

Health and Social Care Staff

Update Guidance - Symptoms of respiratory Infection or Positive COVID-19 Test

From 1 May 2022 there is no longer population wide access to testing for COVID-19 and contact tracing ceased. This new guidance sets out arrangements for health and social care staff as part of changes to wider regulations.

This guidance **applies to the following*** service user face to face roles:

- Staff who work with patients and services users in a face to face setting.
- Members of staff who are regularly in social care setting (for example, a care home or adults day care centre).
- Cleaners, catering and support staff – but does not include office based staff members who do not enter these settings.

Staff members who do **not** work in face to face settings with patients and service users should follow the Government's [Stay at Home](#) guidance for the general population, if respiratory symptoms occur and inform their line manager.

Routine Asymptomatic Testing

- Health and social care staff*, outlined above, should continue with twice weekly asymptomatic LFD testing.

Staff members with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19

- Anyone who has symptoms of a respiratory infection and a high temperature or does not feel well enough to go to work is advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people as set out in the 'Stay at Home' guidance (see link above).
- In addition, health and social care staff who work with patients and service users in a face-to-face setting, who have symptoms of a respiratory infection and a high temperature or do not feel well enough to attend work, are advised to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test as soon as they feel unwell. The result of the LFD test should be reported to their line manager.
- If the LFD test result is negative, they can attend work if they are clinically well enough to do so and they do not have a high temperature.
- If the staff member works with patients whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness despite vaccination, they should discuss this with their line manager.
- All patient/service user-facing health and social care staff who receive a negative test result should resume routine asymptomatic LFD testing when they return to work. If the result is positive, asymptomatic testing can be paused for 28 days from the date of the positive test. On returning to work, the staff member must continue to comply rigorously with all relevant infection control precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn properly throughout the day and remain vigilant for symptoms.

Staff members who receive a positive LFD test result for COVID-19

- If staff receive a positive COVID-19 test result, regardless of whether they have symptoms, they should not attend work for a minimum of 5 full days. Staff working with patients and service users in face-to-face settings can return to work when they have had 2 consecutive negative LFD test results (taken at least 24 hours apart). Those not working in such settings do not require testing before going back to work, as long as they feel well and do not have a high temperature.
- The first LFD test should only be taken 5 days after the day their symptoms started (or the day their first positive test was taken if they did not have symptoms); Day 0 is the date of the onset of symptoms (or the date of that first test if asymptomatic).
- If both LFD test results are negative, they may return to work immediately after the second negative LFD test result, provided they meet the criteria below:
 - they feel well enough to work, and do not have a high temperature.
 - a risk assessment is done and consideration is given to redeployment (if they work with individuals whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness despite vaccination), until 10 days after their symptoms started (or the day their first positive test was taken if they did not have symptoms).
 - they continue to comply with infection control precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE) is be worn correctly.
- If the day 5 LFD test is positive, they should continue to test daily until they have received two negative LFD test results, taken 24 hrs apart. If the staff member's LFD test result is positive on the 10th day, they should discuss this with their line manager who may undertake a risk assessment to facilitate a return to work.
- If staff working with patients and service users in face-to-face settings are feeling well enough to return to work but are still displaying respiratory symptoms, they should also speak to their line manager who should do a risk assessment.

Staff members who are contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19

- Patient-facing healthcare staff who have had overnight or household contact with someone who has had a confirmed COVID-19 test should continue with twice-weekly asymptomatic LFD testing.
- In addition, they should discuss ways to minimise risk of onwards transmission with their line manager. This may include considering:
 - redeployment to lower risk areas for patient/client-facing staff, especially if the member of staff works with patients whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness despite vaccination
 - working from home for non-patient-facing staff
 - limiting close contact with other people especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces.
- Whilst they are attending work, they must continue to comply rigorously with IPC measures and wear the appropriate PPE for the setting they are in.
- At any point, if the member of staff develops symptoms, they should follow the advice for staff with symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, as outlined above.