

ORGANISATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT

EXPOSURE TO AND CONTRACTION OF COVID-19

The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (and its subsidiaries) are fully committed to the health, safety and general comfort of our staff, volunteers and visitors, including contractors and temporary workers, as well as any members of the public who might come into contact with our operations. We are committed to playing our part in managing the current situation. 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.

What is the hazard?

C-19 is a novel strain of Coronavirus first identified in humans in Wuhan City, China in January 2020. It rapidly spread and developed into a worldwide pandemic. Several new variants have since been identified across the UK, some of which are more transmissible than the original virus.

The illness affects the lungs and airways. Common symptoms of coronavirus are a cough, a high temperature and shortness of breath. It should be regarded as a very serious hazard.

Who is at risk?

C-19 can make anyone seriously ill, but for some vulnerable groups of people, the risk is higher and some may die from the disease. The rapid roll out of the vaccination program, initially prioritising vulnerable groups and key workers, has dramatically reduced the number of people in hospital with Coronavirus, although some people cannot receive the vaccination and younger people still await a first or second jab.

Clinically vulnerable people including those aged 70 and over, those with specific chronic pre-existing conditions and pregnant women are still at risk although no longer required to shield. In addition, the C-19 crisis has caused many people considerable mental stress.

How is it spread?

The disease is spread mainly from person-to-person, usually via close contact. That could be via physical contact, like shaking hands with a contaminated person or touching contaminated surfaces. Simply being near an infected person who coughs, sneezes, or talks can expose you to their infected respiratory droplets.

It can survive on surfaces for a period after transfer (depending on such things as the surface type, its moisture content and temperature.)

Importantly some people, including children, young adults and those who have been vaccinated, may be capable of spreading it to others even though they don't have any symptoms.

Statutory control measures to limit transmission

WTSWW closely follow the Welsh government guidelines, including those relating to permitted activities as the national alert level changes. We expect everyone to follow these guidelines.

During the course of the pandemic there have been many updates to the Government's health and safety guidance, however, the basic 'Hands, Face, Space, Fresh Air' rules have not changed;

Social Distancing - stay 2 metres (3 steps) away from people outside of your household or extended household.

Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitiser if access to soap and water is not possible.

Face Covering – must be worn on public transport or in other indoor places if keeping 2m away from others is not possible.

Fresh Air - if you meet with anyone who is not part of your extended household, stay outdoors.

Work from home if you can

Reporting a self-isolation - Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 must immediately self-isolate and book a test. Staff and volunteers should inform their line manager as soon as possible.

Engineering controls

Site and activity specific Risk Assessments cover all WTSWW buildings, staff and volunteer activities.

Mitigation is focused on 'touch-points' and shared equipment and tools, pinch points (where people could congregate in confined spaces) and face-to-face contact. Offices, workshops and shared spaces have been re-organised to gradually allow more people to return to work as Alert Levels allow, with better ventilation and whilst keeping staff apart, BUT only if they cannot continue to work from home.

Offices: single occupancy and rotas, assigned workstations, one-way systems, back-to-back or side-to-side working. Face-coverings and open windows in shared spaces

Travel: Vehicles should not be shared; staff use their own vehicle to travel to/from work (not public transport) or a Trust vehicle. Active transport is encouraged and facilitated.

Activity risk assessments cover tools, separate tool storage areas, allocation of personnel activity related PPE and how staff and volunteers can work together safely.

Administrative Controls

All activities are constantly reviewed in line changes to the National or local Alert Level system.

Working from home remains the preferred option. When this is not possible, measures are in place to ensure compliance with the 2m social distancing guidelines. We continue to facilitate flexible working arrangements and the use of video conferencing for meetings. Additional cleaning regimes are in place for shared facilities, including vehicles.

Cafes at the Welsh Wildlife Centre and Parc Slip remain open for a take-away only menu with limited hours. Toilets and carparks will also be open. Retail spaces at PS, WWC and Lockley Lodge are open and Skomer island opened to limited day visitors on 27 April. Overnight accommodation on both Skomer and Skokholm will reopen as self-contained holiday accommodation in April/May.

Unsupervised volunteering activity and group activities under the direct supervision of a member of staff have been risk assessed. Group activity will only proceed where we are confident that social distancing can be maintained and we can comply with the government's TTP system.

Personal Protective Equipment

Where staff and volunteers already use PPE in their work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, this should continue.

The use of face-coverings and gloves (PPE) to protect against C-19 infection is a last resort. Only where all other controls are impractical is PPE included in the written risk assessment. The use of PPE does not guarantee that an activity can proceed.

Monitoring and Reporting

Reduced supervision and oversight of working practice will be a direct result of implementing social distancing measures and home or lone-working. Buddy details are regularly checked and updated. Line managers will stay in contact with staff by telephone/videoconference but with outdoor face to face meetings now an option.

Decision Making

Welsh Government updates the national position every three weeks. However, guidance from stakeholder groups is received daily as Covid-19 restrictions change. As a result, our activity and site specific Risk Assessments are regularly updated via the H&S Working Group and considered by the senior management team when necessary.

Communications

Public information will be updated on the WTSWW website and site social media channels. Changes to site opening arrangements will be clearly communicated (what facilities will be available to visitors?) The approach will be for a phased re-opening with only essential messaging in recognition of local sensitivities. Staff will continue to update volunteer groups locally.