

NACCC Coronavirus Update ARCHIVE

Monday 3rd August 2020

Recently our members are asking the following questions quite regularly:

1. Should people using contact centres be wearing face coverings.

The [government website](#) for Wales only makes face coverings mandatory for public transport and provides the following information *“Face coverings are not a substitute for these measures, but in some circumstances where it might be difficult to stay 2 metre away from others, we are advising the use of three-layer, non-medical face coverings.”*

Therefore, in Wales, Social Distancing is the priority. In places where this might be difficult face coverings are advised. A contact centre may well be one of these places depending what measures a centre is able to implement.

The [government website](#) for England provides the following information (as of 03.08.2020)

In England, you must wear a face covering by law in the following settings:

- public transport
- indoor transport hubs (airports, rail and tram stations and terminals, maritime ports and terminals, bus and coach stations and terminals)
- shops and supermarkets (places which are open to the public and that wholly or mainly offer goods or services for retail sale or hire)
- indoor shopping centres
- banks, building societies, and post offices (including credit unions, short-term loan providers, savings clubs and money service businesses)

You are expected to wear a face covering immediately before entering any of these settings and must keep it on until you leave.

For members of the public, from 8 August the places where you will have to wear a face covering will be expanded to include:

- funeral directors

- premises providing professional, legal or financial services
- cinemas
- theatres
- bingo halls
- concert halls
- museums, galleries, aquariums, indoor zoos or visitor farms, or other indoor tourist, heritage or cultural sites.
- nail, beauty, hair salons and barbers - other than where necessary to remove for treatments
- massage parlours
- public areas in hotels and hostels
- place of worship
- libraries and public reading rooms
- community centres
- social clubs
- tattoo and piercing parlours
- indoor entertainment venues (amusement arcades, funfairs, adventure activities e.g. laser quest, go-karting, escape rooms, heritage sites etc)
- storage and distribution facilities
- veterinary services.
- auction houses.

Based upon this list, it would seem sensible for people using Child Contact Centres or working within them to be wearing face coverings. The list above contains buildings like Social Clubs and Community Centres, even if you are not based within one of these buildings your centre does serve a similar purpose and may have a similar footfall.

The same website also says *“It is not compulsory for employees of indoor settings or transport workers to wear face coverings (see section 6), although employers may consider their use where appropriate and where other mitigations are not in place. Employers should continue to follow COVID-19 Secure guidelines to reduce the proximity and duration of contact between employees.”*

Therefore, it is not essential to make staff or volunteers wear these, but probably advisable, particularly if people might be vulnerable or live with other who are.

The following list is also provided by way of listing exemptions to this rule:

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to. This includes (but is not limited to):

- *young children under the age of 11 (Public Health England do not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)*
- *not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability*
- *if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress*
- *if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate*
- *to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others*
- *to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you*
- *to eat or drink if reasonably necessary*
- *in order to take medication*
- *if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering.*

Based upon this information it is not essential for children under the age of 11 to be wearing face coverings and children under the age of 3 should not be allowed to wear them.

In the Isle of Man the [government guidance](#) is as follows: *“Though the Isle of Man Government has removed the requirement for social distancing, you may still wish to wear a face mask when you are in a public place. Examples include when visiting busy, enclosed spaces such as supermarkets or grocery stores or when using public transport.”*

Therefore, in the Isle of Man the ownness will be much more on the risk assessments of centres and the individual choice of those using centres.

The Government in Guernsey do not appear to have guidance relating to face coverings. Therefore, in Guernsey the ownness will be much more on the risk assessments of centres and the individual choice of those using centres.

2. Should we close our centres if we are in an area where there is a “Local Lockdown”.

If there is a local lockdown, NACCC will require you to follow the public health information relevant to the area that you are based. Therefore, if there are restrictions on people from separate households congregating indoors and / or other local services are suspended this would indicate that it is not appropriate for contact services to be operating.

Monday 22nd June 2020

As of 22.06.2020 NACCC are recommending that centres make independent decisions about whether they feel able to re-open their services. We have a range of peer support opportunities planned that we hope will assist supported centres in some of the logistics around decision making.

The readiness of centres to be able to offer services will vary significantly and no centre should consider opening their services if they do not feel fully prepared or if doing so contravenes any local advice.

The nature of local advice will vary, special attention is also recommended in terms of Social Distancing and ensuring that this can be implemented within relevant guidelines. Centres will make decisions based upon the guidance offered by government, public health bodies, local authorities and referring or funding bodies like Cafcass (Cymru).

NACCC will continue to promote the independence of centres whilst offering guidance that is designed to help them make safe and appropriate decisions. Some centres will open quickly, others will offer restricted services that look and feel different, some might have a virtual offer, whilst others remain closed for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, to support Child Contact Centres we have prepared a [checklist](#) that we recommend centres work through, prior to making any decision to open. This is a working document that is open to review at any time. This is intended to act as a guide that each centre will build upon and add to, based upon the individual requirements of their centre. This document could then be available to anyone wishing to see it and act as reassurance that the centre has followed a diligent process in their decision making.

Prior to opening a centre, we would strongly encourage centres to update their knowledge around Covid-19. Read the Government guidelines for the part of the UK your centres functions in as the guidance is different in each. In addition, there is advice on keeping environments and staff safe centres can be confident that they are well informed and prepared to offer as safe a service as possible. Online learning is one example, there are several providers offering options. The following link is not particularly endorsed by NACCC but presents as a good introduction to the topic. https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/courses/prevent-covid-19-free-training?fbclid=IwAR3V9s-v23BfsbZbAWFkx-vExrne70mCh-gKg_kWVxxhyrv12w2d42bXNCM

Centres should also liaise with insurance providers relating to the level of cover that they have and whether this is satisfactory in terms of perceived liabilities because of Covid-19 or anything else.

We hope this is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us and we will do our best to help. Stay in touch and stay safe.

Elizabeth Coe: CEO

Phil Coleman: Service Development Manager

22nd June 2020

NACCC – Updated Guidance

Monday 15th June 2020

Up until this point the guidance from NACCC has remained for child contact centres not to offer any face to face services. NACCC Trustees have now made the decision that this will remain our guidance for one week further.

At the end of this week, assuming that there is no escalation to the current risk level NACCC guidance will change and we will no longer be recommending that centres remain closed. Therefore, as of Monday 22nd June, we will be recommending that centres make independent decisions about whether they feel able to re-open their services.

The readiness of centres to be able to offer services will vary significantly and no centre should consider opening their services if they do not feel fully prepared or if doing so contravenes any local advice.

The nature of local advice will vary. Centres will make decisions based upon the guidance offered by government, public health bodies, local authorities and referring or funding bodies like Cafcass (Cymru).

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We will continue to monitor the situation and advice running alongside this with a view to getting updated guidance out when the Government issues 'new rules'. It is planned that this will next be reviewed on the 22nd June and then fortnightly, for the time being.

The review of this information may come sooner or later depending on the information available to us.

Taking this approach will ensure the safety of children and families whilst also seeking to avoid further disruptions, should there be a 'second spike, or other reason to limit services.

We hope this is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us and we will do our best to help. Stay in touch and stay safe.

Elizabeth Coe: CEO

Phil Coleman: Service Development Manager

15th June 2020

Update as at Monday 1st June 2020

Up until this point the guidance from NACCC has remained for child contact centres not to offer any face to face services. Today we have reviewed the public health advice of the main nations making up the NACCC membership. A document has been provided below with a summary of the information that is publicly available as of today.

Our interpretation of the guidance across all the areas is that this is still not the right time to be opening services. We recognise that other people will have different interpretations of this advice. Our understanding is that: where meetings of people are permitted outside of the home this is to be in an outside public space with 2 metres social distancing. It is also a common theme that you should only meet people from a limited number of other households.

To attend a child contact centre would require families and staff to meet people from at least 3 different households (the child's, the non-resident parent and that of the person supervising or supporting the session). Even where social distancing can be put in place, contact often takes place indoors which is not in line with current guidance. It is the case that a child can travel between homes for the purposes of contact, however a contact centre is not defined as a home environment.

NACCC will continue to promote the independence of centres whilst offering guidance that is designed to help them make safe and appropriate decisions. Therefore, we have prepared a [checklist](#) that we recommend centres work through, prior to making any decision to open. This is intended to act as a guide that each centre will build upon and add to based upon the individual requirements of their centre. This document could then be available to anyone wishing to see it and act as reassurance that the centre has followed a diligent process in their decision making.

Prior to opening a centre, we would strongly encourage centres to update their knowledge around Covid-19. Read the Government guidelines for the part of the UK your centres functions in as the guidance is different in each. In addition, there is advice on keeping environments and staff safe centres can be confident that they are well informed and prepared to offer as safe as service as possible. so that this can enable. Online learning is one example, there are a number of providers offering a number of options. The following link is not particularly endorsed by NACCC but presents as a good introduction to the topic. https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/courses/prevent-covid-19-free-training?fbclid=IwAR3V9s-v23BfsbZbAWFkx-vExrne70mCh-gKg_kWVxxhyrv12w2d42bXNCM

We will continue to monitor the situation and advice running alongside this with a view to getting updated guidance out when the Government issued 'new rules'. It is planned that this will next be reviewed around 15th June. The review in this information may come sooner or later depending on the information available to us. By 15th June more public services will be open and we will have a clear

understanding how schools have managed. Taking this approach will ensure the safety of children and families whilst also seeking to avoid further disruptions, should there be a 'second spike, or other reason to limit services.

We hope this is helpful. Please don't hesitate to contact us and we will do our best to help. Stay in touch and stay safe.

Elizabeth Coe: CEO

Phil Coleman: Service Development Manager

1st June 2020

Information for the public regarding the coronavirus outbreak

Update as at 25 March 2020

NACCC and our members have been through some really challenging times over the last couple of weeks, but we have seen our child contact centres rise to this challenge time and time again. NACCC are very proud to support such a dedicated group of people who have shown that they will go far beyond what could reasonably be expected of them to ensure that children can carry on enjoying contact with the people they care about. NACCC are firm in the belief that **Parenting shouldn't end when relationships do** and we want to say a heartfelt Thank You to all of our colleagues working hard to make this a reality in these extraordinary times.

Child Contact Centres are and will remain safe places for children to see people that they no longer live with. In order for them to maintain the highest levels of safety it is particularly important that we stay on top of current events relating to the Coronavirus. In order to do this NACCC have been working with public bodies across the United Kingdom to ensure that we have the most up to date information for our members and the general public. It is for this reason that NACCC are now recommending that Child contact centres suspend offering face to face contact but continue offering their invaluable services using technology where this is possible.

The Coronavirus is likely to be really frightening for children depending upon their levels of understanding. Bearing in mind the messages they will be hearing on the television, online and from their friends it is important that we feel confident to talk openly with them, but also in a way that is reassuring and developmentally appropriate. Childline has a range of information to support children and young people. <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>. There are more resources that you might find helpful when talking to children and some that they can safely access alone at the end of this information.

Child Contact Centres have been in the very difficult situation of having to make judgements about whether they are able to offer services that are safe and effective whilst also being equally concerned about not taking steps to cause unnecessary disruption to the attachments that children have and seek to maintain with people they care about but no longer live with.

Up to this point, many centres have been able to take steps to stay open and to continue offering their services. NACCC, Cafcass, Cafcass Cymru and other bodies as appropriate will continue to work pro-actively with these centres to ensure that there is a diverse range of services where this is safe and appropriate.

A number of accredited Child Contact Centres are looking at alternative ways to ensure that child contact can continue to take place, some of the methods being explored and delivered include:

1. **Centres are working creatively with families** to see if there are other people that might be able to take up the role of the contact centre. This works well where there are family members or other trusted people that can step in, to support. The government has detailed that children can travel to see parents and the judiciary are urging parents to work together in making decisions for children where this is safe and appropriate.
2. **Indirect Contact** is being achieved using technology like skype, WhatsApp video calling, facetime and so on. Some centres are finding ways to support this so that similar arrangements can be implemented in line with the services usually being offered.
3. **Other centres are reducing service sizes and availability.** This means that whilst the centre may have suspended contact, it might be possible for them to offer handovers for those parents who just cannot organise this without the centre.

At this point we would strongly urge members of the public to contact NACCC or your local contact centre to find out what services are available locally and when this might change. Information about how to find and contact your local centre can be found here: <https://naccc.org.uk/find-a-centre>.

Keeping everyone safe is our first priority. Therefore, we would ask you to continue to make yourself aware of any national and local information that is being offered about services and restrictions that might be applicable. The NHS website also has good quality information that is easy to understand in relation to keeping safe.

Should I attend a child contact centre?

At the moment the advice is that children and parents should not attend child contact centres, on the whole.

The government are recommending that everyone (with limited exceptions) should remain at home.

What might symptoms include?

The best advice is to check the NHS website for updated information, however common symptoms could include:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

If you are unsure you should always check by accessing this helpful tool created by the NHS - <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>

To avoid catching the Coronavirus the NHS is currently recommending the following:

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- Always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Avoid close contact with people who have symptoms of coronavirus
- Only travel on public transport if you need to
- Work from home, if you can
- Avoid social activities, such as going to pubs, restaurants, theatres and cinemas
- Avoid events with large groups of people
- Use phone, [online services](#), or apps to contact your GP surgery or other NHS services

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Do not have visitors to your home, including friends and family

Cafcass - COVID-19 guidance for children and families

[Cafcass has put together guidance to support children and families as the situation surrounding COVID-19 develops.](#)