

## **Wearing face coverings: a guide for Trust colleagues working in non-patient facing roles, settings or areas**

This guide is for colleagues who work in **non-patient facing roles, settings or areas**. In line with government advice, we are asking colleagues to wear a face mask or face covering in all non-patient facing roles, settings or areas.

[Guidance about the use of fluid resistant face masks](#) has been developed for colleagues working in patient facing roles in hospital and community settings. That separate guidance should be read in conjunction with this guide.

### **What does this guidance mean?**

Colleagues who work in non-patient facing roles, settings or areas must wear a face mask or face covering whilst on Trust premises, including outdoors, unless medically exempt.

In addition to wearing a face mask or face covering whilst in non-patient facing settings, colleagues must also continue to follow social distancing, hand washing and room occupancy guidelines.

Colleagues do not need to wear a face covering in non-patient facing roles, settings or areas, if:

- You are working in an office alone – however if someone else comes into the office, you must put on a face mask or covering and you must also do this as soon as you leave the office space
- You are outdoors whilst maintaining social distance
- You are medically exempt from wearing a face mask
- Whilst consuming food and drink.

The Trust will provide Type 2r fluid resistant masks to colleagues who require a face covering to avoid any confusion, but we are supportive of those who choose to wear a face covering of their own choosing in a non-clinical setting.

For colleagues who identify that they may be exempt from wearing a face mask, we would like to explore this with you in order to make sure that you and your colleagues are adequately protected. Please talk to your line manager if you believe you should be exempt.

## What is a face covering?

Face coverings are not the same as the fluid resistant masks (sometimes known as surgical masks) used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment (PPE). These should continue to be used by colleagues who need them to protect against risks in their workplace.

Please see the Trust's [guide on the use of face masks](#) for colleagues and patients coming into hospital and community based settings for more information on PPE and face masks.

A face covering is a loose mask, made from material that can be washed and re-used. Pictorial examples are included below as a guide, although there are many different templates available for creating your own face covering.



The government has issued guidance that can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering> if you are interested in creating your own face covering.

Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of two or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly. For example, primary age children unassisted, or those with respiratory conditions

## Are face coverings effective?

Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering protects those around you. If you are infected with COVID-19 but have not yet developed symptoms, wearing a face covering may provide some protection for those you come into close contact with. There is also some evidence that a face covering protects the wearer too – see a summary of this [Oxford University COVID-19 study](#).

**Face coverings do not replace social distancing.** If a person has symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, and/or high temperature, and/or loss of, or change in, your

normal sense of smell or taste) they, and their household must isolate at home. Wearing a face covering does not change this.

It is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off if they are to be effective.

Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. It is important to remove face coverings correctly and washing your hands after handling or touching a used face covering.

Please see further guidance below about the use of face coverings.

### **What about our patients?**

Colleagues working in non-hospital or non-patient settings should not be seeing any patients. Please therefore refer to guidance developed for colleagues who work in **hospital and community settings** to access guidance for patients.

### **Guidance regarding use of a face covering**

#### **Putting the face covering on:**

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Don't put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the face covering – if you do wash your hands.

#### **Removing the face covering:**

- Wash your hands before removing your face covering
- Only touch the ends of your face covering
- Fold the outside corners together
- Place the covering in the washing machine or bleach as below
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing.

#### **Washing guidance:**

Face coverings should be washed with your regular laundry using a regular laundry detergent and the warmest setting for the cloth used.

If washing by hand, the face covering should be soaked in a bleach solution for five minutes and then rinsed thoroughly with cool or warm water. Some materials will not be suitable to be washed in bleach.

The face covering must be completely dry before reusing.

**Health and safety advice:**

If you are wearing a mask or face covering for long periods, please note the following advice:

- Take breaks more frequently – change your mask or face covering and get some fresh air
- Drink more water and make sure you stay hydrated
- Moisturise your skin.

**How do I get a face covering?**

The Trust is currently looking at sourcing fabric face coverings for outpatients. Depending on availability, there may be supplies available for colleagues working in non-clinical areas. We will update colleagues shortly on when face coverings will be available and how they will be distributed.

In the meantime, guidance about how to make a face covering can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>.

The Trust will provide Type 2r surgical masks to colleagues who require a face covering.

**Social distancing and good infection control is the most important protection we all have.**

**Everyday guidance:**

- Keep your social distance of 2 metres wherever possible
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.

We will continue to update our website to include visiting information as well as sharing content on social media to promote messages to the public.

**10 September 2020**