Federation House policy and guidance on face coverings

Subject to a number of exemptions, from 08.08.2020 and in line with government guidance, it will be a legal requirement in England for members of the public to wear a face covering in public indoor areas of the hotel. Signage will be provided at public entrances to promote compliance. This requirement does not apply in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

The risk to employees from COVID-19 is managed through a hierarchy or system of control including social distancing, high standards of hand hygiene, increased surface cleaning, fixed teams or partnering, and other measures such as using screens or barriers to separate people from each other. However, there are some circumstances when wearing a face covering is considered to be marginally beneficial, a precautionary measure and one that gives employees and members of the public confidence.
Accordingly, our policy for the wearing of face coverings by employees at Federation House is as follows:
+ When working in a public area where members of the public maybe present
+ When working behind the reception desk, bar and restaurant counters

**Guidance**Guidance in the form of questions and answers are provided as follows:

**Q - What is considered acceptable as a face covering?**A – A material that covers the nose and mouth and is secured to the head. Acceptable examples include cloth covering, surgical mask, bandana, etc. The aim is to form a barrier to virus-filled droplets that are coughed, sneezed or simply breathed out when talking. Face visors / shields are considered an acceptable alternative providing they cover the nose and mouth.

**Q – What exemptions are there in law for members of the public?**A – Children who appear to be or are stated to be under the age of 11, guests who state they have a medical condition, mental health condition or disability and guests who state they have a religious belief that prevents them from wearing a face covering. You do not require the guest to provide any evidence of their exemption. Their word is sufficient and should not be questioned.
Regardless of any exemption, any guests who are seated at a restaurant or seated at designated areas of the hotel for eating and drinking are exempt from the guest face covering requirement.

**Q – Can employees refuse to wear a face covering for medical reasons?**A – Yes. The list of exemptions in law for members of the public doesn’t apply to employees but there might be a number of reasons, medical or otherwise, why an employee might be unable to wear a face covering. Explore the use of a visor as an alternative but if the employee has a legitimate reason or concern, they do not have to wear one and you should not seek to obtain evidence of their reason for refusal.

**Q – Are there parts of the building where guests don’t have to wear a face covering?**A – Guests do not have to wear a face covering in their room, when using gym, in a private meeting room or when seated in a food and beverage area. A face covering should be worn in all other areas include the atrium area, reception area, corridors, and food and beverage areas (unless seated).

**Q – Where will signage be displayed?**A – Signage will be clearly displayed at each public entrance, including any separate entrances to the gym, F&B areas or meeting and event spaces.

**Q – Do I have to provide face coverings for my employees and guests?**A – If you are asking your employees to wear them you should provide them for use at work. This will assist with compliance and ensure a consistent standard of protection and appearance. Employees who prefer to wear their own face covering should be
allowed to do so providing it meets the minimum criteria, it does not contain any design that maybe considered offensive and is kept clean.

**Q – What should I do if a member of public in England enters the building without wearing a face covering?**A – It is more likely that someone will have forgotten their face covering so be prepared to offer them one. Keep a stock of them and do not remove them from the packaging until required. Use gloves or tongs to pass one to a guest.
Guests who are not wearing a face covering should be kindly made aware of our requirements, and more importantly that we are taking this measure to align with government guidance and to ensure we keep our colleagues and guests safe during this pandemic.

**Q – What should I do if a member of the public in England refuses to wear a face covering and they don’t claim to be exempt from wearing one?**A – The guest should be reminded of the requirement, rationale and that the guest is able to go to their room if they are unable to wear a face covering. The guest should be asked to spend as little time in the public areas as possible during their stay and that items can be delivered to their room if necessary. It is at the Duty Manager’s discretion to accept any guest refusing to wear a face covering.
Employees should contact the manager for resolution as appropriate. Never put yourself or anyone else in danger. Where necessary, for the protection of employees and guests, managers should contact the Police if necessary.

**Q – Can employees refuse to wear a face covering for medical reasons?**A – Yes. The list of exemptions in law for members of the public doesn’t apply to employees but there might be a number of reasons, medical or otherwise, why an employee might be unable to wear a face covering. Explore the use of a visor as an alternative but if the employee has a legitimate reason or concern, they do not have to wear one and you should not seek to obtain evidence of their reason for refusal.

**Q – If I am approached by a guest who is deaf, can I remove my face covering to allow them to read my lips?**A – Yes but you must remain at 2m social distancing or behind a screen.

**Q – Do I need to wear a face covering if I am doing some maintenance back of house?**A – If you are able to maintain 2m social distancing from others, you do not need to wear a face covering. Every effort should be made to maintain social distancing ahead of face coverings as a means of controlling the spread of Covid-19.

**Q - Do I need to wear a face covering when I am cleaning the public toilet?**A – If you have closed the toilet for cleaning then no you do not need to wear one while you are cleaning it because you are not coming into contact with another person. If you are cleaning the toilet with a colleague that you normally work with, you do not need to wear a face covering.

**Q – When I am cleaning bedrooms, do I have to wear a facemask in the corridor between rooms?**A – The length of time you are in close contact with another person passing by is very short and therefore the risk of infection is very low. If someone is passing you in a narrow corridor where you are unable to stay 2m from them, you should be moving to a safe place such as inside an unoccupied bedroom / wider section of corridor or avoiding face to face contact by turning your head as they pass by.

**Q – How often should I change my face covering?**A – There is no set frequency, but we would recommend they are replaced daily or if breathing becomes difficult, if they become visibly dirty or if they are damaged.

**Q – Why do I have to wear a face covering when working behind a reception desk where we have a screen?**A – The screen will provide the necessary protection from infection but we would like you to wear a covering to ensure that our guests feel confident and assured when they walk into the building that we have measures in place for their health and safety.

**Q – Do I put a disposable face covering in the normal waste bin?**A – Yes, they should go into the normal refuse. Please do not put them into a recycling bin.