

Covid-19/Influenza Trigger/Escalations for PPE use and testing – November 2022

Current Trust Position

Our current guidance is for staff in all areas to wear masks at all times and for patient and visitors to wear masks whilst in the Trust. Asymptomatic testing continues for all patients admitted to the Trust.

As an organisation we have maintained this level of PPE usage and testing due to the maintained elevated levels of Covid-19 within the Trust and local area. When we removed face masks in June positive cases increased from 13 to 42, outbreaks from 1 to 17 and workforce loss from 0.8% (45) to 1.7% (99) in the space of 2 weeks.

National Guidance

Current national guidance for PPE is based on local risk assessment to ascertain if masks are required in all areas. It is no longer mandated for masks to be worn in all areas.

With regards to testing, there current guidance is to pause asymptomatic testing as nationally we are deemed to be in low prevalence related to Covid-19 and therefore the only requirement is to conduct symptomatic testing and testing of patients being transferred to another care facility/home.

Recommendations

Following the review of the Trust and regional (using the R Rate) prevalence for Covid-19 below are recommended triggers and escalations for the use of masks and asymptomatic testing.

It is recommended that we move to a risk-based approach for mask wearing and testing for respiratory viruses, using the triggers below. Due to the rising Influenza numbers these have been included in the risk categories below.

We can monitor the Trust and local position on a weekly bases to review the prevalence and amend our precautions where required. This will be included as part of the IPC weekly dashboard to ICT.

High Risk

> 50 inpatients Covid-19/Influenza Positive

and/or

> 5 outbreaks

and/or

R rate greater than 1

- Masks must be worn in all areas by staff
- Masks must be worn by all visitors to the Trust who are not exempt
- Masks must be worn by all patients who can tolerate them, especially when moving around.
- Testing to be carried out on all patients on day 0, 3 and 6, and every 48 hours for patients being discharged to a care facility

Medium Risk

20-50 inpatients Covid-19/Influenza positive

and/or

upto 5 outbreaks

and /or

R rate equal to 1

- Masks to be worn in all clinical areas by staff, patients and visitors.
- Masks not required in non-clinical areas.
- Testing to be carried out on all patients on admission only, unless they develop symptoms, and every 48 hours for patients being discharged to a care facility

Low risk

< 20 inpatients Covid-19/Influenza positive

and/or

0 outbreaks

and/or

R rate less than 1

- Masks to be worn by staff for patients with respiratory infections/symptoms or other usual requirements e.g. theatres
- Masks not required by patients unless moving around the Trust and they have respiratory infections/symptoms
- Masks not required by visitors unless visiting a patient with respiratory infection/symptoms (e.g. compassionate visiting reasons)
- Testing to be carried out on symptomatic patients only, and every 48 hours for patients being discharged to a care facility