

Friday 12th June 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your questions and comments. We have focussed on questions which summarise a key theme from stakeholders. If you do not think we have answered your question, or if we have missed anything, please do come back to us at: england.learning.disability@nhs.net

We will continue to update and re-issue FAQs however this will now be fortnightly and will upload a copy to the Future Collaboration platform.

To support collaborative working across the voluntary and independent sector, health and social care there is a weekly webinar to raise and discuss key issues for people with a learning disability and autistic people with representatives from NHS England and Improvement, the Department for Health and Social Care, Public Health England and voluntary and independent sector organisations taking part.

To receive details about the webinar or to suggest agenda items please contact: england.learning.disability@nhs.net

We have set up a [Future NHS Collaboration workspace](#) to support the work of NHS England and Improvement Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Covid-19 Response Cell. We use this platform to share guidance and information, and encourage mental health, learning disability and autism leads and providers to share advice and feedback on how best to look after patients and staff during these difficult times. The resources on this workspace are open to those working in mental health, learning disability and autism services and will include the voluntary and independent sector.

If you currently have a FutureNHS account, you can access the workspace directly through the homepage (<https://future.nhs.uk/MHLDAcovid19/grouphome>). Those without a FutureNHS account can either self-register to the platform if they have an nhs.net or nhs.uk email account, or directly request access by emailing our generic mailbox if they are from other organisations at: MHLDAcovid19-manager@future.nhs.uk

Key topics this week

- Reasonable adjustments
- Engaging with the key worker pilot
- Face masks
- Testing
- Social bubbles
- Research

Reasonable Adjustments

The pilot phase of the Reasonable Adjustments digital flag project is now complete and this week NHS Digital will update their web page with feedback from the pilots as well as information about next steps. The link can be found in the published resources section.

Engaging with the children and young people keyworker pilot

We have involved young people and people with autism at each stage of planning and delivery of the project. We have continued engagement with people with autism through the programme and are looking to have representation on the steering group, the terms of reference are in development and we will be approaching stakeholders to take part.

Face masks

Response provided by DHSC

From Monday 15 June face coverings everyone must wear a face covering when on public transport if they can but there are exemptions for those who need it. People with certain health conditions, disabled people, people who are autistic, people with learning disabilities and children under the age of 11 will not be required to wear a face covering if to do so would cause them distress, harm or cause problems for people who need to lip read or use facial expressions to communicate. This exemption also applies to others whose wearing of a face covering would cause distress, harm or communication problems with the person they are travelling with.

Guidance on face coverings for hospital visitors will be included in a future FAQ.

Testing

Response provided by DHSC

A package of support is available for care homes which includes guidance and videos for staff on how to undertake the test, an NHS clinical lead and regular webinars.

We are continuing to explore how we can support other parts of the sector such as those in supported living settings. Anyone with suspected coronavirus symptoms in these settings can of course access testing by self-refer on [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

We are currently working with PHE and others to develop updated guidance for the supported living sector. As part of this, we are engaging with a wide range of stakeholders. We expect to publish this guidance shortly.

Further expansion of testing to other adult social care settings and retesting of care homes will be guided by clinical advice on relative priority and available testing capacity. We are listening to views about how different groups may be affected by the virus and are continuing to explore how we can support other parts of the sector such as those in supported living settings and extra care settings.

Guidance on social bubbles

Response provided by DHSC

From Saturday, if you are the only adult in your household, then they will be able to bubble with any other household that is willing to exclusively bubble with you. This is irrespective of whether carers visit you to provide support.

If you live with other adults including your carers, then they will still be able to bubble, however this would need to be with a single adult household.

We appreciate that the restrictions on bubbling may mean that you are not able to bubble with your preferred household. However, we need to limit the change so that we can keep the risk of transmission as low as possible while we take steps to unlock society.

To note we have received questions about reasonable adjustments and how carers are considered for purposes of bubbling and will update further on this in due course.

Social Care Taskforce

Response provided by DHSC

The Taskforce will be made up of a comprehensive list of stakeholders and experts from across the sector which is currently being developed. A more detailed list of those involved will be published shortly.

Research on the impact of Covid on people with a learning disability and stakeholder involvement

Response provided by DHSC

We are continuing to work with research colleagues to develop and commission the approach, and will share more information in due course

Published Resources

[Reasonable adjustments information](#)

Challenging Behaviour Foundation

[Information sheet. People with severe learning disabilities and facemasks](#)

Research calls

[NIHR Covid 19 rapid response rolling call](#)

[The Health Foundation Covid 19 Research programme launch](#)

Future webinars

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Social Care recovery
- Transforming Care
- Accessible information

The regular coronavirus webinar for learning disability and autism partners will now take place fortnightly, rather than weekly. We will delete the current series from your calendar and set up a new one.

The next two dates will be **Wednesday 24 June and 8th July**

We are considering themes to focus on, including autism, children and young people, and health inequalities. If there is a specific theme you would like to discuss or present please let us know.

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Additional information

Public Health England weekly update [sign up here](#)