

## Health and Safety Toolbox Talk No: 138

### Home visits and Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

**Do not go to work if you have symptoms of COVID-19, which are a new continuous cough or fever, or a loss or changed sense of normal smell or taste (anosmia)**



The following guidance is issued for employees when:

- undertaking visits to businesses, private residences and other sites and/or
- other external contact as part of their day-to-day duties;

#### Visits to business premises, home and site visits

Employees should have regard to the following when planning and performing visits.

Work carried out in people’s homes, for example by tradespeople carrying out repairs and maintenance, can continue, provided that the tradesperson is well and has no symptoms.

If you do have symptoms, or a member of your household has any symptoms, you should self-isolate and stay away from public areas for the requisite periods.

**Before the visit:** Is the visit necessary or could the purpose of the visit be achieved equally effectively by way of a non face-to-face intervention for example by way of a telephone call, conference call?

On determining that a face-to-face visit is required, where possible establish as much information in advance of the visit by phoning the agent, business owner, client or resident to ascertain if they and/or their employees is/are in self-isolation and if they are asymptomatic or symptomatic, or they meet the shielding category prior to the planned visit;

- No work should be carried out in a household which is isolating because one or more family members has symptoms or where an individual has been advised to shield - unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household or to the public.
- When working in a household where somebody is clinically vulnerable, but has not been asked to shield, for example, the home of someone over 70, prior arrangements should be made with vulnerable people to avoid any face-to-face contact, for



example, when answering the door. You should be particularly strict about handwashing, coughing and sneezing hygiene, such as covering your nose and mouth and disposing of single-use tissues.

- Explain to those you are visiting how the work will be carried out to minimise risk

You can delay completing the safety checks until after the tenant's occupant's isolation period has ended. You must arrange for this to take place as soon as possible after the isolation period has ended.

You must be able demonstrate that you have taken reasonable steps to arrange and reschedule the safety check, and it is strongly recommended you document your attempts and keep records of all correspondence with your tenants / occupants.

Once this has been established, plan how to approach the visit having regard to the nature of the premises, residence or site to be visited, for example, consider if it is appropriate to avoid entering the property if the environment may be confined/poorly ventilated or be in a poor state of cleanliness.

***If you must enter premises: Gloves, face covering and hand sanitizer.***

#### **DURING the visit**

- On arrival, stand away from those you are visiting, and ask whether anyone has any symptoms, or are self-isolating. If they are, do not enter and inform them you will rearrange the visit.
- If you do enter the premises, wherever practical, please maintain social distancing guidelines as far as possible wherever possible (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) from any household occupants. This is for everyone's safety.
- Those you are visiting may ask you to wash your hands. That's OK but you will need to have paper towels to dry your hands. Do not use their towels. Or simply use a sanitiser.
- If you sneeze or cough in the course of the visit, remember to use a tissue to contain any potential airborne particles arising and dispose of the used tissue immediately in a bin or plastic bag. Ideally wash your hands immediately if possible. If no tissue is available cough or sneeze into the crease of your elbow.
- In the event of the person/s you are meeting sneezing or coughing in your presence encourage them to follow the same steps as above. If they continue to do so inappropriately, you should leave.
- Do not accept drinks or food offered in the course of the visit.
- Try to minimise touching any surfaces in the course of the visit, remembering that all hand-contact surfaces, including - door handles; taps to sinks/wash hand basins; lids to bin; - may be a source of contamination.





- If appropriate, ask to wash your hands before you leave the premises or private residence, or preferably sanitise your hands. Again, be mindful about using towels.
- Remove gloves where applicable and dispose of in plastic bag.

#### **AFTER the visit**

- Wash or sanitise your hands immediately on return to the office.
- If you become aware that the person/s you visited was/were isolated thereafter as a suspected COVID-19 case, you should immediately inform your line manager/HR for further advice.
- If you develop any of the recognised symptoms, you should self-isolate in accordance with Govt / NHS advice and arrange for a test to be carried out.

#### **COVID 19 General**

The risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if [COVID-secure guidelines](#) are followed closely. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk.

All staff and visitors must continue to abide by controls within the Covid secure risk assessments, including:

- Working from home wherever this is possible
- Staying at home and follow self-isolation period if they, or anyone in their household have symptoms.
- Maintaining social distancing where possible
- Observing good hygiene practices
- The use of face coverings where applicable.
- Ventilating enclosed spaces wherever possible.

In addition to the existing controls, all eligible staff are encouraged to participate in testing and vaccine programmes – both of which will help prevent the spread of disease.

