

Face masks and coverings to be worn by all NHS hospital staff and visitors

Evidence from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) previously confirmed face coverings can help reduce the risk of transmission if you are suffering from coronavirus, but not showing symptoms.

NHS staff already wear face masks in clinical areas within 2 metres of a patient, but this new guidance applies to everyone working in all areas of the hospital.

Members of the public are strongly urged to attend hospital wearing a face covering, but a face mask will be provided in emergencies.

Last month, government set out [advice for people on how to make their own face coverings easily at home](#), using scarves or other textile items. These face coverings should cover the mouth and nose while allowing the wearer to breathe comfortably and can be as simple as a scarf or bandanna that ties behind the head to give a snug fit.

The government has adequate stocks of face masks to meet demand and continues to pursue contracts for additional stock.

Further guidance for hospitals will be published by 15 June to allow hospitals to get stocks and plans in place, and the guidance will be kept under review.

We are working with the social care sector to implement a similar approach.

At the press conference today, Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

As the NHS reopens right across the country, it is critically important to stop the spread amongst staff, patients and visitors too.

So today we are setting out that all hospital visitors and outpatients will need to wear face coverings.

One of the things that we've learnt is that those in hospital, those who are working in hospital, are more likely to catch coronavirus, whether they work in a clinical setting or not.

And to offer even greater protection, we are also providing new guidance for NHS staff in England which will come into force again on the 15 June, and all hospital staff will be required to wear Type 1 or 2 surgical masks, and this will cover all staff working in hospital.

It will apply at all times, not just when they are doing their life-saving work on the frontline. It will apply in all areas except those areas designated as COVID-secure workplaces.

And of course where PPE guidance recommends more stringent protection, that remains in place.

There is further [advice on making a face covering available](#).

People should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before putting their face covering on and after taking it off and it is important that people don't touch their face covering when wearing it, where possible, to avoid hand to mask transmission of the virus.

The public are advised to consider wearing face coverings in enclosed public spaces where you may be more likely to come into contact with people you do not normally meet, the government announced today.

On 4 June government announced that it will work with operators to make it mandatory for passengers to wear face coverings when using public transport in England from 15 June.