

Safety

What is this?

Everyone working in the care sector needs **be** safe and also to **feel** as safe as is possible during a pandemic.

Being safe	Feeling safe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE supplies – enough for all, plans for increases in demand or interruptions in supply • Testing kits and regular testing procedures • Decontamination facilities during and at end-of-shift • Individual risk assessments • Separate areas/teams for covid-positive and covid-negative residents • Other relevant infection control measures (e.g. physical distancing, mask wearing etc) 	<p>Ensure that all staff/volunteers know what PPE is needed for different roles and for different levels of risk.</p> <p>Ensure that all staff/volunteers are aware of the procedures in place to ensure adequate supplies of PPE and other infection control consumables.</p> <p>Be sensitive to differences in individual's perceptions of their own risk – listen to their concerns and involve them openly in working out a plan for their safety.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and supervision for new roles, new procedures and changes in procedures • Easy ways for staff to raise concerns and get fast responses 	<p>When staff take on new duties or return to work after shielding, they might lack confidence. Ensure everyone has training in changed or new procedures and support them as they are learning.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care plans for all including senior staff which states who to contact if the person feels overwhelmed (24/7) 	<p>Having a plan in place, which is easy to follow, is reassuring. Advising everyone to have their own personal plan, 'normalises' it and gives meaning to the phrase "It's ok not to be ok".</p>

Why should I be paying attention to this?

Fear of exposure to disease can impact on psychological wellbeing, and on willingness to come to work or to carry out tasks. It's not enough to have robust infection control procedures in place. Health workers also need to *know* what those procedures are, and they need to have *confidence* in them.

Staff need to know that there plans in place to meet possible increases in demand or interruptions in future supplies. They need to have individual risk assessments to identify who is most at risk from consequences of infection. Work duties need to be adjusted accordingly. They need to be correctly trained in new procedures, changes in procedures and new tasks and have support and supervision until they are confident in their ability to carry out new tasks independently.

What should my first steps be?

Think about what you already have in place. You've probably already thought about most of the points above and done a lot of the good work needed to help your workers to be and feel safe. Check with your staff to find out if they know the procedures, if they have any worries, and if they feel particularly exposed. Listen to their concerns. Then, talk together with them about how best you can resolve things.

Don't forget to have your own personal care plan in place – who will you contact when you need emotional support?

How do I find out more?

A guide for leaders and managers in supporting the psychological needs of healthcare staff:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/psychological-needs-healthcare-staff-result-coronavirus-pandemic>

A comprehensive resource with useful links for all aspects of psychological safety during the pandemic:

https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/toolkits/play_22794#resume=3