PPE for mental health professionals working in inpatient, emergency and secure settings
Royal College of Psychiatrists

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This information is based on government guidance and aims to clarify what is required for staff working specifically across mental health settings. *It should be read in conjunction with Public Health England’s revised guidance on Personal Protective Equipment in the NHS.*

The tables we have put together should be used as a guide in helping you and your organisation think about PPE in your setting. We will keep this section updated should government subsequently revise their guidance.

For mental health professionals and non-clinical staff working in inpatient settings and emergency assessment areas/departments, the following PPE guidelines apply. This includes the following settings:

- Liaison mental health services
- All adult acute inpatient wards
- All older adult inpatient wards
- All inpatient wards for children and young people
- All inpatient facilities for those with intellectual disabilities
- Specialist eating disorder units
- Mother and baby units
- PICU
- All secure inpatient wards
- Prison healthcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description/item</th>
<th>Non-direct patient care (not within 2 metres)</th>
<th>Direct patient care on inpatient ward/ED assessment area (within 2 metres)</th>
<th>Direct care in secure settings and PICUs (within 2 metres)</th>
<th>Direct care on inpatient wards/secure care to shielded patients (within 2 metres)</th>
<th>Restraint and rapid tranquillisation</th>
<th>Direct patient care using AGPs e.g. non-invasive ventilation for ECT</th>
<th>Patient transfers (within 2 metres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disposable gloves</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable plastic apron</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>x **risk-assess</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✓ Risk-assess single use</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗ Single use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable fluid-resistant gown</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗ Single use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical mask for patients (reverse barrier)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗ Single use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask</td>
<td>✓ Sessional use</td>
<td>✓ Sessional use</td>
<td>✓ Sessional use</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗ Single/sessional use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filtering face piece respirator</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✗ Single use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye/face protection</td>
<td>✓ Risk-assess sessional use</td>
<td>✓ Risk-assess sessional use</td>
<td>x *risk-assess</td>
<td>x *risk-assess</td>
<td>✓ Risk-assess single use</td>
<td>✓ Single use</td>
<td>✓ Risk-assess single/sessional use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*The national infection prevention and control (IPC) team have determined that neither spitting nor nasogastric (NG) feeding are aerosol generating procedures (AGPs). The same level of PPE (FRSM, apron and gloves, with additional eye protection if felt necessary) is therefore sufficient.

** NAPICU guidance suggests this should be risk assessed.

Important notes

1. **AGPs** - The full list of aerosol generating procedures can be accessed [here](#) [note AGPs are undergoing a further review at present]. ECT falls into the category of non-invasive ventilation. Nasogastric feeding is **NOT** considered to be aerosol generating according to NHS England & Improvement.

2. **Single use** refers to disposal of PPE or decontamination of reusable items e.g. eye protection or respirator, after each patient and/or following completion of a procedure, task, or session; dispose or decontaminate reusable items after each patient contact as per Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs).

3. **A single session** refers to a period of time where a health care worker is undertaking duties in a specific care setting/ exposure environment e.g. on a ward round; providing ongoing care for inpatients. A session ends when the health care worker leaves the care setting / exposure environment. Sessional use should always be risk assessed and considered where there are high rates of hospital cases. PPE should be disposed of after each session or earlier if damaged, soiled, or uncomfortable.

4. **Risk assessed use** refers to utilising PPE when there is an anticipated /likely risk of contamination with splashes, droplets or blood or body fluids.

5. Initial risk assessment should take place by phone prior to entering the premises or at 2m social distance on entering; where the health or social care worker assesses that an individual is symptomatic with suspected /confirmed cases appropriate PPE should be put on prior to providing care.

6. **Eye/face protection** – this may be single or reusable face/eye protection/full face visor or goggles.