

April 2021 PPE Advice

The government recently published updated guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). This guidance is intended to be a general overview of the use of PPE in care homes.

This specific update is intended for all care workers working in care homes in England and may also be applied to visitors or essential care-givers who find themselves in care home settings.

It covers what type of PPE providers should use for different care situations, the different PPE items recommended by the government, as well as how to dispose of used PPE properly.

What type of PPE should I be using?

Always use PPE, even if your resident doesn't have symptoms. Different PPE is required for different tasks, but you can use the following questions to determine which type of PPE you require:

1. Are you likely to be within 2 metres of a resident and carrying out direct personal care or domestic duties?
2. Are you more than 2 metres from a resident undertaking domestic duties and not delivering personal care?

The answers to these questions will determine the risk of the activity and whether or not different PPE is required. For example, eye protection and Type IIR masks should be worn when providing personal care for residents who are known to have respiratory symptoms or a known positive coronavirus test result within 10 days (14 days if medically advised).

You should follow the same PPE guidelines for personal care regardless of whether your service user has tested positive for COVID-19 or if they have had the vaccine.

Note that it is not recommended to use homemade face coverings or cloth masks for staff delivering health and care activities.

PPE use when providing close personal care in direct contact with the resident(s)

Follow this table when you are within 2 metres of the individual and carrying out direct personal care or domestic duties (for example, giving physical care where there is a risk of contact with body fluids)

Disposable gloves (vinyl or nitrile)	Yes
Disposable plastic apron	Yes
Fluid-repellent surgical mask (Type IIR)	Yes
Eye protection (where there is a risk of contact with body fluids)	Yes

Remember that these recommendations apply:

- to all residents, whether they have symptoms of COVID-19 or not
- to all personal care, for example assistance to use the toilet, changing dressings, and when unintended contact with residents is likely (for example, when caring for residents with challenging behaviour)
- to all staff including care workers, managers, supervisors and cleaners
- to essential care givers or visitors if they are carrying out personal care
- regarding eye protection, when you have assessed there is a risk of splashing of body fluids (including respiratory secretions) into the eyes

PPE items required by the government

- **Disposable gloves** are required.

They are single use and must be changed between every contact with another person and while working with the same resident (for example after helping with using the bathroom). They should also be changed after using gloves for other activities, for example cleaning. Wash your hands after disposing of the gloves and make sure to wash hands thoroughly if the glove becomes torn or punctured during use.

- **Disposable plastic aprons** are required.

They are single-use only and are worn to protect your clothing from contamination when providing direct care or if there is a risk of splashing. Wear them when providing personal care and when exposure to body fluids is likely.

- **Fluid-repellent (Type IIR) surgical masks (FRSM)** are required.

FRSM provide additional protection from respiratory droplets produced by residents. The mask also protects residents by minimising the risk of you infecting them via secretions or droplets from your mouth, nose and lungs. A fluid-repellent surgical mask must be single use and disposed of after giving personal care to each resident, and a new fluid-repellent surgical mask applied when giving personal care to another resident.

- **Eye protection (face-shield or goggles)** is recommended for care of residents where there is risk of droplets or secretions from the resident's mouth, nose, lungs or from body fluids reaching the caseworkers' eyes (for example, caring for someone who has tested positive or is currently in isolation). Eye protection should not be worn in place of a mask.

Disposing of PPE after use

Waste should be placed in a tiger striped waste bag and can be disposed of in the usual waste stream unless the resident has symptoms of COVID-19 or has had a positive COVID-19 test and is still in isolation.

Waste from people with symptoms of COVID-19, waste from cleaning of areas where they have been (including disposable cloths and used tissues) and PPE waste from their care:

1. Should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when three-quarters full
2. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second rubbish bag and tied
3. The rubbish bags should be put in a suitable and secure place and marked for disposal 72 hours later.

You should not put your waste in communal waste areas until the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours. After the 72 hours, the waste can be put into the normal domestic waste.

Do not put any items of PPE (or face coverings of any kind) in the recycling bin.

For more information on PPE usage in different services, for PPE use during cleaning procedures and more, check out the [Personal protective equipment \(PPE\): resource for care workers working in care homes during sustained COVID-19 transmission in England](#).

All guidance found in this document has been developed by the UK government and in consultation with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) PPE Task and Finish group, which represents the adult social care sector. [For additional information click here](#).

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