Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Risk assessment
This document details what can cause harm, the significant risks involved and what methods of work should be in place to keep our people safe and well. More guidance on how to do this is available in the Health & Safety handbook.

**Description of the process / task / equipment**

BT Policy is to comply with all other aspects of health and safety at work legislation and the requirement to manage and control workplace risks, including protecting colleagues and others from the risk of COVID-19 infection in the workplace.

All work during the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic must adhere to the controls and risk mitigation processes outlined in this document.

All CU/CFU’s are required to create/include, own, control, review, consult and communicate risk assessments specific to the hazard presented by COVID-19.

**What could cause harm or ill-health? What are the hazards?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access equipment</th>
<th>Enclosed / confined space</th>
<th>Lifting equipment</th>
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<td>Animals</td>
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<td>Body fluids</td>
<td>Falling objects</td>
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<td>Burns / scalds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electricity HV</td>
<td>High pressure pipelines</td>
<td>Sharps</td>
<td>Work around people</td>
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</table>

**Anything else?**

In addition to this BT Group generic risk assessment the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (B.E.I.S) has issued guidance documents to assist in the understanding of how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

The guides apply to: England (see guidance for Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland for variants applicable to the devolved nations)

There are work sector guides (references below). It is noted that BT Group activities incorporate more than one type of workplace. Consistent with the intent of the guidance CU/CFU’s may need to use one or more of the BEIS documents in the creation of COVID secure workplaces.

Further updates to (existing) and extended guidance are anticipated and so it is essential that CU/CFU risk assessments continue to include these documents within source references.

**Stress and mental wellbeing – due to concerns for health whilst working during current COVID-19 pandemic.**

**Frequency and duration of exposure – How long is it likely to take and how often are we going to do it?**

Whilst in the workplace, travelling between workplaces, attending business events and overnight (work related) stays during periods of coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.
Potential harm & residual risk evaluation
Risk is the likelihood of harm happening and is calculated by multiplying ‘Likelihood’ and ‘Severity’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential harm – what could happen? Or why you believe it couldn’t</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Risk rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through work activity BT Group colleagues, customers and members of the public should not be placed at any greater risk of exposure, to COVID-19, than when outside of the work environment.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>BT Group colleagues, must follow Government guidelines to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The roles and responsibility for health and safety are detailed in the BT Group Health &amp; Safety Handbook. COVID specific risk assessments form an element of the Group, CU, CFU’s safety management systems.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT Group colleagues, must follow applicable Government guidelines when displaying symptoms of COVID-19 and/or sharing a household with those displaying symptoms - to reduce transmission “As far as is reasonably practicable” All risk assessments must inform Line Managers to ensure that individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do not physically come to work. This includes: individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19, those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms, those identified as having close recent contact with someone who has coronavirus, entering the UK from other countries.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals who have been in close contact with, but do not live with, a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), must follow the guidance. This may include people in their support bubble and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government’s test and trace service.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals living with a person who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or has had a positive test result must follow the Stay at Home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19).</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT Group colleagues, must follow Government guidelines in every workplace, increasing the frequency of handwashing (for at least 20 seconds).</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT Group colleagues, must follow Government guidelines in every workplace maintaining hand and respiratory hygiene: 1. Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, before you eat or handle food, or when you get to work or arrive home 2. Use hand sanitiser where there is no access to soap and hot water. 3. Cover the mouth and nose when coughing and/or sneezing with a disposable tissues’ or the crook of the arm (not hands) if you don’t have a tissue. Dispose of tissues into a disposable rubbish bag immediately. Then wash hands, immediately, with soap and water or use hand sanitiser where access to washing facilities is not available.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In order to keep the virus under control, it is important that people work safely. To help contain the virus, groups of workers who can work effectively from home will be required to. Public health is devolved in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; consideration must be given alongside local public health and safety requirements and legislation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Refer to the advice to businesses in other parts of the UK in the guidance set by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. The risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if COVID-19 secure guidelines are followed closely.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Managers should consult with their teams to determine who, from the 1 August 2020, can come into the workplace safely taking account of an individual’s journey, caring responsibilities, protected characteristics, and other individual circumstances. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where Line Managers consider that workers should come into their place of work, then this will need to be reflected in the COVID-19 workplace risk assessment together with the actions taken to manage the risks of transmission, consistent with the applicable Government Guidance.

The Public Health England report Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19 shows that some groups of people may be at more risk of being infected and/or an adverse outcome if infected.

The higher-risk groups include those who:

• are older males
• have a high body mass index (BMI)
• have health conditions such as diabetes
• are from some Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

You should consider this in your risk assessment. For more detail refer to the Vulnerable Worker Guidance in the BT health & Safety handbook.

Ensure that steps are taken to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices to each other. This includes, but is not limited to, refraining from playing music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting, including if played at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission, particularly from aerosol transmission. Guidance, based on scientific evidence, is being developed by the UK Government to enable these activities as soon as possible.

On the 2nd December the new tiered system of local restrictions came into effect, with a regionally-differentiated approach where different tiers of restrictions apply in different parts across England replacing previous guidance that was in place during the period of National Restrictions. The new guidance offers additional advice to the clinically extremely vulnerable over and above the rules for the tiers, which apply to everyone.

In the event of a local lockdown, individuals should refer to the information available and visit the applicable local authority’s website for further guidance.

The government will write to those clinically extremely vulnerable individuals that live in an area where additional public health measures require them to resume shielding.

For more detail refer to the Vulnerable Worker Guidance in the BT Health & Safety handbook.

Scottish Government operates protection levels which permit/restrict certain activities. Welsh guidance is published as is Northern Ireland – please note that Each of the devolved nations have differences in their requirements. For more detail refer to the Vulnerable Worker Guidance in the BT Health & Safety handbook.
Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, BT Group Line Managers should consider, via risk assessment, whether those activities need to continue for the business to operate, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between colleagues, customers and members of the public.

Mitigating actions include:

- further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
- keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
- reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using ‘fixed teams or partnering’ (so each person works with only a few others)
- Finally, if people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then the CU/CFU’s risk assessment needs to consider whether the activity can safely go ahead

These (CU/CFU) risk assessments must give particular regard to whether colleagues performing the tasks/work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

Social distancing applies to all parts of a business, not just the place where people spend most of their time, but also entrances and exits, break rooms, canteens and similar settings. These are often the most challenging areas to maintain social distancing and Line Managers should specifically remind colleagues to adhere to guidelines.

All risk assessments must inform Line Managers to ensure that individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do not physically come to work.

This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms. This may include people in their support bubble and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government’s test and trace service.
Guidelines set out by the UK Government requires that social distancing guidelines (2m, or in England - 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable), is maintained wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work, and when travelling between sites.

Everyone must maintain social distancing in the workplace wherever possible.

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, Line Managers should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.


Contained within the guidance are mitigations and adjustments to the workplace that BT Group is required to take. This include but are not limited to:

- Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics.
- Providing additional parking or facilities such as bike racks to help people walk, run, or cycle to work where possible.
- Limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, for example, work minibuses. This could include leaving seats empty.
- Reducing congestion, for example, by having more entry points to the workplace.
- Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points.
- Providing handwashing facilities, or hand sanitiser where not possible, at entry and exit points and not using touch-based security devices such as keypads where possible.
- Maintaining use of security access devices, such as keypads or passes, and adjusting processes at entry/exit points to reduce risk of transmission. For example, cleaning pass readers regularly and asking staff to hold their passes next to pass readers rather than touching them.

The objective with such actions and arrangements is to ensure that social distancing is maintained wherever possible, on arrival and departure and to ensure handwashing upon arrival.

Further social distancing measures must be implemented and adhere to by colleagues moving around buildings, at workstations, in common areas and by reducing face-to-face meetings. Government guidelines contain suggested mitigation actions to be adopted across the BT Group.

Line Managers should consult with their teams to determine who, needs to come into the workplace safely taking account of an individual’s journey, caring responsibilities, protected characteristics, and other individual circumstances. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk. Line Managers should consider the impact of workplaces reopening on local transport and take appropriate mitigating actions (e.g. staggered start and finish times for staff).

When Line Managers consider that workers should come into their place of work, then this will need to be reflected in the COVID-19 risk assessment and actions taken to manage the risks of transmission in line with this assessment and the relevant Government/Health Authority guidance. It is vital that Line Managers engage with their teams to ensure they feel safe returning to work and the workplace.

Government guidelines require that restrictions to the frequency and number of temporary visitors to the workplace are managed to reduce these occasions to the minimum. Mitigation measures must ensure that the number of visitors is controlled by implementing alternative methods. Host procedures must ensure that visitors who feel unwell stay at home and do not attend the premises. Control measures include (refer to guidance):

- Asking visitors to wear face coverings where they are required to do so by law.
Maritain records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS “Test and Trace” The requirement to keep records of all staff, contractors, visitors for 21 days is enforceable in law from the 18 September. Encouraging visitors to use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises.  

Workplaces are required to display visible public notices to ensure that people understand what they need to do to maintain safety. Ensuring public notices are visible and help inform workers, customers, visitors, contractors and the public to maintain social distancing whilst near to or in the workplace.  

BT Group work sites/workplace that have been closed or partially operated, during the COVID pandemic must be subject to a risk assessment (for all sites, or part of sites), prior to restarting work.  

As far as possible, where people are split into teams or shift groups, these teams or shift groups should be fixed so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people. Government guidance requirements are aimed at changing the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each colleague has.  

Safety must continue to be prioritised with respect to workplace accidents, security and other incidents. Government guidance expressly states that in an emergency, for example, an accident, provision of first aid, fire, or break-in, people do not have to comply with social distancing guidelines if it would be unsafe. People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.  

Coronavirus can transfer from people to surfaces. It can be passed on to others who touch the same surfaces. Keeping workplaces and workstations clean reduces the potential for coronavirus to spread and is a critical part of making our business ‘COVID-secure’  

https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/cleaning.htm  

Government guidelines require that measures are in place to ensure that increased cleaning schedules are applied to: workplaces, tools, vehicles, work equipment, surfaces, workstations, toilets, showers and general areas of the workplace.  

Government guidelines contain specific guidance to be applied when cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 in the workplace.
As far as possible, where people are split into teams or shift groups, fix these teams or shift groups so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.

The objective is to change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each worker has. Other steps that will **usually be needed:**

- As far as possible people who work together in one vehicle should be in a fixed pairing.
- Identifying areas where people have to directly pass things to each other (such as job information, spare parts, samples, raw materials) and find ways to remove direct contact, for example, by using drop off points or transfer zones.
- Keep temporary records of colleague shift patterns for 21 days and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks. Check what data you need to collect and how it should be managed.
- Temporary records of customers and visitors working or attending the workplace, offices and shops are required to be kept for 21 days in a way that is manageable for departments. This is to assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed.


[https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works)


CU/CFU’s risk assessment, should include an up to date plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace. This plan should nominate a **single point of contact (SPOC)** where possible who should lead on contacting the BT CMO office, by email using this link. - Submit it to the CMO Surgery. The BT CMO office will contact either Public Health England or local Public Health teams, as appropriate.

**Washing Hands**

Wash hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas.

The British association of dermatologists advise that everyone should follow government advice about washing hands, using soap and water, and drying them thoroughly, by patting them dry rather than rubbing. Once fully dry, apply a moisturiser. Do this every time you wash your hands and at other times if your skin feels dry. You might want to carry a small bottle around with you in the same way that we carry small bottles of hand gel for those times we cannot access soap and water. Rehydrate hands overnight with an emollient based moisturiser that’ll trap in moisture. Wear gloves if you need to handle detergents or other cleaning products at home or in the workplace in line with local risk assessments.

**Hand sanitisers**

Use hand sanitisers where there is no access to soap and hot water.

A hand-sanitiser should have a 60% or higher alcohol content to kill viruses effectively. The advice is to use hand sanitisers only when soap and water aren’t available and apply moisturiser after use. If you develop severe sores, cracks, oozing or redness, contact your doctor who might need to prescribe medication to reduce inflammation.
PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks.

BT Group colleagues that are already using PPE in their work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, should continue to do so.

When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what is usually worn is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks normally present in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE. These controls must be documented in subsequent CU/CFU COVID specific risk assessments. **Refer Controls section 6.**

Government guidance states that workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn’t possible. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. There are some places where individuals must wear a face covering by law. Different rules exist in different parts of the UK, reference must be made to the relevant websites:

- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales

Where face coverings are not required by law to be worn in the workplace, but colleagues choose to wear one they must be supported. Refer Controls section 6

Work Related Travel (within UK) & Accommodation – The objective is to avoid unnecessary work travel and keep colleagues safe when they do need to travel between locations.

Steps that will usually be needed:

Minimise all non-essential work-related travel by considering remote options in the first instance. Similarly:

- Walking or cycling where possible. When not possible, colleagues can use public transport or drive. Wearing a face covering when using public transport is mandatory.
- Minimising the number of people outside your household, or support bubble, travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed travel partners, increasing ventilation when possible and avoiding sitting face-to-face.
- Cleaning shared vehicles between shifts or on handover.
- Where colleagues are required to stay away from their home, centrally log their stay and make sure any overnight accommodation meets social distancing guidelines.
If at any time whilst travelling for work, colleagues begin to exhibit signs of coronavirus, they **MUST**:

- Go straight to their vehicle and isolate themselves.
- If travelling - stop at a safe location and remain isolated in their vehicle
- Remain in the hotel room
- Telephone 111 for advice – colleagues must advise that they are a key worker and are onsite at or travelling to/from a customer site
- Telephone their manager to advise and update them on the advice given by 111
- Their manager must immediately contact their CU/CFU Safety Team for advice.

**Social distancing in vehicles** – The objective is to maintain social distancing wherever possible between individuals when in vehicles:

- avoid multiple occupancy vehicles where safe to do so
- vehicles should not be shared if possible
- if it is not possible to maintain social distancing guidelines inside vehicles (2m, or in England - 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable), consider additional safety measures

**Steps that will usually be needed:**

- Keeping the number of people in the vehicle to a minimum and as distanced within the vehicle space as possible.
- Limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, for example, work minibuses. This could include leaving seats empty.
- Devising mitigation measures where workers cannot maintain social distancing guidelines to minimise the risk of transmission, including:
  - clear signage to outline social distancing measures in place
  - single person or contactless refuelling where possible
  - using physical screening, provided this does not compromise safety, for example, through reducing visibility
  - sitting side-by-side not face-to-face and increasing ventilation where possible.
  - Using a fixed pairing system if workers have to be in close proximity, for example in a vehicle.
  - Making sure vehicles are well-ventilated to increase the flow of air, for example, by opening a window.
  - Ensure regular cleaning of vehicles between journeys and in particular between different users, using standard cleaning products - make sure that door handles and other areas that people may touch are cleaned.
  - ask the driver and passengers to wear a face covering

Specific guidance for individuals travelling as passengers on public transport is also published. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#face-coverings

**Procedures to minimise person-to-person contact during deliveries to the workplace** are required in order to maintain social distancing and hygiene measures. Such measures may include:

- Maintaining consistent pairing where deliveries involve more than one person
- Minimising contact during payment and exchange of documentation through the use, for example, of electronic signatures, payment methods and document exchanges.
During the preparation and delivery of in-bound and out-bound goods procedures are required to maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the worksite/workplace, especially in high volume situations. Government advice contains suggested mitigations:

- Revising pick-up and drop-off collection points, procedures, signage and markings.
- Minimising unnecessary contact at gatehouse security, yard and warehouse. For example, non-contact deliveries where the nature of the product allows for use of electronic pre-booking.
- Considering methods to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger quantities less often.
- Where possible and safe, having single people load or unload vehicles.
- Where possible, using the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed.
- Enabling drivers to access welfare facilities when required, consistent with other guidance.
- Encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise their safety and existing safe working practice, such as preventing drive-aways.

Meetings - Minimise the number of unnecessary visits to offices, this includes for meetings that could otherwise occur remotely by utilising technology.

Only absolutely necessary participants should physically attend meetings and they should maintain social distancing (2m, or in England only - 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable).

This is to reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and to maintain social distancing in meetings.

Steps that will usually be needed:
- Using remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.
- Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example avoiding sharing pens, documents and other objects.
- Providing hand sanitiser in meeting rooms.
- Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.

For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.

All CU/CFU’s are required to establish regular communications with colleagues and their representatives through existing channels for the purpose of ensuring individuals are kept up to date with how health, safety and wellbeing measures are being implemented or updated. As part of communications training materials may be required.


BT (UK) Group properties are required to display the UK Government Poster to indicate that the published guidance has been followed.
Ventilation into the building should be optimised to ensure a fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the facility and increased wherever possible. Ventilation systems should provide an adequate supply of fresh air with the objective of using ventilation to mitigate the transmission risk of COVID-19.

Air Conditioning Systems - HSE guidance states that the risk of air conditioning spreading coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace is extremely low as long as there is an adequate supply of fresh air and ventilation.

The recently published guidance from the Government - Safer Working Guidance for offices, has led to a review within BT PFS, as follows:

- Due to the current low occupancy of our estate, approx. 40% of usual levels at max demand, those buildings utilising mechanical ventilation are deemed to be providing adequate fresh air by design as the ventilation system mixes extracted air with fresh air.
- If any areas are identified as having pockets of stagnant air within occupied spaces, this will be addressed by increasing circulation of outside air and this can be done with the assistance of desk fans. The risk of transmission through the use of desk fans is extremely low.
- The use of temporary or mobile air conditioning systems is deemed acceptable for additional cooling or heating where required as they operate on 100% recirculation. The risk of transmission by air conditioning systems is extremely low.
- A large portion of the office estate uses DX cooling (typically the ceiling or wall mounted AC units) which operate on 100% recirculation and HSE guidance advises that the risk posed by these systems is extremely low, so their continued use is satisfactory.

For the Operational Estate:

- Within BT Technology we employ a number of cooling technologies. These include Adiabatic cooling units, Fresh Air Units, packaged FADX units and CRAC (Computer Room Air Conditioning) units.
- All systems use a fresh air supply either directly (over 90% of our units) or via a fresh air make up system. The systems using direct fresh air are optimised to ensure the maximum fresh air is provided wherever possible, with minimum fresh air ventilation rates at all times.
- In all instances the cooling and ventilation rates are sized to meet equipment loads, and hence in the operational estate the ventilation rates are far in excess of the recommended values for occupied spaces.
- Cooling in operational areas is always room-specific, and there are no systems that circulate air in different rooms.
- Within our operational estate we also operate a rigorous documented maintenance program for monitoring and managing filter replacement in accordance with manufacturer instructions

Ceiling and Desk Fans - HSE guidance states the risk of transmission through the use of ceiling and desk fans is extremely low.

BT has considered via its risk assessment approach and believes the following approach is suitable and sufficient.

Desk fans in open plan Call Centres – The air conditioning should be maintaining the ambient temperatures adequately. If someone believes they require a desk fan this should be discussed with their line manager and if required, a local desk fan can be supplied as a last resort. The fan should be located to affect the person and not the surrounding area. The person may be required to relocate desks in order to achieve this aim.

Desk fans in small enclosed office areas in these situations, it is normally better to open doors (exception - fire doors are not to be kept open, unless they have the appropriate auto close technology) and windows if at all possible. If required, the principles mentioned above should be followed.

Desk fans in technical floor areas (exchanges) – It is not anticipated that a desk fan would be a problem as any desk / workstation are likely to be single desks and very few persons are present at any one time.

Portable air coolers / heaters including floor fans - These are likely to be required when the air conditioning system is faulty. These would be considered on a case by case basis and sited to minimise the risk of spreading any potential Covid 19 droplets that may be present.

Large air coolers for whole exchange / switch floors or local racks/ servers.
These are to be provided under the control of a risk assessment. The risk assessment will consider the siting of the unit and anyone who may be affected by its installation.
Controls in place / working methods / procedures / safe systems
- thinking about Safe People, Safe Plant, Safe Place

1. Eliminate

Government guidance states that telecommunications is included as one of the critical sectors in new regulations and legislation in response to dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak. Work to repair and maintain the telecommunications network must be allowed to continue at the current time.

Critical national infrastructure activity/work will continue to be prioritised during the COVID pandemic.

2. Reduce

Through work activity BT Group colleagues, customers and members of the public should not be placed at any greater risk of exposure, to COVID-19, than when outside of the work environment. Consider if the task can be completed remotely, through the use of technology, mechanical aids/engineering solutions? Can the number of people required to complete the task be reasonably and safely reduced? Alternatives methods and strategies must be considered.

3. Isolate

Guidelines set out by the government require that 2m (or in England only - 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) social distancing is maintained wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work, and when travelling between sites. Workplace mitigations should include re-arranging work activity, schedules and arrangements to reasonably and safely reduce the number of individuals involved in workplace tasks. Further guidance is available in the reference documents contained at the end of this assessment.

4. Control

BT Group colleagues, must follow Government guidelines when displaying symptoms of COVID-19 and/or sharing a household with those displaying symptoms - to reduce transmission “As far as is reasonably practicable” All risk assessments must inform Line Managers to ensure that individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do not physically come to work.

This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19, those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms, those identified as having close recent contact with someone who has coronavirus, entering the UK from other countries. Colleagues who have tested positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate for at least 10 days starting from the day the test was taken. Where a colleague has tested positive while not experiencing symptoms but develops symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10-day isolation period from the day the symptoms developed. This may include people in their support bubble and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government’s test and trace service.
Guidelines set out by the government require that 2m (or in England only - 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) social distancing is maintained wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work, and when travelling between sites.

BT Group colleagues, must follow Government guidelines in every workplace maintaining hand and respiratory hygiene:

a. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas.

b. Use hand sanitiser where there is no access to soap and hot water.

Cover the mouth and nose when coughing and/or sneezing with a tissue, or the crook of the arm (not hands) if you don’t have a tissue. Dispose of tissues immediately. Then wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser where access to washing facilities is not available.

Those colleagues, customers and members of the public identified as either extremely vulnerable or at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 shall require additional considerations, as documented in the guidance published by the UK Government, PHE & HSE.

Due consideration must be given to the task, environment and the risk of transmission, according to individual susceptibility of employees, colleagues, customers and members of the public as identified in guidance below.

Consideration is required to ways in which stringent/rigorous social distancing could specifically, be applied to those employees, colleagues, customers and members of the public identified as requiring it in the guidance.

All work during the COVID-19 pandemic must follow the controls and procedures outlined in this document.

On the 2nd December the new tiered system of local restrictions came into effect, with a regionally-differentiated approach where different tiers of restrictions apply in different parts across England, replacing previous guidance that was in place during the period of National Restrictions.

This guidance sets out what individuals can and cannot do in each tier. The guidance in England for clinically extremely vulnerable people is now linked to the tier restrictions in England. The new guidance offers additional advice to the clinically extremely vulnerable over and above the rules for the tiers, which apply to everyone. For more detail refer to the Vulnerable Worker Guidance in the BT Health & Safety handbook.

5. PPE

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks. Where individuals are already using PPE during work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, they should continue to do so.

UK Government advice is that workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Risk assessments across the BT Group identify certain scenarios where PPE is required, against the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Colleagues must adhere to the training and information they receive with regard to the use of PPE. For example: Donning (putting on), Doffing (taking off), storage, maintenance, disposal etc.

However, where colleagues and visitors want to wear a face covering they should be allowed to do so.

6. Face-Coverings

It is important to know that face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, (detailed in Government Guidance) including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

Note: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance

Please refer to this guidance for the definition of a close contact, which includes:

“A close ‘contact’ is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 7 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). This could be a person who:

- spends significant time in the same household
- is a sexual partner
• has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), including:
  - being coughed on
  - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
  - contact within one metre for one minute
• has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
• has travelled in a small vehicle, or in a large vehicle or plane

Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

The contact tracers will not consider the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) as a mitigation when assessing whether a recent contact is likely to have risked transmitting the virus. Only full medical-grade PPE worn in health and care settings will be considered.”

Medical-grade PPE should not be purchased to circumvent self-isolation, as this risks disrupting critical supplies needed by the NHS and social care sector.


Different regulations exist for wearing face coverings in different parts of the UK:

- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales

Where governments have or may stipulate the use of face coverings. Always follow your [local government advice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own).

Where face coverings are required, by national agencies, then please refer to the guidance the agency provides/produces as to how to appropriately wear them.

**Wales**
The Welsh Government recommends people in Wales wear three-layer face coverings.

Due to the complexity of the different contexts in which COVID-19 can spread and the rapidly changing and growing evidence base on the effectiveness of face masks and coverings, there are currently no UK product standards for face coverings.

In June 2020, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) released a specification for Textile Barrier Face Coverings designed for both disposable and reusable coverings. The specification sets out the design, performance and chemical requirements of coverings, as well as labelling instructions. The performance requirements do not include tests for filtration efficiency which are incorporated under the CEN and AFNOR guidelines.

The British Standards Institution will not be creating a separate standard and intend to adopt the CEN Workshop Agreement. Copies of both the CEN and AFNOR documents are freely available for the public to download.

**Travelling from England to other UK nations**
Before you travel from England to Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, you should check that:

- the activity you are travelling for is permitted in the country you plan to visit
- you will be able to stay overnight if necessary

Read the guidance for:

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales

A CFU produced face covering guide is available as a video, via learning home reference number BTGHSSF001.

It is important that BT colleagues do not get a false sense of security about the level of protection provided by wearing a face covering. It is essential that everyone continues to:

- practise social distancing as much as possible
- wash hands thoroughly throughout the day
• ‘catch it, kill it, bin it’ when they sneeze or cough

When wearing a face covering, it is important to following the general guidance below:
• wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on
• avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
• avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
• change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you’ve touched it
• avoid taking it off and putting it back on a lot in quick succession (for example, when leaving and entering shops on a high street)

When removing a face covering:
• wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
• only handle the straps, ties or clips
• do not give it to someone else to use
• if single use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
• if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer’s instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
• wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed

You can make face-coverings at home. Find guidance on how to wear and make a face-covering on GOV.UK.

**Some regions/governments have or may stipulate the use of face coverings/masks. Always follow your local government advice. Where masks are required, by national agencies, then please refer to the guidance the agency provides/produces as to how to appropriately wear them.

Stress – any concerns please talk to your manager or the safety team. Support is also available via Your Wellbeing site and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) on 0800 917 6767.

Safe system of work (SSOW)
Through scenario planning and risk assessment CU/CFU’s risk assessments have identified specific SSOW, with respect to COVID-19, for colleagues to adhere to. It is important individuals discuss the details of these SSOW with their line managers in-order to ensure that through work activity BT Group colleagues, customers and members of the public are not be placed at any greater risk of exposure, to COVID-19, than when outside of the work environment.

Resources: UK Government
• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19
• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely
• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/labs-and-research-facilities
• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery


• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services


• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace


• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-levels-what-you-need-to-know

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-level-medium

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-level-high

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-level-very-high

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-advice-for-accommodation-providers

• https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council

• https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control


• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know


**HSE**


**NHS**

• https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace

• https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance

• https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/

**BT**

• https://www.yourwellbeing.bt.com/coronavirus.html
Other external resources for useful information


- https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/

For advice to businesses in other nations of the UK please also see guidance set by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government.

Northern Ireland


- https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/node/23544


- Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’ and ‘vulnerable’ people | nidirect

Scotland


• Read the Scottish Government’s guidance for going to work in your tier for people who were previously shielding.

Wales

• Written Statement: New advice to those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable – previously ‘shielding’ (22 December 2020) | GOV.WALES

• https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance

• https://gov.wales/keep-wales-safe-work#section-43060

• Construction and outdoor work: coronavirus workplace guidance

• Offices and contact centres: coronavirus workplace guidance

• Labs and research facilities: coronavirus workplace guidance

• Working in or from a vehicle: coronavirus workplace guidance

• Evaluating the impact of rehabilitation services post COVID-19

• Travel and transport: advice

• Guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable from coronavirus (COVID-19).
Assessment completed by: HSWB CoE  Date of completion 23/12/2020

Document owner: HSWB CoE

Review frequency 90 Days

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<td>28 May 2020</td>
<td>Initial publication of generic template</td>
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<td>Additional links to UK, Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Govt Welsh guidance documents. Updated content of generic assessment.</td>
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<td>Update includes Tiered system of local restrictions in England and the link to the advice for those that are clinically extremely vulnerable.</td>
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<td>Risk Assessment reviewed against B.E.I.S following move to Tier4 England. Not published</td>
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