

COVID-19 Infection, Prevention and Control risk mitigations for Blood Collection Sessions, Blood Collection Donation Clinics and Plasma for Medicine Clinics.

Please note any updates or amendments to these controls are noted in purple font

Government advice is clear that a “social distance” of 2m must be maintained where possible. This means that if individuals can be 2m apart then they should be. Government advice also concedes that it may not always be possible for workplaces to maintain 2m social distance and undertake business critical activity. The collection of blood and plasma products is clearly a business-critical activity. Where 2m social distance cannot be maintained the government has identified that 1m+ additional mitigations would provide a similar level of protection as 2m. Therefore, on Blood Collection sessions, Blood Donation Clinics and Plasma for Medicine Clinics, the following controls must be implemented to ensure that social distance of 2m is maintained or if not possible 1m+ mitigation is in place at all times.

Elimination

- Blood Donation sessions, Donation Clinics & Plasma for Medicine clinics have COVID-19 screening and triage arrangements in place for donors attending sessions and/or clinics.
- MPD110/7 – Pandemic Planning – Management and Layout of Donor Sessions
- Colleagues must follow the NHSBT Algorithm which is in place for England when it comes to close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual inside or outside of their household. All colleagues must take a PCR Test and can only return to work where the result is negative. The guidance takes into account colleagues vaccine status and utilises NHSBT Internal Test & Trace where the Positive contact is a household contact where an individual risk assessment is conducted (see Appendix A for the England Algorithm)
- Colleagues who have come into contact with a Positive individual with a new COVID-19 variant will be given advice from NHS Test & Trace and should follow this and report to their manager all guidance given.
- Colleagues must be vigilant to the symptoms of COVID-19 and all new variants and if colleagues have these must not attend work and seek a PCR Test. The three main recognised symptoms include
 - Continuous cough
 - Temperature
 - Loss or change to sense of smell/taste
- COVID-19 related screening questions to be asked of Donors ahead of their appointment, including:
 - Have you had the recent onset of a new continuous cough?
 - Do you have a high temperature?
 - Have you noticed a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell?
- If the Donor has any of these symptoms, however mild, they should stay at home and reschedule their appointment.

Substitution

- Ensuring any changes to entrances, exits and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled donors. For example, maintaining pedestrian and parking access for disabled donors.
- Using outside spaces for queuing where available and safe, for example some car parks.
- Using safe outside areas for break

Engineering Controls

- Calculate the maximum number of donors to allow social distancing measures to be maintained and limiting the number of appointments at any one time.
- Consider total floorspace as well as likely pinch points and busy areas.
- Reviewed layouts and processes to maintain social distance between Donors being attended simultaneously.
- Ensure that space is maximised to allow donors to sit at least 1m apart (as per IPC Guidance Dec 2021).
- Use floor markings to help people comply with social distancing guidelines particularly in donor interaction zones.
- Adjust how people move through the session to reduce congestion and contact between donors, for example, queue management or one-way flow.
- Ensure all new venues identified during the current outbreak have ability to maintain social distancing rules.
- Reduce Number of beds in line with venue ventilation risk assessments and ensure that social distance between beds is in place as guided by the risk assessment as some donors will be required to remove their masks whilst on the donation bed/chair.
- Maintain social distance between donor and colleague undertaking triage questions and where not possible (temperature check) implement additional 1m+ mitigation
- Maintain social distancing in waiting areas when donors wait for their appointments. When waiting areas can no longer maintain social distancing, move to a 'one-in-one-out' policy.
- Ensure waiting donors maintain social distance.
- Adapt a sensible approach to maintain adverse events monitoring when tea table is in use.
- Arrange mealtimes to enable staff to maintain 2m Social distance.
- Maintain 2m Social distance during team brief or any other training.
- Implement physical changes like barriers or screens to protect colleagues in reception and welcome. This will not be required between the Donor Carer and donor during venepuncture
- Stagger break times to reduce pressure on the staff break rooms or places to eat and ensures social distancing is maintained in staff break rooms.
- COVID-19 screening questions for donors and visitors to read upon arrival to ensure everyone who enters the donation session is well and has not had any recent illness.
- Keep the facilities well ventilated by fixing doors and windows open where appropriate.
- Minimise contact between different Donor Carers while caring for a donor.
- Review working practices to minimise the duration of contact with the donor
- Make hand sanitiser available to all on entry to session where safe and practical.
- Insist donors, visitors and colleagues sanitize their hands/use alcohol hand rub (hand sanitizing gel) before entering the session environment.
- Ensure suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying are available.
- Increase visible hand hygiene using soap and water or hand sanitiser Increase regular and visible cleaning of frequently touched surfaces Increase regular cleaning of ICT and communication devices
- Minimise how frequently equipment is shared between Donor Carers by frequently cleaning between use and assigning to an individual.
- Provide more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish clearance.
- Instruct colleagues to avoid touching the face, particularly mouth, nose and eyes.
- Instruct colleagues to cover mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing and put used tissues in nearest bin immediately, which may be clinical waste, then wash/sanitise hands.

Administrative controls

- Operating an appointment-only system.
- When booking an appointment, asking the donor if they can attend on their own,
- Informing donors of guidance about visiting the premises prior to and at the point of arrival, including information on websites, on booking forms and in entrance ways.

- Reminding donors who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines.
- Reminding donors who are accompanied by children over 11 that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and that the child is required to wear a face covering whilst on session, unless they are exempt.
- Asking donors to arrive at the scheduled time of their appointment.
- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, to avoid touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely.
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage.
- Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces.
- Putting up a visible cleaning schedule; keep it up to date and visible.
- Providing clear guidance on expected donor behaviours, social distancing, and hygiene to people before arrival, when scheduling their appointment, and on arrival, for example, with signage and visual aids.
- Explaining to donors that failure to observe safety measures will result in services not being provided.
- Providing written or spoken communication of the latest guidelines to both colleagues and donors inside and outside the premises. We should display posters or information setting out how donors should behave on session to keep everyone safe.
- Consider the needs of those with protected characteristics, such as those who are hearing or visually impaired.
- Providing a safety briefing of on-site protocols, rules for shared areas and key facilities, for example, handwashing
- Ensuring latest guidelines are visible and available
- Informing donors that they should be prepared to remove face coverings if asked to do so by staff for the purpose of identification or to have refreshments/fluids
- Ensuring information provided to Donors and visitors, such as advice on the location or size of queues, does not compromise their safety.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Donors must always wear a face covering during the donation process. Where the donor is required to remove the face covering social distance rules must be applied.
- In the donation environment donor carers / nurse will be in close contact with a number of donors without being able to carry out social distancing. In normal circumstances, these donors will be healthy. As an additional risk reduction measure and to reassure colleagues, the use of fluid repellent surgical face masks for front line colleagues is being implemented. This is a precautionary measure.
- When available the wearing of masks is mandatory. In team base, when travelling in NHSBT vehicles as per the risk assessment, during the load and unload of vehicles, at triage and when working on session to provide reassurance to colleagues and donors and during breaks if social distance cannot be maintained.
- All donor carers and nurses to be trained in how to wear, use and remove masks and training package to include information on the hazard, risk and controls.
- Dispose of all used masks in waste.
- If there are any shortages of masks, provide to individuals carrying out:
 - Close contact services
as these roles cannot maintain 2m social distancing.
- If supply totally interrupted the level of risk is still low due to other control measures in place.
- The wearing of surgical face masks does not reduce the need for hand hygiene and colleagues do not attend work if they or any household member has symptoms of COVID-19.
- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) in warm/hot environments increases the risk of heat stress. This occurs when the body is unable to cool itself enough to maintain a

healthy temperature. Heat stress can cause heat exhaustion and lead to heat stroke if the person is unable to cool down.

- Measures to control the temperature of clinical environments and enable staff to make behavioural adaptations to stay cool and well hydrated should be made. Staff may require more frequent breaks and the frequency of PPE changes may increase, with a resulting increase in demand.
- If there are shortages of masks then provide available masks to individuals carrying out:
 - screening, and
 - venepuncture, and
 - the nurse.As these roles cannot maintain social distancing. If the supply is totally interrupted the level of risk is still low due to other control measures in place.
- Staff working in warm/hot conditions should follow the advice:
 - + Take regular breaks if possible, find somewhere cool if you can.
 - + Make sure you are well hydrated (checking your urine is an easy way of keeping an eye on your hydration levels – dark or strong-smelling urine is a sign that you should drink more fluids).
 - + Be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat stress and dehydration (thirst, dry mouth, dark or strong-smelling urine, urinating infrequently or in small amounts, inability to concentrate, muscle cramps, fainting). Don't wait until you start to feel unwell before you take a break.
 - + Use a buddy system with your team to look out for the signs of heat stress (e.g. confusion, looking pale or clammy, fast breathing) in each other.
 - + Between sessions, try to stay cool as this will give your body a chance to recover.
- Managers are to consider whether more staff may be needed per shift to maintain service levels while accommodating increased staff breaks.
- Disposable gloves and apron are available when carrying out additional cleaning activities during the pandemic.
- Disposable gloves and aprons are available and mandatory when dealing with an unwell donor
- Using disposable items

As such controls are acceptable and have been reviewed in Dec 2021 in line with current Government and NHS & NHSBT Guidance & IPC Guidance

Appendices

Appendix A – England Test & Trace Algorithm

Appendix A

