|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Frequently Asked Questions for Workplaces** |
| **Summary introduction** | In response to local needs, this frequently asked questions (FAQS) paper has been prepared to collate and respond to common questions asked likely to be asked by business proprietors and cases  This is not an exclusive or exhaustive list of questions and/ or responses, but has been produced based on information available at the time of writing. The information will be updated periodically and will remain subject to change as more timely and relevant information, advice and guidance becomes made available superseeding previous information.  To be read in conjunction with HR FAQs and Asthma FAQs |
| **Audience** | Workplace setting but **excluding** schools, nurseries and other childcare facilities, faith settings, hostels |
| **Date of issue** | 15th June 2020 |
| **Effective from** | 15th June 2020 |
| **Review date** | To be reviewed fortnightly (or sooner in response to local needs or government legislative changes) |
| **Updated** | 06/10/20 |

| **Ref.** | **Question** | **Response(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **How can I ensure my business is covid-19 compliant?** | Businesses and organisations will face stricter rules to make their premises COVID Secure (from 28 September):   * A wider range of leisure and entertainment venues, services provided in community centres, and close contact services will be subject to the COVID-19 Secure requirements in law and fines of up to £10,000 for repeated breaches. * Employers must not knowingly require or encourage someone who is being required to self-isolate to come to work. * Businesses must remind people to wear face coverings where mandated.   It is essential that all settings carry out a risk assessment. The assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus so that sensible measures can be put in place to minimise employees and other persons visiting workplaces.  The Health and Safety executive have produced guidance on conducting a risk assessment. This is the link to risk assessments during the coronavirus outbreak  <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>  This is the link to general risk assessment guidance from the HSE: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>  You will also find some useful information on the GOV.UK website at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-reopening> which by answering a few questions relating to your business will help you identify the measures you need to implement to comply with social distancing measures.  Further specific business type advice can be found at  Further guidance can be found for  Working Safely at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely>  Construction and Outdoor work at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>  Education and childcare establishments at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>  Factories, plants and warehouses at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/factories-plants-and-warehouses>  Offices and contact centres at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>  Other people’s homes at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>  Restaurants offering takeaway and deliveries at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>  Keeping workers and customers safe during covid-19 in restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb96e8e86650c278b077616/Keeping-workers-and-customers-safe-during-covid-19-restaurants-pubs-bars-takeaways-230620.pdf>  Shops and branches at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>  Keeping workers and clients safe during covid-19 in close contact services at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ef2889986650c12970e9b57/Keeping-workers-and-clients-safe-during-covid-19-close-contact-services-230620.pdf>  Vehicles at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles> |
|  | **Health and Safety at Work legislation is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in my business. How do I contact them for further advice**? | The HSE can be contacted   * by telephone on 0300 790 6787, or * completing an online form at <https://hsegov.microsoftcrmportals.com/workingsafelyenquiries/> |
|  | **Is there any information, such as posters, I can download to display in my workplace to reinforce social distancing?** | Dudley Council has prepared a number of posters to display for customers and staff which can be found at <https://www.dudleybusinessfirst.org.uk/reopening-your-business/>  Up to date information for businesses can also be found at <https://www.dudleybusinessfirst.org.uk/> |
|  | **I understand the Council has an COVID-19 Outbreak Plan. Where can I see a copy of the plan?** | You can view a copy of the plan at <https://www.dudleyhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/localoutbreakcontrolplan> |
|  | **What will happen if there is an outbreak in my workplace?** | An outbreak control team will be formed jointly between the local authority and PHE to help an employer manage an outbreak. Workplaces in which the relevant working safely guidance has not been adequately implemented are at greater risk of an outbreak occurring and of consequent disruption or even having to close a business while measures are taken to deal with the outbreak. In some cases local authority or HSE enforcement powers may need to be used to compel employers to take adequate measures to protect their workers’ health and safety and this can include a prohibition of work activities whilst the necessary measures are being implemented. |
|  | **What should an employer do if an employee becomes ill whilst at work?** | You should isolate the ill person in a separate, well ventilated room and thoroughly clean all the equipment and areas used by them including toilets and rest areas. The employee should be sent home to self-isolate for 14 days and to arrange to be tested.  The sooner you report any positive cases, the sooner we can support you – email us at [Food.DUE@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Food.DUE@dudley.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 555 2345 (Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm and ask to speak to the environmental health duty officer. On Saturdays and Sundays ask to be referred to the Covid duty officer). |
|  | **One of my employees has been tested positive for coronavirus. What advice can you give me about cleaning the workplace?** | Specific advice for cleaning in a non-healthcare setting can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings> |
|  | **Do I have to do a RIDDOR notification for coronavirus case?** | This is the link to explain when you must make a RIDDOR notification  <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-coronavirus.htm> |
|  | **If there is a positive trace, do I have to send all staff home?** | There is no requirement that you automatically send all staff home. All employees notified by the Test & Trace service as needing to self-isolate for 14 days because they are recent close contacts of a workplace colleague who has tested positive must be supported to do so by the employer. Although this may be disruptive to the business, it will ultimately protect your business by preventing a workplace outbreak which may lead to the workplace having to close. To avoid workers having to repeatedly self-isolate, employers must do everything possible to mitigate the risks of Covid occurring in the workplace. You will need to follow Government guidance to ensure that you can maintain Covid Safe working. This may mean you need to review working practices, cleaning practices, or update risk assessments for example (see question 1). |
|  | **My staff have been told by NHS Test and Trace staff to self-isolate, they cannot work from home, what are my options?** | The Government guidance states**:**  “*Employers should support workers who need to self-isolate and must not ask them to attend the workplace.*  *Workers will be told to isolate because they:*   * *have coronavirus symptoms and are awaiting a test result* * *have tested positive for coronavirus* * *are a member of the same household as someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for coronavirus* * *have been in close recent contact with someone who has tested positive and received a notification to self-isolate from NHS test and trace.*   *Employers should continue to communicate with workers in self-isolation and provide support. This includes allowing people to work from home if they remain well and if it is practicable to do so. This might include finding alternative work that can be completed at home during the period of self-isolation.*  *If people can’t work from home, employers must ensure any self-isolating employee is receiving sick pay and give them the option to use their paid leave days if they prefer”* |
|  | **What is the Test and Trace service?** | The NHS test and trace service:   * Ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus * Helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus   The services will be delivered through a NHS COVID-19 app, online and phone tracing.  From 24 September, all business with any customer facing element will be required to display the official QR code in a visible place to customers. They will be able to ‘check in’ at different premises using this QR, making it quicker and more efficient.  Please click on the link for the most up-to-date information on QR codes and posters:  <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>  As part of the NHS test and trace service, if other cases are detected in a workplace the local authority will carry out a rapid investigation with Public Health England’s local Health Protection Team and the Health and Safety Executive (if health and safety legislation is enforced by them in your premises) and advise you of the most appropriate action to take.  Further advice on test and trace can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance> |
|  | **Who is eligible to be tested for coronavirus?** | Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/> for information on who can ask for a test and when to ask for a test. |
|  | **Can I claim back Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for staff absent due to coronavirus?** | Guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19> |
|  | **Can I furlough staff for a 2nd time if a positive trace requires me to close my business?** | The furlough scheme was closed to new entrants from 30th June 2020; hence unless the staff concerned were previously furloughed for at least 3 weeks before 30th June, employees who have to self isolate under the Test & Trace scheme can’t be furloughed. Other options will need to be considered, such as SSP or allowing employees to work at home if this is possible or to take paid annual leave.  Further information can be found at  <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-and-support-for-employees-during-coronavirus-covid-19> |
|  | **A staff member was on the shielded list, they remain concerned about returning to work, what should they do?** | Expert doctors in England have identified specific medical conditions that, based on what we know about the virus so far, place someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19. If someone is clinically extremely vulnerable, they are strongly advised to follow the guidance on shielding. This can change depending of the rate of transmission of the virus. It is currently low so there is no need for people to shield. If your workplace is Covid Secure, the person should attend work if working from home is not possible. Please use the link below to check for the latest shielding guidance.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>  Shielding is for personal protection. It’s an individual’s choice to decide whether to follow the measures that are advised. This will be a personal decision but staff should be advised to speak to their GP or specialist to discuss this. |
|  | **My setting has not been open, so do I need to undertake a deep clean of the building?** | If nobody has been in the building there has been no contact from contaminated persons, therefore there is no need for a deep clean. The deep clean can be undertaken during the normal deep clean periods of the summer holidays. However, settings will need to ensure cleaners undertake a general clean of the building wiping down surfaces and cleaning floors etc before opening.  Please see further government guidance on cleaning non-healthcare settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings> |
|  | **Should I double bag all waste to reduce the risk of transmission?** | Double bagging waste is only necessary when disposing of waste produced from someone who is symptomatic in the premises. |
|  | **Will I have to treat my water system in case of Legionella growth before I open?** | If the building has been closed and the water has not been circulated by running the taps for a period of time, twice a week, then it will very likely have a culture growth within the system and will require testing and potentially chlorinating.  The Health and Safety Executive have produced advice about the control of legionella which can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm> |
|  | **What further information is available to support businesses during the pandemic?** | This can be found at  <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>  <https://www.bitc.org.uk/business-emergency-resilience-group/>  <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-is-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=3c760223-0ff3-4ad9-9444-ec730531dfa9&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily> |
|  | **Do my employees have to wear a face covering?** | Guidance stating that face coverings should be worn in close contact services is a legal requirement from 24 September – meaning your employees should wear face coverings whenever in contact with customers.  Staff in hospitality and retail will now also be required to wear face coverings (from 24 September).  Staff working on public transport and taxi drivers will continue to be advised to wear face coverings. |
| **21** | **Do my customers need to wear face covering?** | Please click on the link to find the most up-to-date information <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>  Customers in hospitality venues must wear face coverings, except when seated at a table to eat or drink from 24 September.  As of 23 September, customers in private hire vehicles and taxis wear face coverings.  If your business involves customers/members of the public accessing parts of indoor areas where social distancing may be difficult and where they will come into contact with people that they don’t normally meet then face coverings are strongly recommended for your customers and you may wish to consider providing a supply of disposable face coverings for customers to use if they don’t have their own face coverings . You may also wish to provide appropriate signage/ posters to inform your customers of this. Posters are available to download on the Dudley Business First website on this link  <https://www.dudleybusinessfirst.org.uk/reopening-your-business/> |
|  | **Are there any exemptions to wearing a face covering?** | The details of any exemptions can be found in the above guidance but includes:  young children under 11 years old,  those who can’t put on a face covering because of physical or mental impairment, or disability  if putting on a face covering will cause distress  if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies upon lip reading  to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others  to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm you do not have to have a face covering with you  to eat or drink if reasonably necessary  in order to take medication  if a police officer or other official requests you to remove your face covering |
| 1. **How w** | **How can customers prove they are exempt from wearing face coverings?** | Some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign.  This is a personal choice and is not necessary in law.  Those who have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering should not be routinely asked to give any written evidence of this. Written evidence includes exemption cards. Free hidden disability lanyards can be picked up from participating supermarkets or from <https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/> (small charge applies). This makes it easier to identify people who are exempt so many choose to wear them.  [Access exemption card templates](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own)  Alternatively exemption cards can be found on the Council’s website at <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/emergencies/coronavirus-advice/coronavirus-guidance/> |
|  | **Can I refuse entry to members of the public into my premises if they don’t wear a face covering?** | Please be aware there are exemptions, please see Question 21.  At this moment in time, a business has no legal right in preventing members of the public/customers entering your premises without a face covering.  Nonetheless, premises were face coverings are required to be worn must by law take reasonable steps to promote compliance with the law, such as a poster. Please see link below:  <https://www.dudleybusinessfirst.org.uk/coronavirus-business-guidance/in-dudley-borough/> |
|  | **Do I need to take the details of my customers?** | Many businesses that take bookings already have systems for recording their customers and visitors – including restaurants, hotels, and hair salons. Pubs, bars, takeaway services, places of worship, community centres, libraries, children’s centres, museums, zoos and theme parks are now also being encouraged to take customer details to assist in NHS Test and Trace.  The government has worked with industry and relevant bodies to design a system in line with data protection legislation. To view a complete list of premises that should collect customer details and what data you need to collect please visit [Check what data you need to collect and how it should be managed](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace). |
|  | **Have opening/closing times changed?** | From 24 September: Businesses selling food or drink (including cafes, bars, pubs and restaurants), social clubs, casinos, bowling alleys, amusement arcades (and other indoor leisure centres or facilities), funfairs, theme parks, adventure parks and activities, and bingo halls, must be closed between 10pm and 5am. This will include takeaways but delivery services can continue after 10pm. |
|  | **I sell food and drink, how am I affected?** | All food and drink must be ordered, and served to, the table in licensed premises  Customers must eat and drink at a table in any premises selling food and drink to consume indoors, on site  Pavement licences can be [purchased](https://www.dudleybusinessfirst.org.uk/news/temporary-licence-to-support-hospitality-industry/). |
|  | **I work in the hospitality industry – how am I impacted upon?** | * Hospitality venues in England are now **legally required** to enforce the rule of 6 or face a fine of up to £4,000. * Indoor organised sport for over 18s will no longer be exempt from the rule of six. There is an exemption for indoor organised team sports for disabled people (from 24 September). * Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies and receptions will be restricted to a maximum of 15 people (down from 30). Other significant standalone life events will be subject to the ‘rule of six’ limits, except funerals (from 28 September). |
|  | **What’s happening about larger events?** | The spread of the virus is also affecting our ability to reopen business conferences, exhibition halls and large sporting events, so we will not be able to do this |
|  | **If I have any further questions, who do I ask?** | If you have any further questions, please send them to [Food.DUE@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Food.DUE@dudley.gov.uk) |