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The Royal College of Radiologists

## **Guidance for Imaging and Radiotherapy services during the Covid-19 pandemic: Use of face coverings for patients, clients and carers**

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On 29 April 2020 Sir Simon Stevens wrote to NHS Providers with the goal of re-opening NHS services that had been paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He requested NHS local systems and organisations to start providing non-Covid-19 urgent services as soon as possible<sup>1</sup>.

On 11 May 2020 the government followed up on this statement, urging people who could go back to work safely to do so. It advised those who are in crowded places and unable to socially distance to wear face coverings. Health Minister Jo Churchill said:

*Today, thanks to the evidence provided by our expert scientists, we are advising people to consider wearing a face covering if they can in enclosed public spaces where social distancing is impossible, for example on public transport or in shops. This may help prevent you spreading the virus to others<sup>2</sup>.*

This guidance is for Imaging and Radiotherapy services to help promote good practice when social distancing cannot be managed. It is offered to members to support the development of local policy.

The use of face coverings in such situations is aimed at reducing the spread of Covid-19 between patients or clients and their carers, as staff will be wearing PPE as appropriate. There is evidence that cloth coverings can decrease the amount of virus passing from the wearer by as much as 99%. Therefore, for maximum effect:

**Face coverings should be worn by everyone in crowded areas where social distancing is not possible<sup>3</sup>.**

Please note that this advice is intended to supplement the most important and effective measures of physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, not to replace them.

We hope this guidance is helpful to those developing local policies in Imaging and Radiotherapy services concerning face coverings for patients, clients and carers.

## References

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