

**Worcestershire Clinical Directors
Position Statement on Patient PPE
Correct as of 22.4.20**

The PHE advice for patient use of PPE was updated on 17th April:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

9. Patient use of PPE

In clinical areas, communal waiting areas and during transportation, it is recommended that possible or confirmed COVID-19 cases wear a surgical face mask if this can be tolerated. The aim of this is to minimise the dispersal of respiratory secretions, reduce both direct transmission risk and environmental contamination.

A face mask should **not** be worn by patients if there is potential for their clinical care to be compromised (for example, when receiving oxygen therapy via a mask). A face mask can be worn until damp or uncomfortable

We have sought advice from system leaders as to interpretation of the new PPE advice above when considering patients who are not currently reporting symptoms of Covid-19.

The Director of Public Health for Worcestershire has stated as follows:

The PPE guidance is clear that there is no evidence of effectiveness of all asymptomatic patients wearing masks. Only shielded patients should routinely wear surgical masks

Table 4 where there is sustained transmission in the community – this only refers to staff wearing PPE not patients

We have confirmed that this remains the policy of our community trust, social care, and the acute trust.

We are determined to comply with the very latest PHE advice around PPE in order to protect our staff and patients. However, it is very difficult to exceed this advice where there is a known shortage of PPE. Were we to apply a patient mask at every contact, this would use around 2500 masks per week across Worcestershire, with a significant risk that we would exhaust our supplies.

Furthermore, there needs to be a system-wide response to Covid-19, and our system partners are clear in their policy. Herefordshire GPs are following the same policy too.

Our policy on patient face masks is therefore as follows:

Red Hubs (symptomatic Covid-19):

Patient to wear face mask

Amber Hubs:

- 1) Patients attending for scheduled appointments do not need to wear a face mask.
- 2) Patients attending for unscheduled/emergency appointments, a risk assessment will be carried out and a facemask offered as required

We are aware that the government is currently reviewing the subject of the general population wearing facemasks, and will continue to abide by all relevant guidance as and when it is updated.

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