

**Black Country Women's Aid
COVID-19 risk assessment
All BCWA sites and services**



Name	COVID General risk assessment
Assessment last updated	September 2020
Assessment Author	Sara Ward, Chief Executive Officer
Assessment applies to	All Black Country Women's Aid (BCWA) employees
Assessment Purpose	<p>COVID 19 has brought many challenges to BCWA and BCWA has needed to respond swiftly and decisively to keep all employees and stakeholders safe.</p> <p>BCWA has responded in a variety of ways including changing service delivery models, on and offsite working and strengthened its IT infrastructure, and has relied upon the cooperation and support of all its employees to make changes effective and safe.</p> <p>BCWA understands that this is a rapidly changing environment and the organisation needs to respond swiftly and decisively when the need arises.</p> <p>This assessment brings together all previous risk assessments into one document and outlines the framework and principles within which BCWA employees will work.</p> <p>Each service area has agreed to the framework however each has identified additional risk assessments that are relevant to specific service areas. These service-specific risk assessments must be read in conjunction with the overall risk assessments.</p> <p>The assessment gives clear lines of accountability and responsibility; however at the core of the assessment is the responsibility of every individual. We are all individually responsible to keep ourselves and each other safe during this global pandemic.</p>
Related Policies and Procedures	<p>Health and safety policies and procedures</p> <p>Service specific risk assessments will be an addendum and retained within corporate documents</p>
Review	<p>Monthly via SMT meeting (this will be tabled for the 2nd meeting in each month)</p> <p>Employee feedback is encouraged via service manager or Tracey Alexander, Executive Officer.</p>

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Failure to follow government policies will lead to the spread of coronavirus infection amongst our workforce and anyone they come into contact with.

Control Measures (existing):

The government's Coronavirus Act 2020 and associated regulations and orders have set a framework to prevent the spread of the virus. BCWA has developed procedures and arrangements to work within those rules and guidance.

In accordance with the government guidelines the services provided by BCWA fall into the category of essential activities.

Each service area/location has produced a set of detailed COVID-19 operating guidance in line with government guidelines. This is published at local offices and all employees and service users are made aware of it.

Each employee has been issued guidance for use of equipment and restrictions on moving across sites.

Where employees attend other partner location/sites, risk assessments are received in advance to be assured that they meet appropriate standards.

Procedures/operating guidance are reviewed on a 2 weekly basis by senior managers and where necessary amendments made.

Where new guidance is published via [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus), immediate action is taken to adhere to new guidance and minimise risk.

Where there are spaces that are not contained within BCWA managed space BCWA request the host organisation's COVID-19 plans to ensure they meet government guidance to ensure employee safety as they move about the building.

All soft furnishings in BCWA offices are being replaced with wipe able surfaces.

Employees are instructed to work in designated areas with designated equipment that is exclusively available to them. No shared working is permitted.

BCWA workspaces are disinfected at the start of the day and at the end of the day. Employees must remain in agreed spaces and operate in "work bubbles" to minimise risk and contamination. All social distancing rules and COVID-19 standards still apply when working in bubbles.

Where an individual within a work bubble presents symptoms the operational manager will hold an emergency planning meeting and decide if all the team should be isolated and work to be undertaken.

BCWA ensures that all employees are informed via regular briefings by the CEO/trustees.

BCWA maintains an accurate database relating to employees (vulnerable, shielding, isolating, contracted COVID-19 cases) reporting, breaches and actions taken to ensure compliance at all times.

BCWA maintains an onsite and offsite operating model that meets all good practice guidance issued by the government. Health and safety risk assessments/homeworking agreements must be completed to ensure compliance by all employees working outside BCWA offices. BCWA to review homeworking risk assessments with individual employees via Microsoft Teams/appropriate video call platforms and or undertake home visits to ensure that employees are working within health and safety regulations.

Internal meetings: where these need to take place, BCWA has designated meeting spaces which meet COVID-19 standards (including cleaning, screens, available PPE etc.). No other identified space is considered a safe meeting space.

External meetings: employees are required to notify their manager of any external meetings they have been invited to. The manager is then to assess whether the meeting is to be attended by the employee. The manager must be satisfied that arrangements are in place for safe practice and COVID-19 risk assessments have taken place. The manager reserves the right to refuse attendance where it is felt the space will have a detrimental effect on the BCWA employee.

Where specialist equipment has been provided via Access to Work, BCWA and the employee must make arrangements for equipment to be available for home working for health and safety compliance. If equipment is not taken home BCWA will assess suitability of working from home.

All employees have access to full PPE applicable to the risks assessed within the service (sanitizer (alcohol-based at least 60-95% alcohol) hand wash (must wash for min 20 secs), disinfectant, face masks, gloves, face shields, desk dividers, signs)

BCWA practice social distancing across all sites and within each office/location and avoid any physical contact with colleagues and/or others.

Where employees display symptoms onsite they will be instructed to seek a COVID-19 test at a local test centre. Where employees have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace and requested to self-isolate BCWA require notification of this and will maintain a record to assess any patterns of infection/spread. BCWA will work within Public Health England's instructions for reporting incidents in an area.

Contractors on site have all been notified of new operating guidance and advised in advance of BCWA's onsite COVID-19 operating procedures. Contractors are requested to provide BCWA with their risk assessments prior to attendance on site and provide their staff with access to PPE. Where applicable BCWA will provide PPE where work is essential/emergency.

Access to the service by the general public is limited and access to services where possible are prearranged to ensure full compliance with COVID-19 guidance and BCWA operating procedures. Direct access is limited and prearranged where possible

Further Control Measures Required:

Assigned To:

Due Date:

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BCWA to audit control measure to ensure compliance and reduced risk for minimal cross contamination.	SMT/ HR administrator	Ongoing
BCWA to maintain a list of external meetings attended	SMT/HR administrator	Ongoing

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):		
Local areas BCWA work within are designated areas that are subject to local lockdown		
Control Measures (existing):		
BCWA to receive regular information from local authority public health departments via local commissioners on updates to area risks		
BCWA to keep up to date with local news regarding risks in the areas		
If an area is identified as a local lockdown CEO and relevant operational SMT to hold an emergency planning meeting to assess impact on employees, BCWA premises and services.		
Operational senior management team to notify employees affected and review operational bubbles, rotas and on and offsite working.		
If premises remain operational instructions for hyper-vigilance (including but not exclusive to cleaning, assessments)		
Monitoring local area lockdown on a daily basis.		
BCWA to agree unlocking when it is deemed safe and reasonable to do so by Trustees.		
Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Contact with customers or clients. Risk of infection being passed from contacts or with contaminated premises and equipment.

Control Measures (existing):

Access to the service by the general public is limited and access to services where possible are prearranged to ensure full compliance with COVID-19 guidance and BCWA operating procedures. Direct access is limited and prearranged where possible.

All access points have protective equipment that must be used prior to entry and on departure (hand sanitizer, hand wash and other PPE as appropriate).

Clients must sign in, complete health and safety assessments and provide up to date contact details as part of NHS test and trace procedures. If the client refuses BCWA reserves the right not to provide face to face support the client but to agree alternative support and make referrals to statutory agencies for help and support. This must be completed in designated areas and BCWA must be satisfied that there are no risks whilst in BCWA space (clients must confirm that they have no symptoms when accessing BCWA sites).

All group activity has been suspended until the foreseeable future within BCWA offices however alternative group support is available via IT platforms. Schedules are made available to relevant client group.

Contact with clients has been reviewed and service delivery redefined to ensure that risk of harm to victims of abuse is not affected during COVID-19. The main offer is telephone support however face to face meetings are available subject to individual risk assessment. Where appropriate BCWA link with statutory partners (police, social services, health) to refer risk and concerns to adult/child for statutory assessment.

A COVID-19 client survey has been undertaken to assess impact on client in relation to risk of harm and impact of support. Following this service models have been adjusted as appropriate.

Face to face meetings are available via 2 methods 1) emergency response (walk in request for help and support) and 2) pre booked appointment. Emergency response procedures have been developed to enable the service to deliver help and support. Full PPE and sanitised spaces are available. Clients are requested to complete health and safety checks prior to support. Pre booked appointment procedures have been developed and clients are advised of the procedures in advance of the appointment. Full PPE and sanitised spaces are available. Clients are requested to complete health and safety checks prior to support. Meetings/contact should last no more than 1 hour.

Contact rooms have been reviewed and those without natural ventilation are not used (this has reduced the space available). Rooms are sanitised before and after each use with appropriate furniture (no soft furnishings) and designated numbers allowed in each room identified, to enable the requirements of 2 metre distancing. Protective screens are used when supporting clients and if the appointments are set for a

period of time face masks are issued to the client and requested that they are a condition of the support/scheduled meeting. No toys or books are available during contact time to minimise contamination.

Reception spaces have been risk assessed and designated numbers identified in the space at any one time. Operating procedures have been developed, this includes practicing social distancing, protective screens and PPE is available for employees and clients. Clients are requested to arrive and leave within a designated time to enable full clean pre and post attendance. Furniture is appropriate (no soft furnishing) and all toys and books have been removed to minimise cross contamination.

If at any time there are more than the permitted number of clients in a space BCWA will provide support on a first-come, first-served basis and request clients attend the space at designated times.

Where clients display symptoms onsite they will be instructed to seek a COVID-19 test at a local test centre. BCWA will work within Public Health England's instructions for reporting incidents in an area.

Where a client informs BCWA that they have tested positive BCWA and we have been in direct contact with them we will assess if employee has followed guidance for social distancing. If employee is contacted by track and trace we will adhere to national guidance.

Notices and information are available for clients at all sites.

Clients are advised that there will be no physical contact e.g. handshakes, hugs, comforting or refreshments provided. Should refreshments be provided these must be in a disposable cup and disposed of by the client and/or removed by employee using appropriate PPE

Any items given to comfort e.g. tissues must be disposed of by the client and/or removed by employee using appropriate PPE

Counselling clients or those accessing the service on a regular basis, not one off contact, will be provided with a PPE pack. This will be signed for and clients should bring to each appointment. Where this is not provided the session/contact cannot take place and telephone support offered.

Due to cleaning/limited rooms available appointment times must be maintained by clients with an expectation of 5 minutes either side of the appointment being acceptable. Clients are encouraged to notify the service if there are any delays which may prevent the service operating as arranged. BCWA will reserve the right to cancel the appointment.

Clients accessing the service on site will be monitored on a weekly basis.

If a client has been tested and traced they are advised to notify the local public health department of when they were in contact with BCWA and identify employees who have supported them.

Offsite visits. Where it is essential to meet up with a client in service for support/subsistence/emergency, a risk assessment must be completed in advance detailing the location and space that the employee is due to enter. Where possible meetings should be undertaken in the open with relevant PPE being worn. The client is required to complete the health and safety checklist (as with an onsite visit) prior to

support. Employees are not permitted to access a client's home during COVID-19 unless risk assessed and with prior knowledge of the health and safety risks, ventilation, history of COVID-19 symptoms. Where provisions e.g. food parcels are being made available employees are required to hand them over allowing sufficient distance between themselves and the client.

BCWA will notify the local public health department of clients in contact with the employee should they test positive for COVID-19.

Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:
BCWA to establish individual room checklists and audit control measure to ensure compliance and reduced risk for minimal cross contamination	SMT/ HR administrator	Ongoing
Test and trace list of clients and follow up support recorded	Operational service	Ongoing
BCWA to maintain lists of PPE allocated to client and usage including DNAs, failure to bring equipment provided	Operational service	Ongoing
BCWA to review offsite visits on a weekly basis and monitor contact with clients	Operational service	Ongoing

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Employees working on or within other host sites. Risk of spread of infection from non BCWA employees into BCWA sites

Control Measures (existing):

A full list of employees working within a host site to be maintained and updated monthly by HR. BCWA to distinguish employees working on a regular basis e.g within LA partners and those that attend other sites on an ad-hoc basis e.g. visits to other premises

COVID-19 risk assessments for each host site to be shared in advance of BCWA employee working or attending a site for BCWA assurance that that they meet with government guidelines and BCWA standards.

PPE to be made available for employees working within host sites based upon their risk assessment and role/function.

Employee to notify BCWA HR if host has identified COVID-19 symptoms/cases within the space and or test and trace cases.

Where COVID-19 has been identified within a team member in the host space BCWA employee may be required to self-isolate in accordance with test and trace guidance.

If the employee has symptoms and/or contracts COVID-19 employee to notify BCWA advising of all people they have been in contact with both within host and BCWA so BCWA can assess risk. The employee must not enter into any BCWA office until after a period of isolation and or full recovery.

Employees working in host sites not to access BCWA sites without prior notice of their attendance and meeting BCWA onsite attendance numbers. On arrival to BCWA office a health and safety form to be completed.

Supervision and support to be provided offsite either via face to face meetings in host venue or via IT platforms.

Where the employee is required to drive this must be for essential work business and risk assessments on use of vehicle use to be followed.

Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Travel and vehicles. Risk of the spread of infection from vehicles and during travel.

Control Measures (existing):

Where possible employees are encouraged to use their own vehicle to arrive/depart from work. Employees are advised to ensure that surfaces and controls are routinely sanitised. Upon arrival employees are required to wash hands and/or sanitize their hands before touching any work surfaces and/or equipment.

If public transport is used employees are required to comply with public transport arrangements of PPE and social distancing. Upon arrival employees are required to wash hands and/or sanitize their hands before touching any work surfaces and/or equipment.

Employees are discouraged from providing transport to other members of staff. Should this be absolutely essential and related to work PPE must be worn during the journey. Employees are asked to consider sitting at the back of the car if not driving to maintaining some element of social distancing. Prior to the journey the employee is required to complete a health and safety risk assessment.

Employees are discouraged from providing transport to clients and their children. Should this be absolutely essential or if a second worker is required for any part of the work activity they will travel separately. Employee will;

- Complete the health and safety assessment for every individual on the trip/in the vehicle.

- Agree terms of the transportation with the client in advance of the journey.
- Provide Information on social distancing and hygiene to clients when entering the vehicle.
- Ensure that the employee cleans the vehicle to avoid cross contamination.
- Wash hands before and after entering the vehicle and upon exit. Hand sanitiser should be provided for use by all in the vehicle.
- Consider seating arrangements within the vehicle with as much room between passengers as possible. No more than 1 additional adult and 2 children in the vehicle at any one time.
- Windows should be open for ventilation regardless of the temperature outside.
- No car heating or air circulation to be used to minimise circulation of any virus.

Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:
BCWA to maintain a list of employees taking public transport to work	HR	Ongoing
BCWA to maintain a list of car journeys undertaken with clients	Operational manager	Ongoing
BCWA to review whether client journeys are viable	Operational manager	Every 2 weeks

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Donations new and 2nd hand. Risk of spread of infection from donated items to employees and clients

Control Measures (existing):

New items

New items can be received in to designated sites preferably on dates and times pre agreed with the donor (site list to be provided).

New items to be received by a BCWA employee at all times and a health and safety checklist must be completed by donor household. Schedule to be published and made available.

Non-BCWA staff are unable to handle new items donated into the service.

New items to be stored in a space away from all employees where the items can be quarantined for 72 hours.

New items will be distributed via a tracking system to ensure that all items are logged and distributed safely.

2nd hand items

BCWA are unable to receive 2nd hand donations during COVID-19.

Where items are brought to the BCWA offices the staff on site/commissionaire (Landchard House) will refuse items presented.

Where items are brought to BCWA offices and left at the building without the knowledge of a BCWA staff member, these items will be automatically sent to a cash for clothes agency so that BCWA can benefit from the generosity of its kind supporters.

Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:
List of items presented without prior knowledge	Fundraising team	Monthly
Cash for clothes totals to be published as part of annual accounts as part of donations	Finance	Annually

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Personal hygiene. Inadequate personal hygiene standards pose a risk of contracting the infection and cross contaminating surfaces.

Control Measures (existing):

BCWA employees are required to attend work meeting high standards of hygiene in accordance with their employment conditions.

All PPE to be made available at each site and used appropriately.

Notices available at all sites regarding personal hygiene.

Upon access to all BCWA sites employees are instructed to use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. This must be repeated when exiting and re-entering throughout the working day.

Employees are instructed to wash hands in line with government standards (soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds) and every 1-2 hours regularly especially where they may be moving throughout the office space.

Employees are instructed to only use their own equipment and not share with others. This included any PPE stationary, desk, chairs IT, telephones, mobile phones, crockery and cutlery. Where a phone has to be shared it is wiped down after each use.

Employees are encouraged not to touch their eyes, nose or mouth, if their hands are not clean nor touch or be close others.

Employees to maintain a 2m distance between each other at all times.

Employees are instructed not to make any physical contact with another employee, however if contact is made in the spirit of friendliness and safety employees must use accepted ways to connect such as connecting elbows.

Employees are instructed to ensure that any items e.g. tissues containing any bodily fluid must be disposed of using a plastic bag and then in a shared/office bin or pocketed until that procedure can be followed. Work surfaces must be disinfected/wiped down immediately after sneezing and or coughing and at the start and end of the day by the employee.

Employees are instructed that any potentially contaminated clothing and or personal protective equipment should be taken off and placed in a suitable plastic bag or container and disposed of.

Further Control Measures Required:

Assigned To:

Due Date:

SMT to assess personal hygiene of employees on a daily basis.

Service manager

Weekly

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Food and drink on and offsite. Potential for cross-infection.

Control Measures (existing):

On BCWA premises

Employees are required to provide their own food and drinks to sustain them through a working day.

Employees are required to provide and use their own crockery and cutlery for food and drinks provided and ensure that they are washed and stored on their desk at the end of each day.

Employees are encouraged not to share food from their crockery/cutlery or have communal food such as a biscuit box.

Where employees purchase food offsite they are required only to purchase food from outlets that meet high standards of government health and safety standards and maintain COVID-19 regulations to minimise potential exposure to infection.

Food and beverages purchased from outside that contains packaging must be disposed of in BCWA bins (emptied every day). No food or packaging must be left on desks. Any leftovers must be put in a plastic bag/package and stored in the BCWA fridge and consumed the next day. Food will only be stored for maximum 72 hours before it is removed and binned.

Off BCWA premises

Employees are instructed to politely refrain from consuming food and beverage offered by clients to avoid risks associated with cross contamination.

Employees are required not to touch food or equipment to prepare, store or present food/drinks in a client's/host home/venue.

Employees are instructed not to provide food or refreshments to clients at their own homes as a good will gesture. Only food via agreed methods e.g. foodbanks must be provided.

Employees are required to provide their own food and refreshments when working within a host agency or attending meetings.

Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:
Tea and coffee canisters to be cleaned out weekly	Agreed with teams	Weekly
Observations on a daily basis that desks are clean and food/drink free	Service manager	Daily

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Contacts on client premises. Potential for cross-infection at client premises.

Control Measures (existing):

Where possible employees do not enter into clients houses for appointments unless approved by senior manager and a risk assessment completed.

In advance of any face to face contact employees must be aware of the setting that they are going into e.g. house, flat, bedsit to assess in advance the logistics and privacy of the meeting and advise the client of the arrangements prior to the appointment.

Employees must complete where possible a pre site visit health and safety assessment and complete on arrive to the property to assess immediate risk or any changes to previous risk assessments.

Where face to face contact occurs employees must maintain 2 m distance with all parties involved and wear full PPE. If at any stage the COVID-19 standards are not maintained the employee must leave the premises to avoid further risk to themselves.

The employee is instructed to avoid shaking hands, hugs and other personal contacts.

Employees are instructed not to accept any items from the client to hold/read without PPE.

Before entering into a client's space/property the employee must sanitise their hands and/or wear gloves. The employee must avoid touching any surfaces within the client's space. On departure the employee is required to sanitize their hands prior to entering into their vehicle.

Workforce instructed that where any client contact may have been made or surfaces touched or handled, they must sanitise their hands before getting back into their vehicle.

If the employee returns to a BCWA office they are required to submit a risk assessment summary and sanitize prior to entering into any BCWA office.

If the employee returns home they are required to submit a risk assessment summary and sanitize prior to entering into their home to minimise cross contamination.

Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:
Client visit logs produced on a weekly basis	Service Manager	

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Personal protective equipment (PPE). Contact with potentially cross contaminated PPE may transmit infection.

Control Measures (existing):

Only PPE provided by BCWA must be used by its employees whilst at work. Personal purchases are not to be used under any circumstances.

Employees must not accept any PPE offered by any host agency or by a client

Employees must not share or borrow PPE from each other. Allocated PPE remains personal to whom it was issued.

If PPE is not available for the visit, meetings must not take place.

If PPE is left in offices and or communal areas BCWA will dispose of it in a plastic bag and put into communal bins (emptied daily) with all work surfaces disinfected and wiped down.

Employees are required to sanitise/disinfect all work areas before they are used

Employees are required to enter and exit using hand sanitiser and handwash.		
Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:
PPE service audit to take place to ensure appropriate use	Finance team	
Where PPE is left office audits to identify risks and employee notified	Service manager	
Office cleaning rota's and audits	Service manager	

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):		
Telephone and IT equipment. Contact with potentially cross contaminated equipment may transmit infection.		
Control Measures (existing):		
Employees will be provided with fully furnished workstations containing desk, chair, computer/laptop and telephone/mobile phone (as appropriate). These must only be used by the employee and wiped down at the beginning and end of the day.		
Employees must not utilise equipment provided or made available by clients during any offsite visit.		
Employees working within a host site must only use equipment agreed by BCWA and adhere to cleaning/sanitising requirements		
Employees must use sanitising PPE provided by BCWA to sanitise and clean BCWA equipment.		
Where equipment is returned to the corporate team by employees the employee is required to have cleaned it down before handing it over. The corporate team will quarantine the equipment for 48hours minimum before making it available to another employee. Before allocating, it will be cleaned again and once again in front of the employee receiving it.		
Further Control Measures Required:	Assigned To:	Due Date:
Asset register of equipment to be updated listing who has what equipment/ access to equipment	Finance team	Monthly
Once a month a through clean of all equipment	Service manager	Monthly

Hazard (hazard and hazard description):

Smoking. Inhalation of tobacco smoke and or vapours from e-cigarettes may make smokers vulnerable to coronavirus infection.

Control Measures (existing):

Employees are reminded to comply with no smoking regulations at all times

Where employees smoke within designated spaces they must not smoke in groups (2 defines a group). They must smoke on their own in the designated area to finish and or return to their work. BCWA does not pay for smoking breaks all time must be taken out of the breaks employees are entitled to. If more than one employee wishes to smoke in the designated area they must wait until the space is free and no one else present to minimise shared smoke/cross contamination. Smoking breaks are not permitted in line with current standards of employment. Employees are required to use their own time for smoking. Employees must enter into BCWA premises having washed their hands thoroughly and using hand sanitizer.

BCWA employees are advised not to smoke and to avoid inhaling tobacco smoke and e-cigarette vapour

BCWA employees must refrain from smoking when working within host agencies, visiting clients and or other partners.

BCWA can refuse entering into client space/property if it known that they are a smoker to reduce vulnerability to chest infections/COVID.

Further Control Measures Required:

Assigned To:

Due Date:

Random audit of smoking shelter space in each site

Service managers

Monthly

Identify smokers within the team

Service managers

Immediately

Review Date:

Reviewer:

Comments:

October 1st

Sara Ward
CEO