

## Working Safely through the Covid-19 Crisis

This document sets out North Wales Wildlife Trust's response to the risks associated with Covid-19 to its staff, volunteers and visitors, including contractors and temporary workers, as well as any members of the public who might be affected by the Trust's operations.

### The Trust and our people: the hazard from Covid 19.

In light of the C-19 crisis the Trust is committed to protecting our staff, volunteers and other people we work with, and to playing our part in managing the current situation. As such this risk assessment has been created to protect those people who are returning to work after the initial 'Lock-Down'. We understand that people have concerns and the Trust will not expect any staff or volunteers to undertake activities that put them at unreasonable risk, or that causes them stress or anxiety as a result of C-19.

Covid 19 is a hazard, the virus is spread in minute water droplets that are expelled from the body through sneezing, coughing, talking and breathing. The virus can be transferred directly by inhalation or via the hands and from there to surfaces, then from surfaces to the face (normally by touch) where it can enter the body via the mouth, nose or eyes. It may also enter the body via breaks in the skin. It can survive on surfaces for a period after transfer (depending on such things as the surface type, its moisture content and temperature), but C-19 virus environmental survival periods are not certain and so we should assume it could be indefinite. We have concluded that if it is passed from one person to another, while many survive infection, some may die from the disease, and so should be regarded as a very serious hazard.

Some people, including those aged 70 and over, those with specific chronic pre-existing conditions and pregnant women, are clinically vulnerable. There is a further group of people who are defined, also on medical grounds, as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus – that is, people with specific serious health conditions.

In addition, there will be staff and volunteers who, while not identified as clinically vulnerable may, for other reasons consider themselves vulnerable. This would include their own; age, general physical or mental health, or because others in their household may be vulnerable.

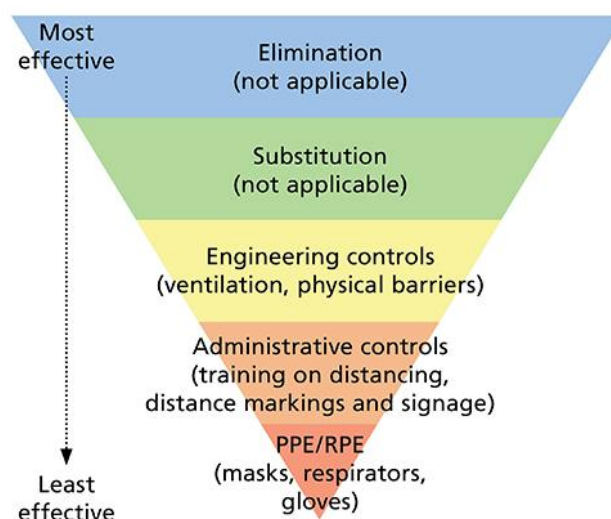
The Trust will work with all our identified and declared vulnerable people to protect them, including redesigning work patterns to allow them to work from home.

### Our Approach

This assessment is the highest level document in our approach to dealing with the hazard posed by Covid 19. Elimination is outside the control of the Trust until a vaccination is available and substitution is not possible. It therefore summarises the mitigation taken to reduce the risk, applying a hierarchy of control illustrated opposite. This information cascades through our health and safety policy and its processes to the level of activity risk assessments.

<https://iosh.com/resources-and-research/our-resources/communicable-diseases/coronavirus/returning-safely/risk-assessments/>

Covid-19 hierarchy of control



## **Engineering controls**

These are physical controls such as barriers, ventilation, the way we lay-out the work place and how we provide equipment.

- Mitigation is focussed on touchpoints and face-to-face contact.
- Workshops and offices are being re-organised to gradually allow more people to return to work whilst keeping staff apart, eg single occupancy offices, perspex screen between desks, separate tool storage areas.
- Shared facilities in offices (including toilets) will be allocated to an individual during the working day and cleaned before the start of the next day.
- All bird hides remain closed due to their confined nature and the difficulty in maintaining hygiene standards.
- High profile/usage sites are being assessed for pinch points and other key hazards.
- Vehicles are not shared; staff either use their own vehicle to travel to/from work (not public transport) or a Trust vehicle, which is allocated to a single member of staff. If a vehicle does need to be used by another person, it is cleaned before they use it.

## **Administrative controls**

This is the way we organise our workforce, managing hygiene and welfare, practicing social distancing, signage and information.

Our main way to reduce risk to our staff and volunteers is to keep numbers in any one area to a minimum. Work from home is preferable. We will review the provision we have made for 'homeworking' on a regular basis and ensure that staff and key volunteers have home work stations and conditions suitable for the type and duration of homeworking they expect to be undertaking.

If this is not practical, then there is a limit set for the number of people in offices and workshops at any one time.

Information on handwashing is provided and systems in place for cleaning touchpoints. Social distancing is maintained within buildings.

Signage has been put in place in offices and on the busier nature reserves, to remind visitors to keep their distance from each other and staff.

Certain types of work, particularly livestock husbandry, may not be safely carried out by one person. Should social distancing not be able to be maintained, there will be an agreed system in place to limit the time and frequency spent on the task, ensure the area is well ventilated and ensure it is the same team if it has to be repeated.

Educational activities, Area Group meetings, volunteer groups and face-to-face meetings all remain cancelled until Government advice changes.

## **Personal protective equipment**

While at the time of creating this risk assessment personal protective equipment has a high profile in the C-19 media, following the risk control hierarchy, it is recognised as the last resort, the final protection an organisation relies upon to protect their workforce. Only where all previous controls (elimination, substitution, engineered and administrative) have proven insufficient to protect people should it be considered.

## **Monitoring and Reporting**

It is recognised that there will be reduced direct supervision and oversight of working practice as a result of implementing social distancing measures. Line managers will undertake increased contact with staff by telephone, request feedback from staff and ensure photographic and written records are maintained.

## **Decision Making**

With the guidance changing on Covid-19 almost daily, this assessment will need to be regularly reviewed and updated. As a minimum this will be undertaken by senior staff at their monthly meetings. Changes to working practice will be phased and communicated. A step-by-step approach will require consultation with staff and approval of a Head of Department or the Chief Executive.

## **Further Information**

High level risk assessments are being up dated and a specific risk assessment for Covid 19 has been prepared. This will be cross-referenced in Trust site, task and daily risk assessments to incorporate Covid-19 requirements. These will be reviewed on a regular basis in order to comply with the latest government advice.