

Supporting excellence in infection prevention and control behaviours

Implementation Toolkit

Version 1, 09 June 2021



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Introduction

Background

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts have been made in all adult social care settings to maintain the highest level of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) excellence, reducing the risk of infections and deadly outbreaks.

Research conducted by partners in the NHS looked at the behavioural drivers which influenced people to follow IPC measures. This research involved gathering insights from people working in and using services, professional bodies, and clinical, communication and IPC experts, to understand these drivers and develop products to address key themes. These products have been reviewed and developed for use in adult social care settings.

Purpose

This implementation toolkit is designed to provide information, resources and ideas, to adult social care providers, to address the barriers to behavioural excellence with IPC measures.

This includes resources and tools targeting compliance and awareness, leadership, morale and wellbeing, training, and operational interventions.

Innovative ideas to support interventions have also been collated from the research and included at the end of this document.

Contacts

For any questions on the content in this toolkit, please contact:

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- **Infection prevention and control (IPC) clinical advice**
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- **COVID-19 Behavioural Change Unit**
NHS England and Improvement
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Research summary

Context

Behaviour is driven by several factors that all influence why and how people act. This includes internal factors, such as subconscious motivations, personality, and perception of risk, as well as external factors, such as culture, environment, and wellbeing (physical, mental and emotional).

There is a need to focus on what can be done to support everyone, including staff, people using services and visitors, to achieve excellence with IPC measures.

Key insights

- Strong, compassionate leadership and role modelling is critical – local implementation is vital to the success of any interventions.
- As more people are vaccinated, personal risk will be lowered. We need to enhance the mindset of the workforce from protecting **themselves** while also protecting **others** and create a culture of kindness, where compliance is associated with being kind and caring to all.
- Social care workers need support to challenge people when they are not following the correct IPC guidance, particularly when speaking to senior managers. Providing staff with the tools and support to both speak up and 'listen up' will help address this.
- 'Hotspots' are areas where infrastructure issues, mainly space, aren't easily overcome but can be improved with some quick fixes, improved monitoring, and communication tools, such as posters.
- Training to further enhance awareness and understanding of IPC measures and their purpose for all parts of the sector, will support behavioural excellence with these measures.
- Clear messaging for people using care services and any visitors or household members is essential; outlining not just what we want them to do, but how to do it, for example, the need for social distancing. Direct messaging was felt to be more effective than softer messaging for this group.
- A zero-risk approach to sickness will relieve pressure on staff to come to work with minor symptoms.

Every Action Counts

The 'Every Action Counts' suite of resources has been adapted to support adult social care providers to apply interventions to achieve excellence in IPC measures, for all who work and come into contact with, adult social care services.

The research stressed the importance of communicating with these groups regularly, through a variety of different formats and channels, to reinforce expected behaviours.

Situational reminders in key areas throughout the care setting should be considered to remind people ‘in the moment’. This includes thinking about location for example, during staff breaks and in changing rooms and using channels such as TV screensavers in more than one location.

The resources have been adapted to be relevant for most adult social care settings. Some can be modified for your local context if required.

Graphic device and colours

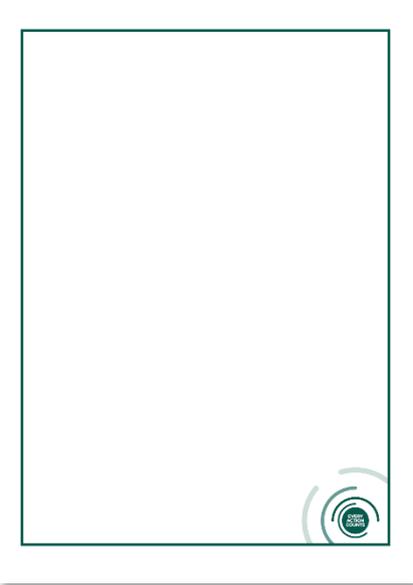


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Templates

Word



PowerPoint



Key messages

- Every Action Counts – each action you take has a big impact.
- We all have a responsibility to reduce the spread of coronavirus.
- People with COVID-19 can have very mild or no symptoms at all. This means they can transmit the virus to others without knowing.
- We all need to do things differently to how we would normally to reduce the risk.
- You should always follow the rules, even when with colleagues, family, or friends.
- When you follow these measures, you are playing your part.
- You can still spread the virus to others, even if you have been vaccinated.

Additional staff messages

- Observing IPC measures helps keep everyone safe from coronavirus.
- There is no such thing as a 'work bubble'. The virus can still spread between colleagues, so it is important to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing when on breaks and outside of work.
- If you see something, say something – it is ok to gently remind others to make space, fix or change their PPE, or observe other measures.
- We're all in this together – it has been a challenging year and taking care of each other is important.
- If you need help, ask for it.

Additional visitor messages

Additional messages for people who use services, their visitors, other members of their household and visiting professionals.

- We want to keep you, your family, all other people in our care and our staff safe from coronavirus.
- Because we care, we may ask you to do things differently while you are here/while we are with you. This may include:
 - Wearing a mask or face covering over your nose and mouth.
 - Wearing PPE, such as gloves and aprons
 - Making space for others – 2 metres
 - Washing or sanitising hands regularly
 - Taking a test
 - Only visiting parts of the building indicated by staff
 - Asking other members of your household to remain in another room while we provide care.
- It's ok to remind staff that we need to make space for each other and to cover our mouths and noses. Reminders can help us all to look out for each other.

Resources

Staff assets

We need to engage the hearts and minds of staff, by emphasising the impact their actions have on others.

Staff engagement assets can be downloaded from: [Infection prevention and control \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/infection-prevention-and-control)



- Because I care – posters

Poster versions of the 'Because I care' video help to reinforce the messages for staff. They should be placed in staff areas such as break rooms, changing rooms, offices, and canteens to remind staff of the expected behaviours. Artwork files are available if you wish to swap the staff photos.



Getting there safely

- It is only if it is safe to travel during the journey, do you or staff need to bring a car to work or home for a car ride.
- Remember, if it is not safe to travel, do not get into your car, do not get into the car of another person.
- Encourage people to use public transport, walking, cycling, or driving to work.
- Offering options for car sharing with staff during these times.
- Check the car is clean and safe.
- Wash your hands before and after the car ride.



• Digital cards

Three digital cards to help you share important information with staff about how they can be safe at work. These cover car sharing, PPE and asymptomatic testing.

These could be used on communication channels such as intranets, staff newsletters, apps and screensavers.

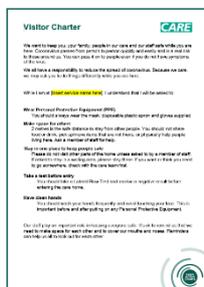
Visitor assets

Research has indicated that interventions for people using services and those significant to them need to be simple and practical, with strong clear messaging on the IPC measures are in place. Face-to-face interactions, explaining what is expected, supported by situational reminders and information before visiting, is helpful.

Resources

The following assets have been reviewed with a social care stakeholder group. They are based on insight gained through NHS patient groups and made relevant for adult social care. They can be downloaded from <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Learning-development/ongoing-learning-and-development/infection-prevention-control/Infection-prevention-and-control.aspx>.

Information resources for service users:



• Template charter

Some providers have a visitor charter approach that recognises we all have a responsibility to reduce the spread of coronavirus. This should not be presented as a formal contract but rather as mutual recognition of the moral responsibility of the signatory. The charter can also be used without the signature section.

Situational reminder cards:



Staying safe from coronavirus



We want to keep you, your family, other residents and our staff safe.



- All of us have a responsibility to reduce the spread of coronavirus, so while you are here, please remember to:
- Wear a mask at all times.
 - Make space for others.
 - Only visit other areas if you are asked to.
 - Keep your hands clean.



• Poster - IPC measures

The IPC measures poster reminds people of the four key IPC actions - hands, face, space and not moving around unnecessarily. This poster can be used in care settings and on social media.



- Digital cards - key behaviours

The digital cards focus on specific actions, such as wearing masks properly. They can be displayed on TV screens and other digital channels, or used on social media.



- A4 posters - key behaviours

The behaviours posters focus on a particular action, such as washing hands or wearing a mask, and can be displayed throughout the building. These posters should be laminated or displayed in holders, to reduce the spread of infection. Consider placing these posters in the areas where you want the behaviour to happen, such as the 'Keep hands clean' poster by the hand sanitiser.

Operational resources

Leadership

There is lots of anecdotal evidence that organisations with strong, visible leadership on IPC and exemplary role modelling from managers and team leaders achieve excellence with IPC practice.

Key principles for leadership include:

1. Role modelling is essential at all levels -
 - Lead by example and practice good IPC
 - Be visible
 - Let staff know it is ok to remind you as well
 - No risk approach to illness - be supportive and trusting of illness, so staff do not feel compelled to work when sick.
2. Promote the IPC guidance - constantly remind staff in all interactions.
3. Collective leadership is important to provide greater consistency of IPC processes and foster trust among staff.
4. Show support - ask staff how they are feeling and remember to thank them for their work.
5. Strong leadership can come from any level - it doesn't have to be top down - recognise people in your team and empower them.
6. Involve people using services. Make sure they are aware of expectations - encourage them to speak up and promote IPC excellence.

Creating a culture to speak up on IPC compliance

Many staff find it difficult to challenge non-compliance, even with their peers. They can be intimidated by hierarchy and those they feel have more influence than them.

Supporting a 'reminding culture', where everyone is empowered to speak up and be receptive to feedback, is important.

We need to empower all staff, and people using or coming into contact with services, with the confidence and language to speak up, if someone is letting their guard down.

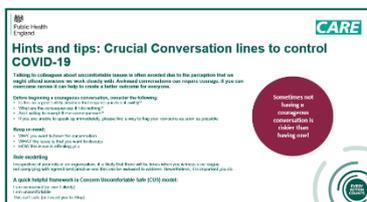
Key principles for creating a culture to speak up include:

1. Sharing messages about it being 'ok' and being expected to speak up at every briefing, every handover, every interaction
2. Senior leaders reinforcing these messages in all communications and interactions
3. Encourage staff, at all levels, to take feedback in good faith, assume positive intent, and not react badly when reminded by others.

Resources

Creating an open and transparent culture that empowers staff to speak up, is essential to support compliance with IPC measures.

The Skills for Care culture toolkit is about creating an open and supportive culture. The lines of communication section identifies how leaders can set the example by having an open-door policy, being approachable and visible, listening to their staff, praising when things go well, and taking responsibility when they don't. This will help to set and reinforce the standards for staff.



- Hints and tips - speaking up on IPC
The reference cards are designed to support staff to speak up and remind colleagues and others if they are not following IPC measures. The cards include tips about preparing for tricky conversations.

In addition

- Speak Up training materials for social care managers and staff
<https://speakup.direct/for-employers/>
- SCIE video: Whistleblowing in social care: improving organisational practice -
<https://youtu.be/oKtGgH7-eR0>

Wellbeing and morale

Wellbeing and morale are important factors when considering staff behaviour.

Staff are more likely to comply with IPC measures when they feel supported by their leaders and organisation. It is important they feel their concerns are listened to and acted upon quickly.

Key principles for maintaining staff wellbeing and morale include:

1. Saying 'thank you' and 'well done' goes a long way

2. Communication should be two way: check in with staff to see how they are feeling and if they need more support
3. Demonstrate empathy and take time to listen - a culture where it is 'ok not to feel ok'
4. Speed is important: when concerns are raised, listen and respond as quickly as possible, to make sure staff feel heard and that their concerns are taken seriously.

Resources

[Health and wellbeing of the adult social care workforce - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Innovative ideas for local implementation

In addition to the resources developed nationally, the research process highlighted several innovative approaches to IPC excellence.

Care providers can consider these ideas according to need and setting.

Wellbeing and morale

- Staff buddy system
Staff buddy systems are a great way to make sure staff have someone to check in with and ask for help if they need it. Buddies can also help to remind each other to follow IPC measures 'in the moment'. Small buddy groups can be used to cover different working patterns.
- Create a virtual hug
To replace real hugs, while social distancing measures are in place, consider creating a team or organisation 'virtual hug' to show support for each other in challenging or stressful times. One example of this is the distanced 'fist bump' in Disney's Big Hero 6 film.
- Message support boards
A message board, for staff to leave each other comments, or notes of support, can provide a good channel for teams to communicate across different shifts and working patterns. Consider making this virtual. A good example of this is the @allontheboard Twitter channel for London Underground.
- Wobble rooms
Consider dedicating a room or space as a staff 'wobble room', a safe space to go and take a minute if staff become overwhelmed. This space could include messages to help people in the moment, for example, a poster outlining breathing techniques.

Vicky Bradshaw at Cygnet Healthcare wrote about looking after care colleagues, including those experiencing trauma, in this blog: [Stabilising the wobble: looking after our care colleagues](#)

- Create team WhatsApp groups
Team WhatsApp groups are a great way to create an informal channel for staff to communicate, and check in with each other, and provide support if needed.
- Safety words
Safety words are already used in some healthcare environments, such as surgical theatres. A similar concept could be applied to IPC measures. A nominated word, usually unrelated to the environment, such as 'pineapple' can be used to remind everyone to stop and check their PPE and surroundings for compliance.
- Daily Dose toolkits
Pulling together a suite of images/videos/animation of feel-good messages to share with staff (through WhatsApp, intranet, bulletins etc) can help to improve morale and wellbeing.
- Mindfulness moments
Taking a moment to check in at the beginning of every shift can help to set the mood and morale of staff. A mindful moment can include a few minutes at handover for each shift where positive messages and support are shared.
- Team breaks
Creating an online 'room' that is always open, can help people to chat in a socially distanced way and feel more supported during their breaks.

Creating a speak up culture

- Key message stickers
Stickers for staff and residents to wear can remind others of the correct behaviours and help support a culture of speaking up. Messages could include things such as, 'The best way to support me is to wear a mask properly' and 'If I keep my distance, it is because I care'.
- Elect team speak up champions
Team champions can help to create a culture of positive reminding and can also act as a support for staff who feel uncomfortable speaking up. This could be a rotating role, to help embed the speak up culture across all professions and levels of staff.
- Create an anonymous escalation process
Even with support, some people still may not feel confident to speak up. Creating an anonymous escalation process allows all voices to be heard.

Leadership

- Daily messages to staff
A personal message can be very powerful. A daily message from leaders (senior or area lead) can provide connection and emphasise that staff are

supported. This could be through a quick written message, a meme, or an informal video.

- Volunteer support
Volunteers are a great resource and already play an important role with many providers. Consider creating volunteer roles to support compliance and behaviour. These volunteers could act as safety ambassadors, reminding people of behaviours in public spaces, such as canteens and corridors, or give arrival briefings on IPC measures for visitors.
- Safety huddles
Create dedicated safety huddles, or conversations during handover, to focus on IPC and safety measures, instead of adding them on to the end of huddles in a hurry. This will help to embed the importance of these topics in the organisational culture.
- Establishing a 'faceless' sickness line for staff
It can be difficult for staff who are unwell to call in sick if they are speaking to their line manager. They may feel they are letting the team down, or adding to pressure in already challenging times. It is important to embed a no-risk approach to staff illness, to reduce the risk of staff spreading infection. Dedicated absence phonelines for reporting sickness have proved very effective.
- Virtual meetings and handover
Changing face-to-face meetings, handovers and debriefs to virtual meetings means staff can be socially distanced but still provide group feedback. These virtual meetings can be delivered through Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, Zoom, or a local platform.

Residents and visitors

- Front door 'greeters'
Non-verbal cues, such as smiling, are missing in a world full of masks and PPE. Consider using volunteers or dedicated staff at the front door, to help explain IPC measures.
- Community language videos
If your demographic includes a large community of other language speakers, consider filming additional videos explaining the measures in those languages. If you can find a local care worker, who speaks the language and is representative of the community, this will help it to be well received.
- Staff pictures
Staff in full PPE can seem remote and 'faceless'. Consider if there is way to make photo badges or laminated pictures of staff to reduce the barrier between staff and residents or service users. This can help requests from staff to land better.

- Feedback
Surveys are a useful way to obtain feedback from people on how they experienced care. Consider including a question about the information they received regarding IPC measures such as, 'was it enough?' and 'did they understand it?', to support ongoing evaluation of your local measures.

General safety

- Temperature checks at the front door
Many people are used to having a temperature check when visiting restaurants or other settings. Temperature checks at the entrance helps identify those who may not know they are ill. Temperature takers would need to wear masks and PPE.
- WIFI login page
A Wi-Fi login page is another opportunity to share IPC messages. You could add videos or infographics on the login page, with links to more information.

Buildings

- Contactless 'office'
A contactless building reduces the need to touch handles or press buttons. Swipe cards and phone app access are used instead.
- Staff only bathrooms
Consider making some bathroom and toilet facilities 'staff only', so there is less mixing between staff and visitors.
- Create more space for breaks
It can be challenging for staff to stay socially distanced while on rest breaks. Consider heated tents or marquees to create more room for staff on breaks. Carry out risk assessments for these extra spaces.
- Visual cues
Many organisations will be using visual cues, such as coloured floor tape and signs, to remind people about social distancing and different zones. Consider using these visual cues in staff rooms and changing rooms as well.
- Removable signage
Consider using flexible signage, which can be moved around. For example, pull-up banners including the text: 'You are now entering a red zone. Rules in this zone include ...'

Cleaning

- 'I'm clean' notice

An 'I'm clean' note or sticky tab can provide a quick and easy way of knowing that a workspace or shared equipment has been cleaned and sanitised. The tabs should include a date and time.

- Changing rooms cleaning rota
Using a changing room cleaning rota or nominating specific people to keep changing rooms neat and tidy, helps to reduce cross-contamination in shared spaces.

Staff/workforce

- Family portraits
Pictures of loved ones help remind staff why following IPC measures is so important. Laminated pictures in staff-only areas are a reminder to stay safe at work, so staff don't take COVID-19 home to their families.
- Flexible working from home policies
Encourage staff to work from home if they can. It is safer and reduces the number of people, and therefore risk, in the care setting.
- Own pen and mug policy
Having an 'own pen and mug' policy reduces the risk of cross-contamination between staff.
- Staggered break times
Staggered break times can help reduce the number of people in a space at once. Consider carefully, as staff sometimes feel they need 'downtime' with their colleagues, particularly during stressful working periods.

Useful sources for further reading and information

- Follow the Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care on Twitter
www.twitter.com/sturdy_deborah
- Sign up to the regular Adult Social Care Update newsletter
[Sign up for emails \(dhsc-mail.co.uk\)](https://www.dhsc-mail.co.uk)
- Visit the DHSC social care blog space
[Social care \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk)