

Chair  
Sarah Newton  
Health and Safety Executive  
10 South Colonnade  
Canary Wharf  
London  
E14 4PU

Tel: I&S

[Chair@hse.gov.uk](mailto:Chair@hse.gov.uk)  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

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via email

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your letter of 25 November 2021. As the issues you have raised are operational, executive colleagues have contributed to this response, including Professor Andrew Curran. I will address the issues you raise but I will start by acknowledging the enormous contribution workers in the NHS have made to our national response to the pandemic.

While COVID -19 is first and foremost a public health matter, there are relevant health and safety requirements, including under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 as amended to protect workers who come into contact with COVID-19 either as a direct consequence of their work e.g., those who carry out research work on the virus, or else may be exposed in the course of their work e.g., healthcare workers caring for infectious patients.

All employers, including those in the NHS, are expected to assess the risks to their workers created by their work activity and to implement appropriate measures to control these risks. In making this assessment, employers are expected to use up to date and relevant guidance.

The Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC), working closely with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the devolved administrations (DAs) are the government experts in public health and infection control. These competent bodies lead the Government response including developing and publishing [Infection prevention and control for seasonal respiratory infections in health and care settings \(including SARS-CoV-2\) for winter 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) which is agreed and applied across the four nations.

We will not be undertaking a review of this guidance as this has already been done by DHSC, UKHSA and the DAs. We will however continue to provide, on request,