



## COVID-19: Delivery of essential items guidance

### Purpose

This guidance is for Fire service staff who undertake a risk-based approach to the delivery of essential items in support of the UK response to COVID19.

This guidance covers actions prior to the delivery of essential items as well as defining the appropriate PPE to be worn, in addition to social distancing.

### Background

As part of the Government's response to COVID19 the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) has adopted a risk-based approach in support of delivery of essential items. This action is taken in order to avoid the further spread of COVID 19 to vulnerable groups and other identified persons.

The Government's definition of vulnerable groups, including those who are shielded, is as follows:

- Aged over 70
- Aged under 70 with an underlying health condition, listed in the attached link ([Guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#))

The non-exhaustive list of potential actions to be completed would include:

- The delivery of shopping and other essential items
- The delivery of medication

This position is under constant review and may be subject to change based on the introduction of additional interventions.

### Strategic Intent

Activities are being undertaken to 'Delay' and 'Mitigate' the impact of COVID-19 across the UK in order to protect our communities. The NFCC strategic intentions that are pertinent to assisting local communities are listed below:

- To proactively protect our communities and limit the spread of COVID 19
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff in the pursuance of their duties
- To ensure that sectors response is coordinated and integrated with other responding agencies, promote shared situational awareness and joint understanding of risk.

## Key Principles

There are a number of key principles that underpin the arrangement of FRSs assisting local communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The principles have been agreed at a national level between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) the Fire & Rescue Services National Employers; the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), the Fire Officers Association (FOA) and Retained fire union (RFU)

This agreement defines the activities for which FRSs may be required to assist local resilience forums with as detailed below:

1. Ambulance Service Assistance; Ambulance Driving and Patient/Ambulance personnel support limited to current competence (Not additional FRS First or Co-responding) \*
2. Vulnerable persons - delivery of essential items
3. COVID-19 – Mass Casualty. (Movement of bodies)

*\* This guidance document is specifically for point 2 only, 'Vulnerable persons - delivery of essential items'*

It also stipulates that for the activities to be undertaken the following minimum safety requirements will have been met:

- The activity is risk-assessed
- appropriate delivery and management of any additionally necessary training is in place
- appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided
- appropriate management arrangements for Fire service staff are in place

## **Responsibilities of Employers**

Each service will select personnel who are suitably qualified to undertake the role

Whether FRS staff undertake these duties within their own organisation or work under any secondment and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) arrangements, the FRS will work with local resilience forums to ensure that the following minimum safety requirements are met for fire service personnel before they are operationally deployed:

- Appropriate delivery and management of any additional necessary training is in place
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided
- Appropriate management arrangements for Firefighters are in place
- Familiarisation with the risk assessments for activities fire service personnel will be expected to undertake and provide explanation of control measures contained within the risk assessments.
- Provide PPE in accordance with regulation and the most recent NFCC guidance '**COVID-19 – NFCC PPE Guidance**'.
- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of fire service personnel.

## Management of Fire service personnel

### Action

Prior to any delivery of essential items being undertaken, the referral partner or occupier should be asked by telephone to confirm:

- Have they received a letter from the Government identifying a person in the household as extremely vulnerable and being shielded from COVID 19?
- If anyone in the property is in self-isolation?
- If anyone in the property is showing symptoms of COVID 19 such as a high temperature (greater than 37.8°C)
- If anyone in the property is showing symptoms of COVID 19 such as a new, persistent dry cough or shortness of breath?

If the answer to any of the above is yes, then additional control measures may be required in order to complete the essential delivery.

### PPE

The PPE required to undertake the delivery of essential items in addition to social distancing is as follows

**Activities requiring interaction with people confirmed or suspected of having COVID19 where a distance of 2 metres (6ft) CAN be maintained. Doorstep deliveries.**

#### PPE – NFCC min requirements

PPE	Nitrile Gloves	Eye Pro	Fluid repellent Coverall suit or Fire Kit	Fluid repellent surgical mask ****	FFP3 respirator or equivalent
	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗

\*\*\*\* Fluid Resistant Surgical Mask (IIR type) to be worn if entering property.

### Additional considerations

The descriptors above detail the level of PPE that is recommended by the NFCC in relation to COVID19, based on the most recent PHE guidance. This guidance should be adopted by FRS staff as a minimum for the care of all possible COVID-19 cases; a dynamic risk assessment should be carried out to determine if a higher level or additional PPE is required.

Although not recommended should any FRS seek to reduce the level of protection provided any deviation should be subject of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

The NFCC acknowledge that some FRSs may wish to default to an alternative level of protection on occasion, again subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

Should staff attend a property where an individual appears to be in distress or unresponsive within the property, then a dynamic risk assessment should be undertaken and any requirements to enter the property only be taken as a last resort and in all circumstances in line with current NFCC guidance.

## **Hand hygiene**

After undertaking each activity, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand rub at the earliest opportunity.

Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and/or nose, unless you have recently cleaned your hands after having delivered essential items.

There are no additional precautions to be taken in relation to cleaning your clothing/uniform other than what is usual practice.

## **Training**

Due to the rapid escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgency of activating MOU arrangements, the training criteria for fire service staff has been tailored to meet the needs of the activities to be undertaken and within the parameters set out in the National agreement between NFCC, National employers and Fire brigade union, the Fire Officers Association and Fire & Rescue Services Association. Minimum training requirements will include:

- Driver familiarisation with type of vehicles Fire service staff are likely to drive.
- Instruction on items being delivered into local communities.
- Training and familiarisation with PPE to be utilised.
- Provide information on shifts to be worked, work routines and welfare arrangements.
- Safeguarding

Fire service staff are to have relevant DBS check and certified driving license for vehicle being driven.

## **Welfare arrangements**

It is recognised that undertaking the duties as described above are outside of the usual requirements for FRS staff. To ensure that the requisite levels of welfare support are considered, each service should ensure its respective Stress Management principles are adopted.