carry out a risk assessment and assure themselves that the workplace is COVID-secure.

Learning providers should work with staff, parents/carers, learners and employers so that there is clarity on what and how the revised arrangements will work in practice and have active arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

- effective;
- working as planned; and
- updated appropriately, considering any issues identified and changes in public health advice.

### Workplace learning

The latest Welsh Government guidance for staying safe at work is available [here](#). This includes guidance for some specific industries, which is being expanded and updated as more sectors reopen for business.

Workplace assessors visiting employers should familiarise themselves with any guidance for their sectors, to ensure that they understand what employers should be doing to keep their staff safe.

If a learner reports concerns about their safety in their workplace, or if an assessor observes unsafe practices (such as poor hygiene, or failure to observe social distancing in enclosed spaces),

the provider should escalate these concerns to the employer. Assessors and other staff involved in workplace delivery must **not** be required to visit workplaces if the provider is not sure that they are safe.

Learners or assessors can report an issue relating to protecting people from COVID-19 in the workplace to the Health & Safety Executive:

- on 0300 790 6787 (lines are open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 8pm)
- online using their [working safely enquiry form](#)

## **Transport**

We have published separate guidance for further education institutions on planning and managing dedicated college transport for learners, available [here](#).

The latest advice and guidance in relation to public transport is available [here](#) and is regularly updated. Guidance on the use of face coverings on public transport is available [here](#).

Local authorities are required to assess the travel needs of learners who are aged under 19 in their area. This includes those who they are legally required to provide transport for and those for whom they may wish to provide discretionary transport when assessing travel needs. An authority is also required to have regard to:

- the needs of disabled learners and learners with learning difficulties;
- any particular needs of learners who are 'looked after' or formerly looked after by a local authority;
- the age of a learner; and
- the nature of the route that the learner is expected to take between home and the places where they receive education or training. In assessing the travel needs of learners, local authorities must take into account the fact that travel arrangements they make in light of the assessment must not cause unreasonable levels of stress, take an unreasonable amount of time or be unsafe.

## **Contact**

Any questions or comments on this guidance should be sent to [FEAD.COVID-19@gov.wales](mailto:FEAD.COVID-19@gov.wales).