

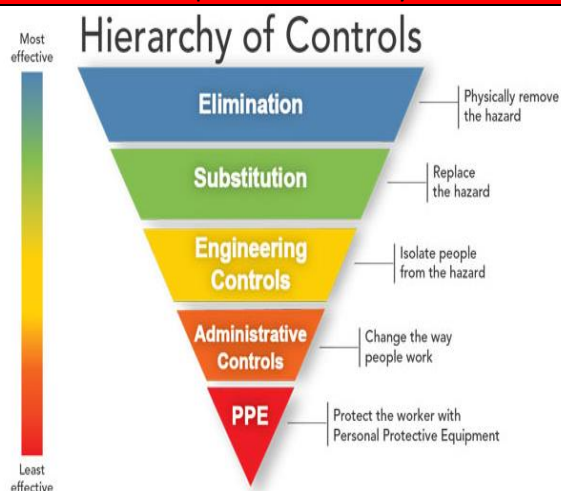
The Trust is aware that in the national press, research has been shared indicating that FFP3 masks should be worn by all staff working in COVID-19 high risk areas.

The current evidence and guidance [link here](#) states that Airborne PPE (an FFP3 mask, gown, gloves and eye protection) should be worn in the presence of Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP's). There is an additional statement to this guidance for high risk areas;

if an unacceptable risk of transmission remains following rigorous application of the hierarchy of control, taking these controls into account, it may be necessary to consider the extended use of RPE for patient care in this situation.

RPE is respiratory protective equipment, this would include items such as FFP3 masks (disposable and reusable) and powered respirators. Current hierarchy of control measures involve isolation of patients, treating patients using separate pathways, routine testing, regular application of cleaning methods paying close attention to high touch points and hand hygiene performed correctly at the correct moments. PPE, as guided by PHE, NHS E and HSE guidance is always the last choice of protection for staff.

Vaccination, regular screening, lateral flow device testing,
Can we deliver care in a different way to reduce occupancy
Socially distanced beds, screens, increasing air flow.
Change behaviour, Safari ward rounds to reduce movement of patients, avoid mixing at nursing stations etc.
PPE should be worn as the last level of control. This is an additional barrier and must be worn, removed and disposed of correctly.



NHS England/ Improvement, Public Health England, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies regularly review national and international research related. To ensure that we have a local and rapid understanding of this the Dorset ICS Infection Prevention and Control Cell will also review this new research.

Given the level of fully vaccinated patients and staff is increasing each day and that the incidence of patients with COVID-19 infection remains low within the Trust the current position is that PPE recommendations will remain in line with the national guidance.

We will continue to review this especially if vaccine escape variants become established; currently the variants circulating in this region are effectively protected against by the vaccine.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/996565/Vaccine_surveillance_report_-_week_25.pdf