

Standard operating procedure (SOP) for Health and Social Care staff car sharing for essential practice

Where possible Health and Social Care Staff (including bank or agency workers and those from the independent sector) should not car share with colleagues or students for the purposes of clinical placements or providing care. However, where a student/colleague does not own or have access to their own car the following points will reduce the risk. These points are also applicable to staff who must transfer patients/service users in their car.

This standard operating procedure has been developed to provide a number of key actions for all members of staff who, for the purpose of work, are required to travel with either a student, another staff member, a patient or service user.

Any vehicle used for the purpose of work should be road worthy and in a good state of repair; local policies regarding driving for work must be adhered to, it is the responsibility of the individual health and social care worker to check with their insurance provider that his guidance will not have implications for their insurance cover.

The document sets out practices aimed at reducing the risk of transmission of infection whilst car sharing for the purpose of essential service provision. This may take the form of:

- a member of staff sharing a car with a student to ensure clinical placements can take place
- staff members required to share a car to provide care,.
- the movement of patients or service users on certain occasions such as taking a child to a placement or essential rehabilitation for service users with learning disabilities.

The SOP is based on interpretation of the national COVID-19 guidance as below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#private-cars-and-other-vehicles>

General information for health and social care workers (including bank or agency workers and those from the independent sector) and students:

- Any member of staff or student on supernumerary placement or work experience must not report to work/placement if they are unwell or have symptoms of COVID-19 and should follow local absentee policies and procedures.
- Any member of staff or student on supernumerary placement or work experience must not report for work or placement if they are a contact of known positive case of COVID -19 until they have completed 14 days of self-isolation and are well for work. Local absentee policies and procedures to be followed.
- Any staff or student who is 'shielding' should consult their line manager before returning to work.

- Where possible car sharing should be arranged between the same people on each occasion.
- All staff and students should be aware of COVID-19 guidelines as outlined by Public Health England (PHE) including social distancing, use of PPE, hand hygiene and environmental cleaning.
- Students should be advised of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and be advised of the actions to take should they or a member of their household become unwell with same.
- All staff and students should be advised on the care and management of their uniform as per local guidance.

General information for patients/service users:

- The driver of the car must check with the patient or service user prior to the journey if they are unwell with symptoms of COVID -19 or if they have been in contact with a known positive case of COVID-19.
- If the patient/service user has symptoms of COVID -19 or has been a contact of a case of COVID-19 local guidance for the management of COVID d-19 must be followed. It is highly unlikely that the journey will take place unless a risk assessment is carried out and it is thought that the risk of not transferring the patient/service user is greater than the risk of COVID-19 exposure to others. An example of this may be safeguarding issues. In this case, advice must be sought from the local Infection Prevention and Control Team before the journey takes place.

Car sharing:

- Hand hygiene should be carried out before entering the car on every occasion.
- The use of wipeable seat covers should be risk assessed when sharing the car with a patient or service user and the car seats are not waterproof. This risk assessment should take into account the capacity of the passenger to comply with hand hygiene and refrain from touching surfaces, the likely hood of bodily fluid spillages must also be considered.
- The passenger should sit in the backseat on the passenger side of the vehicle.
- The passenger should wear a disposable fluid resistant mask if tolerated as 2m distancing cannot be achieved.
- The driver should wear a disposable fluid resistant face mask if tolerated while driving.
- Adequate ventilation should be in place by opening the vehicle windows and/or the external vents.
- Seat covers and common touch points such as door handles, window adjusters, seatbelts and seatbelt points should be cleaned with a suitable product such as detergent wipes at the end of each journey, after each patient/service user and at the end of the day as a minimum.
- The car should be clean and clutter free and in a good state of repair, surfaces should be wipeable.