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| **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 superseding 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** | 25th January 2021 |

| **Ref.** | **Question** | **Response(s)** |
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|  | **How can I ensure my business is covid-19 compliant?** | It is essential that all business settings carry out a risk assessment so as to prevent any cases of coronavirus in the workplace. 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  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://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>  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://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services>  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 a 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 10 days and to arrange to be tested.  You should identify close contacts of the affected person as they will also have to isolate for 10 days starting with the day they last had contact with each other if the affected persons test comes back positive. Until such time as the test result is known as a precautionary measure you may wish to send close contacts home.  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). |
|  | **What do you mean by the term ‘close contact’?** | Someone is regarded as being a close contact if:   * + having face-to-face contact with someone less than 1 metre away (this will include times where you have worn a face covering or a face mask)   + having been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)   + travelling in a car or other small vehicle with someone (even on a short journey) or close to them on a plane   If you work in – or have recently visited – a setting with other people (for example, a GP surgery, a school or a workplace) the use of face masks and other forms PPE does not exclude somebody from being considered a close contact, unless they are providing direct care with patients or residents in a health and care setting |
|  | **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 10 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 should 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?** | There are 2 types of tests currently available to the public – a pcr test if you have symptoms and a ‘Lateral Flow Test’ if you do not exhibit any symptoms.  You can only get a free NHS (pcr) test if at least one of the following applies:   * you have a high temperature * you have a new, continuous cough * you’ve lost your sense of smell or taste or it’s changed * you’ve been asked to get a test by a local council * you’re taking part in a government pilot project * you’ve been asked to get a test to confirm a positive result   You can also get a test for someone you live with if they have symptoms  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.  To book an appointment for a Lateral Flow Test please go to /<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/emergencies/coronavirus/coronavirus-testing/symptom-free-covid-19-testing/> |
|  | **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?** | For advice on the furlough scheme please refer to the link below:  <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?** | COVID-19 case numbers are now very high and rising rapidly across the country, driven by the new variant. Everyone in England, including those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, is required to follow the new [national lockdown guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home), which has been set out by the government and applies to the whole population  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.  <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>  You are strongly advised to work from home because the risk of exposure to the virus in your area may currently be higher. If you cannot work from home, then you should not attend work. You may want to speak to your employer about taking on an alternative role or change your working patterns temporarily to enable you to work from home where possible.  . |
|  | **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.. 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?** | The government has produced lots of documented advice for businesses which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus |
|  | **Do my employees have to wear a face covering?** | Guidance stating that face coverings should be worn by staff when in close contact with customers,, public transport workers, people working in retail shops and hospitality is a legal requirement – meaning your employees should wear face coverings whenever in contact with customers. Further advice on when to wear a face covering can be found at  <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>  . |
| **22** | **Do my customers need to wear face covering?** | Customers are required to wear face coverings in all indoor workplaces including shops, banks, building societies, private hire vehicles/ taxis and public transport. Please click on the link in the answer to the above question for up to date advice.  You should encourage your customers to wear a face covering by displaying 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/> |
| **23** | **Are there any exemptions to wearing a face covering?** | The details of any exemptions can be found in the ‘Face Covering’ guidance (the link can be found in the answer to question 20) 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 |
| **24** | **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, sunflower lanyard, 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/> |
| **25** | **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 from wearing a face covering ( 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 where face coverings are required to be worn must by law take reasonable steps to promote compliance with the law, such as displaying a poster advising customers that they should wear a face covering. Please see link below:  <https://www.dudleybusinessfirst.org.uk/coronavirus-business-guidance/in-dudley-borough/> |
| **26** | **Which businesses can remain open under the Tier 4 Regulations introduced on 6th January 2012?** | The following businesses are allowed to remain open in the Tier 4 area and trade as normally —  (a)food retailers, including food markets, supermarkets, convenience stores and corner shops,  (b)off licenses and licensed shops selling alcohol (including breweries),  (c)pharmacies (including non-dispensing pharmacies) and chemists,  (d)newsagents,  (e)animal rescue centres and animal boarding facilities,  (f)building merchants and suppliers of products and tools used in building work and repairs,  (g)petrol stations,  (h)vehicle repair and MOT services,  (i)bicycle shops,  (j)taxi or vehicle hire businesses,  (k)the following businesses—  (i)banks  (ii)building societies  (iii)credit unions  (iv)short term loan providers  (v)savings clubs  (vi)cash points  (vii)undertakings which by way of business operate currency exchange offices, transmit money (or any representation of money) by any means or cash cheques which are made payable to customers,  (l)post offices,  (m)funeral directors,  (n)laundrettes and dry cleaners,  (o)dental services, opticians, audiology services, chiropody, chiropractors, osteopaths and other medical or health services, including **[**[**F64**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/1374/schedule/3A#commentary-key-fb60c6ca2e2982863d59eb5d4619619e)services which incorporate personal care services and treatments required by those with disabilities and**]** services relating to mental health,  (p)veterinary surgeons and pet shops,  (q)agricultural supplies shops,  (r)storage and distribution facilities, including delivery drop off or collection points, where the facilities are in the premises of a business included in this Part,  (s)car parks,  (t)public toilets,  (u)garden centres,  (v)automatic car washes,  (w)mobility and disability support shops.  **Other businesses are not allowed to trade. Such businesses include**:  (a) carpet stores  (b) car washes (except for automatic car washes)  (c) tattoo and piercing parlours  (d) nail salons, beauty salons, hair salons and barbers  (e) kitchen, bathroom, tile and glazing showrooms  **Other businesses are allowed to trade in a restricted way**. These businesses include pubs, bars and, restaurants.  For further clarification and advice on those businesses which can legally trade please contact Food and Trading Standards via Dudley Council Plus 0n 0300 5552345. |
| **27** | **Have opening/closing times changed?** | Those businesses which sell **food and drink (but not alcohol)** for immediate consumption off the premises must close their doors to the public between the hours of 11:00 pm and 05:00 am. Between these hours they can continue to supply orders received by telephone, text, via a website or other online communication provided the purchaser does not enter the premises or leave their vehicle.  Those businesses selling alcohol can also continue to do so provided the order is delivered to the customer. |
| **28** | **I am required to close under Tier 4 requirements can I operate a ‘Click and collect’ service** | **Retail** businesses are able to operate a ‘Click and collect’ service:  by making deliveries or otherwise providing services in response to orders received—  (a)through a website, or otherwise by online communication,  (b)by telephone, including orders by text message, or  (c)by post, or  to a purchaser who collects goods that have been pre-ordered by a means mentioned above, **provided the purchaser does not enter inside the premises to do so,**  **See also question 28 above in relation to food, drink and alcohol** |
| **29** | **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 |
| **30** | **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) |