



Information Sheet J: Masks and Face Coverings

The virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) is spread by droplets from the mouth and nose. These droplets spread when we breathe, talk, cough, sneeze etc.

Most of these droplets quickly fall to the ground or other surfaces. Keeping a 2m distance from other people is the best way to minimise direct contact with respiratory droplets.

However, when a 2m distance cannot be maintained, physical barriers such as screens, face coverings, and face shields can reduce exposure to droplets. Make sure that you are aware of what types of mask and/or face covering you need to wear within the care home.

Screens

Physical barriers like clear plastic or acrylic screens, can protect others from COVID-19 where a 2m distance is not possible. These screens can help to prevent respiratory droplets passing from one person to another. Some care homes use screens to facilitate family visits.

Face coverings

A cloth face covering catches your respiratory droplets. It does not protect you, but may help protect people you come close to. You must wear your face covering properly, covering your mouth and nose. If you wear glasses, make sure that the glasses do not prevent the covering from having a good fit.

Don't touch the outside of your face covering. Wash your hands before putting your face covering on, and after taking it off.

Care home staff and visitors who are working within 2 m of a resident will wear clinical face masks. The type of face mask chosen will depend on several factors. The latest guidance on face masks is available from the <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> web site.

Face shields

A face shield/visor provides a barrier against respiratory droplets between the wearer and any person closer than 2m. Visors need to fit properly and be worn properly. A visor must cover your forehead, extend below your chin, and wrap around the sides of your face.

***None of these physical barriers remove the need for frequent hand washing, good respiratory hygiene, and enhanced surface cleaning**