

Practical approaches to COVID-19 Risk Assessments

This resource is complemented by Practical approaches to undertaking all Risk Assessments available separately [here](#) which covers more general principles and is not COVID-19 specific.

The following recommendations relate specifically to Risk Assessments that adult social care services are using in response to the pandemic. Where there are useful templates and other resources available, these are included.

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| <p>Identify the hazard</p> | <p>This could be as broad as “COVID-19” or focus more acutely on a specific associated risk.</p> <p>Some services are choosing to be very specific (see the list at the bottom of this document) but others are using one or two Risk Assessments to document all the hazards.</p> |
| <p>Identify who can be harmed</p> | <p>Think about the impact on the people you support, your workforce, volunteers, visitors, and contractors etc. List all who could be impacted by the pandemic.</p> <p>Identify people who may be at higher risk amongst the group identified, as these may require more detailed risk assessment and control measures.</p> <p>Consider which Risk Assessments processes work best for you from online guidance and advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DHSC COVID-19: adult social care risk reduction framework ■ Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership Risk Assessment tool ■ Manor Community / NHS University Hospitals Bristol and Weston COVID-19 Personal Risk Assessment process <p>With people from Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities groups at higher risk from COVID-19, Skills for Care has produced some additional resources to help employers here.</p> |
| <p>Consider how different groups of people you support could be impacted</p> | <p>COVID-19 and the associated changes to daily life will impact people we support in different ways.</p> <p>Skills for Care COVID-19 website section is regularly updated with key national guidance but connect with charities and other services for more specialist guidance and advice. This ADASS resource originally aimed at Day Care is also helpful</p> |

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| <p>Involve the people you support</p> | <p>Involving people in deciding how best to manage risks remains key to person-centred care. Whilst we are all adapting to living differently during the pandemic, involving them in decisions around positive risks remain key to supporting individuals to live their best lives.</p> |
| <p>Ensure even “unwise decisions” are as safe as possible</p> | <p>People may continue to make what others may regard as unwise decisions and these will need to be risk assessed too.</p> <p>Whilst you may not be able to stop the person doing something, you still have a responsibility to help them do it as safely as possible.</p> |
| <p>COVID-specific risk factors</p> | <p>When identifying who may be harmed by risks around COVID, be sure to take into account whether these people fall into one or more of the COVID at-risk categories (age, sex, ethnicity, pregnancy and underlying medical conditions), and adjust your consideration of the risk level accordingly.</p> <p>You may also want to take into account those living with extremely vulnerable household members.</p> |
| <p>Identify how people can be harmed by COVID-19</p> | <p>Like other Risk Assessments, think about the hazard and how it can harm the people who have identified at risk. List the different ways that people could be harmed as part of this process.</p> |
| <p>Decide the level of risk (no control measures)</p> | <p>Consider the level of risk and the impact this might have on different groups and conditions.</p> <p>Consider what is the risk level if you did nothing to prevent the risk. Decide a meaningful way to rate this impact without any control measures.</p> |
| <p>Decide general control measures</p> | <p>Consider the control measures needed to reduce or minimise the risk from COVID-19. For some risks you identify there may only control method to implement, for others there may be multiple to identify and consider using within your service.</p> <p>For adult social care environments, some of the safest control measure (e.g. working from home) may not be possible so look at practical alternate measures. When deciding control methods, consider if different ones are needed for different people groups.</p> <p>Many COVID-19 risks can be reduced by changes to practice. This practical example from Vivo Care Services includes simple but effective control measures.</p> |

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| <p>Decide the level of risk (with control measures)</p> | <p>The aim is to significantly reduce risks by implementing your control methods. Therefore, considering the different groups and the different control measures you are applying, revise the risk rating.</p> <p>It may not be possible to remove all risks, but your measures should be able to significantly reduce risk. If not, you may wish to consider implementing further measures.</p> <p>As we continue to learn more about COVID-19, your Risk assessment and control measures can continue to evolve in regular reviews.</p> |
| <p>Review existing measures that may need to be strengthened</p> | <p>Consider any control measures you were already being applying prior to the pandemic and consider how this need to strengthen further. For example, enhancing IPC procedures on touch cleaning that may require to be undertaken much more frequently than before COVID-19.</p> |
| <p>Keep your workforce and people informed</p> | <p>Make sure your workforce is fully aware of all of the risk assessment and control measures you put in place around COVID-19.</p> <p>Keep the people you support and their family/advocates up to date via regular communications. For some, the pandemic is a very difficult and scary time so find accessible ways to communicate changes and support available.</p> |
| <p>Stay up to date with guidance</p> | <p>Guidance and requirements around managing COVID-19 and related issues has been frequently amended and updated during the pandemic.</p> <p>Make sure you are aware of the latest changes, and that these are incorporated into your consideration of risk and controls. Where your staff are carrying out risk assessments, make sure they are also aware of any changes.</p> |
| <p>Keep a record</p> | <p>In addition to updating Risk Assessments as a result of guidance changes, keep a clear record of how your Risk Assessments have changed at different stages of the pandemic.</p> <p>If CQC regulated, be prepared to evidence different versions and how these have changed to meet people and the service's needs.</p> |

Different types of COVID-19 Risk Assessments

Since the beginning of the pandemic, many services have created either new or repurposed existing Risk Assessments to help them focus on COVID-19.

The following is a list of just some of the Risk Assessments that are being used in the initial response to COVID-19 and the list continues to grow.

Please note that many of these examples can be accessed by frontline managers joining Skills for Care's Facebook Group. If you are using other COVID-19 specific risk assessment that you feel are useful to be shared with others, these can be uploaded into the [Facebook Group](#) when you have joined.

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| For consideration for all services | COVID testing and swabbing, IPC (including PPE), Washing hands, Medicines, Hospital discharge, Hospital visit A&E, Refusal of observations, Oxygen/Aerosol generating procedures, Disruption and non-clinical goods, Nail varnish and extensions, Communal living, Accessing local community |
| Staff specific | Individual staff risk assessments, Recruitment during COVID, Pregnancy/ Maternity, Sharing vehicles and transport, Cross working, COVID testing and swabbing, COVID supervision, COVID Appraisal |
| Residential home specific | Visitors (including contractors), Visiting healthcare professionals |

Further information and advice about Risk Assessments is available from www.skillsforcare.org.uk/COVID-19webinars