

Encouraging Visitors to Wear Face Coverings in HSC Settings

- Key Principles for HSC Organisations

Everyone coming into a HSC setting must wear a face covering. A face covering is any item which encloses the person's nose and mouth. However, some people may find it difficult to wear face coverings and some may be exempt from doing so. It is important that staff are aware of these exemptions, which include:

If you need to seek medical assistance or to provide care to someone who needs assistance, such as a vulnerable person or in an emergency

If you have a physical or mental illness, disability or impairment that means you can't put on, wear or remove a face covering

If putting on, wearing or removing a face covering would cause you severe distress

If you are with someone who relies on lip reading to communicate

If you need to remove it to avoid harm or injury or the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others

If you need to eat, drink, or take medication

Further detail is available at:

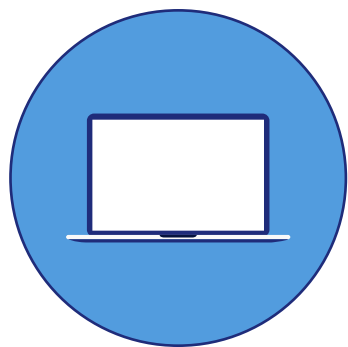
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-face-coverings>

If someone is not exempt, research suggests that engaging with them to understand why they are reluctant to wear a face covering can be helpful. You have an opportunity to educate them and reinforce the reasons for wearing a face covering – to protect their own health, and that of healthcare workers and other visitors/patients.

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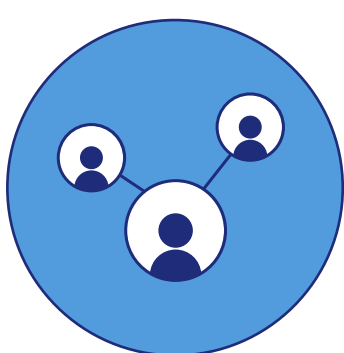
Make sure you have clear and visible signs highlighting the need for face coverings at entrances to buildings and departments.



Use a variety of media to reach different groups of people, such as posters, TV monitors, audio/tannoy systems, leaflets, appointment letters.



Patients and visitors may have diverse needs, so consider whether you need to provide information in translation or in alternative formats such as sign language.



Identify staff/volunteers to act as ambassadors/advisers on COVID-19 safety precautions. Where possible they should receive interpersonal communication training for this role.



Arrange for a staff member/volunteer to meet people as they enter the HSC setting and positively remind them that they need to wear a face covering. Keep a supply available to offer people who haven't brought their own.



Where refusal to wear face coverings has been identified as an issue in a particular setting, proactively monitor and record.



Consider adopting a Quality Improvement approach in settings where refusal has been a particular concern.



Continue to provide regular positive messaging on your website/social media sites to highlight the need to wear face coverings.

It won't always be possible to ensure everyone wears a face covering, so it's essential that other measures such as 2 metres social distancing and hand sanitising are applied.