**General Principles**

* Novel Corona virus (COVID-19) is a respiratory virus.
* It is mainly spread by droplets from the nose and mouth.
* These droplets are under the influence of gravity and usually settle within 2m of the infected person.
* Hands can be a major way of spreading infection, as they can easily be contaminated from surfaces where droplets have landed, or where other contaminated hands have been.

**To protect against this virus there are two main things you can do:**

**Contact Precautions:**

* This means protecting yourself from touching any surfaces, objects and people.
* Strict hand hygiene is vital.
* Whilst soap & water, and/or Handgel are both effective at removing the virus, soap and water is the preferred option.
* Avoid touching your face.
* Gloves and an apron provide protection when in close contact with a patient or client.

**Droplet Precautions:**

* This means protecting yourself from potentially infectious droplets.
* A fluid resistant surgical mask (FRSM) should be worn.
* Eye protection should be worn when in close contact with people (within 2 metres).

**Common sense**

* You don’t need to wear PPE when not in the vicinity of a patient or their care environment
* Hand hygiene is essential at all times, whether at home or at work
* Observe guidelines around social distancing.

**Personal Protective Equipment in the Community**

* For provision of direct care to any member of a household where one or more is a possible or confirmed case, plastic aprons, FRSMs, eye protection and gloves should be worn.
* If you are caring for more than one person in the household you do not need to change your mask, this is classed as sessional use.
* You should change your mask after each visit to a household, or it becomes wet, soiled, or no longer fits.

**Other Visiting Professionals (e.g. GPs, Specialist Nurses etc) are advised to ensure these steps are followed:**

* Can a telephone call, or Near Me session be considered?
* Can you talk to the patient or client from outside? If not, follow the guidance above.
* Try to follow social distancing where possible.
* Practice strict hand hygiene as per National Infection Prevention and Control manual.

**When to replace your mask:**

* If your mask becomes wet or soiled, or is no longer fitting
* You must undertake hand hygiene after removing your mask and before applying a new one
* If you leave the clinical area (or client/patient’s house) -
* Discard it, by placing it within a plastic bag with all other PPE and clinical waste
* Advise that this bag should be kept for 72 hours before placing into the household waste; this is to reduce any virus which may be on the surfaces
* Don’t put it in your pocket for later!

**Guidance, Posters and Learning Materials**

If you need help:

Please contact your line manager for practical issues regarding sourcing PPE.

If you require infection control advice please email the following address with your question: [high-uhb.infectionpreventionandcontrolteam@nhs.net](mailto:high-uhb.infectionpreventionandcontrolteam@nhs.net)

Please ensure you follow your employers guidance regarding occupational health, health & safety, waste disposal and procurement.

NHS Highland Occupational Health: [high-uhb.OHAdmin@nhs.net](mailto:high-uhb.OHAdmin@nhs.net)

Highland Council Occupational Health: [Occupational.HealthReferral@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Occupational.HealthReferral@highland.gov.uk)

Argyll and Bute Council Occupational Health: xxx