

Guidance on Care & Repair Operations and Personal Protective Equipment

This Guidance sets out the baseline operational requirements for Care & Repair frontline staff and their use of Personal Protective Equipment.

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Purpose of the Guidance

Care & Repair working to support vulnerable older people, the NHS and Social Care

1. As a publicly funded service, working pan Wales across the housing, health and social care sectors, Care & Repair continues to provide essential support to vulnerable older people in the community. In many circumstances, we are still visiting and working in our clients' homes to help the NHS, Social Care and vulnerable older people cope with the Coronavirus pandemic.
2. Care & Repair Cymru is working with Care & Repair Agencies, developing safe working practices and supporting them to fund and procure appropriate PPE.

Handy-persons and tradespeople.

3. To help increase numbers of hospital beds for COVID-19 admissions, the NHS in Wales changed to a new “discharge to assess” way of working, where the emphasis is on rapid discharge, followed by providing support around the individual after discharge. Many older people need support in their own homes before and/or after hospital discharge, and essential to this is undertaking small works, adaptations, and other work that helps keep them independent, safe and well in their own home. Care & Repair is a part of the response to this, and our handy-persons and skilled operatives are still in homes and communities helping with safe hospital discharges.

4. We are also continuing to support older people who may face crisis problems, such as their heating and hot water breaking down, gas leaks, plumbing problems or electrical safety concerns. For these and other vital urgent works, we are still here, carrying out, or enabling and facilitating essential works for older people with nowhere else to turn.

Hospital to a Healthier Home (H2HH) Caseworkers

5. Our H2HH Caseworkers are working with hospitals and patients to support quicker safe discharges, linking with Care & Repair handy-persons and tradespeople to ensure essential works are completed in client homes.
6. Depending on locations, our H2HH Caseworkers are working either remotely to perform this role, using links they have set up in hospitals with NHS and other staff in discharge hubs and teams, or in some cases through attending discharge planning meetings in hospitals, alongside other health and community staff responsible for hospital discharge planning.

Caseworkers, Technical Officers and project staff (Managing Better & Attic Project)

7. Older people and other vulnerable groups who are staying home, self-isolating due to symptoms and shielding because they are an “at risk” group need our help to stay connected and supported with essentials such as food shopping, prescription medication, or just not feeling even more lonely and isolated. Many of our Caseworkers all over Wales are directly providing these services, or signposting to others, in addition to working remotely on our normal business of taking new enquiries, making assessments of housing need, and ensuring our clients are claiming all their entitlements.
8. From July 2020, we are increasing the amount of work we do in people’s homes and through face to face visits. Separate guidance for Care & Repair Caseworkers and Technical Officers has been produced to ensure that as an organisation across Wales, we work consistently and safely when we visit people in their homes to help them with essential work. The definition of essential work includes the situations described above- hospital discharges, urgent and vital repairs, but in addition from July, includes preventative work such as housing adaptations, falls prevention, or work that supports health and well-being such as improved heating and property insulation.

Scope of the Guidance

Keeping our staff and clients safe

9. To support our Teams to undertake their work safely, and to give our clients comfort and peace of mind that we are not putting them at risk, we have developed the guidelines contained in the table below, about appropriate

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be used in a range of different situations.

10. Our guidelines comprise:

- a. **Minimum standard of PPE**, having regard to:
 - i. **joint guidance** issued on 2nd April 2020 by a number of organisations including Public Health Wales (PHW), Public Health England (PHE) and the NHS. These [PHW/NHS guidelines](#) cover the direct care or visit to individuals in their own home.
 - ii. **supplementary advice note** published by PHW on 20th April: [*Housing, health, social care and support settings: Examples to inform implementation of the updated Infection Prevention and Control guidance – COVID-19*](#)

Care & Repair has adopted the minimum standards in the following tables as applying to all visits to individuals in their own homes where there is a confirmed or suspected case or for individuals who are in the extremely vulnerable group or where any member of the household is in the extremely vulnerable group undergoing shielding.

- b. **Optional additional/alternative PPE** - each individual Care & Repair Agency may wish to consider locally, and can adopt locally all or just some of the additional PPE.

11. In addition to 10a. and/or 10b. above, our Care & Repair Guidelines include the following operational practices, which have regard to the guidance from PHW and the NHS, referred to above, and which are expanded upon below the tables:

- **Risk assessment and triaging** relating to the properties and clients we are providing services for
- Correct **social/physical distancing**
- Good **general hygiene and sanitation** practices
- Correct **equipment cleaning** processes,
- **Training**
- **Good practice in PPE disposal**

12. Using these practices, Care & Repair is doing everything we can to keep everyone safe and prevent spread of coronavirus.

Minimum PPE		Disposable gloves	Disposable plastic apron	Surgical mask	Fluid resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask	Eye/face protection ¹
Setting	Context					
Client's own home - internal	Working inside properties where any member of the household has symptoms (i.e. is a possible or confirmed case) ²	✓ single use	✓ single use	✗	✓ single use	✓ single use
Client's own home - internal	Working inside properties where client is in extremely vulnerable group or where a member of the household is within the extremely vulnerable group undergoing shielding ³	✓ single use	✗	✓ single use	✗	✗

¹ This may be single use or re-usable face/eye protection and may be full-face visor or goggles

² Prior risk assessment questions to be asked to ascertain, based on assessment of symptoms being shown

³ Shielding and extremely vulnerable group definitions can be found in government guidance

Optional Additional PPE		Disposable gloves	Disposable plastic apron with disposable over-sleeves or disposable coveralls	Disposable foot covers	Surgical mask	Fluid resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask	Eyeface protection ¹
Setting	Context						
Clients' own home-internal	Working inside properties where any member of the household has symptoms (i.e. is a possible or confirmed case) ²	✓ single use	✓ single use	✓ single use	✗	✓ single use	✓ single use
Clients own home-internal	Working inside properties where client is in extremely vulnerable group or where a member of the household is within the extremely vulnerable group undergoing shielding ³ or where status of client is unknown	✓ single use	✓ single use	✓ single use	✓ single use	✗	✓ single use
Outside clients homes	Undertaking external works, or delivering shopping or medication to front door	✓ single use	✗	✗	✓ single use	✗	✗

¹ This may be single use or re-usable face/eye protection and may be full-face visor or goggles

² Prior risk assessment questions to be asked to ascertain, based on assessment of symptoms being shown

³ Shielding and extremely vulnerable group definitions can be found in government guidance

Specific operational practices

Training and Instruction

13. Depending on the type of work undertaken, PPE will need to meet an accredited standard and may require supplementary instruction or training to be effective.

Risk assessment and triaging

14. Infection Prevention and Control guidance highlights the need for a risk assessment approach to implementation for settings where direct care is being delivered. The Supplementary Advice Note issued by PHW on 20th April 2020 states that “other community settings will need to interact with clients/service users and in order to protect their staff, all organisations are advised to undertake and document appropriate individual and organisational level risk assessments in relation to the implementation of the updated guidance”.

15. Each Care & Repair Agency will undertake and document individual risk assessments (triage) by calling clients ahead of every visit to discuss whether any symptoms or possible symptoms are present. Organisational business continuity plans/ risk assessments will also be undertaken by every Care & Repair Agency, and these national Care & Repair Guidelines will form a part of the risk assessment and continuity plan.

Social Distancing

16. Public Health Wales and NHS guidance is clear that social distancing is the key requirement to reduce spread of infection. This will be applied in our client's homes in all cases.

17. Wherever we can control the environment through adhering to a minimum of two metres distancing, we should do so, ensuring that the need for this is explained fully to clients at all times.

18. Where a client is in the extremely vulnerable category, and/or shielding; or where they or a member of their household is showing any symptoms, all members of the household will be asked to locate in a separate part of the house to where work is being carried out by our team.

Hygiene, hand sanitiser and cleaning practices

19. Use good hygiene procedures before and after removing PPE by washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

20. Hair should be tied back off the face to reduce the risk of touching the face.

General work area sanitation

21. Wipe down and clean the general work area on arrival and after leaving the client's property with detergent and hot water, or appropriate sanitising wipes.

Vehicles, tools and equipment

22. The following biosecurity rules should be observed:

- a. Do not take any unnecessary items into the client's home - e.g. paperwork, work bags, and tools not being used.
- b. Sanitise tools and equipment after every internal use, either using detergent and water, or sanitising wipes.
- c. Wipe down key contact points in vehicles regularly with detergent and water, or sanitising wipe when not available. Key points of contact include door handles, and steering wheels.
- d. Re-usable PPE e.g. visors or goggles to be placed inside a small bag, and washed as soon as possible with detergent and warm water, immersing in water, rubbing gently, rinsing in running water, before drying.
- e. Clean all mobile devices regularly

Safe disposal of PPE

23. Once used, disposable PPE items should be double-bagged, labelled with the date and time, removed from site, and carefully disposed of by Care & Repair. Disposal in general collection after at least 72 hours of bagging the last item of PPE is acceptable.

Key dates

24. This is a live, working document. Care & Repair Cymru will continue to review any updates in PPE guidance from WG, PHW and the NHS to ensure these guidelines are as specific and robust as possible.

- Date of introduction : 1 June 2020
- Date of review : 3 July 2020
- Date of next review : August 2020

Additional Care & Repair guidance

25. This guidance is supported by the following Care & Repair documents:

- ▶ **Care & Repair clients' guide for workers in their homes -**
www.careandrepair.org.uk/files/8915/9413/7111/Client_guide_for_workers_in_their_homes_July_2020.pdf
- ▶ **Contractors' guide for working in Care & Repair client homes -**
www.careandrepair.org.uk/files/3015/9413/8528/Contractor_guide_for_safe_working_in_client_homes_July_2020.pdf
- ▶ **Guidance to Caseworkers & Technical Officers on visiting clients' homes and community locations**