

Living with COVID-19

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Summary

- From **21 February** the Government is:
 - Removing the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice weekly asymptomatic testing.
- From **24 February** the Government will:
 - Remove the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. Adults and children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days.
 - No longer ask fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 to test daily for 7 days, and remove the legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate.
 - End self-isolation support payments, national funding for practical support and the medicine delivery service will no longer be available.
 - End routine contact tracing. Contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests.
 - End the legal obligation for individuals to tell their employers when they are required to self-isolate.
 - Revoke The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations.
- From **24 March**, the Government will:
 - Remove the COVID-19 provisions within the Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance regulations.
- From **1 April**, the Government will:
 - Remove the current guidance on voluntary COVID-status certification in domestic settings and no longer recommend that certain venues use the NHS COVID Pass.
 - Update guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people. This will align with the changes to testing.
 - No longer provide free universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England.
 - Consolidate guidance to the public and businesses, in line with public health advice.
 - Remove the health and safety requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments.
 - Replace the existing set of 'Working Safely' guidance with new public health guidance.

Key legal changes

- From 24 February, the Government will:
 - Remove the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. Adults and children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. After 5 days, they may choose to take a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) followed by another the next day - if both are negative, and they do not have a temperature, they can safely return to their normal routine.
 - No longer ask fully vaccinated close contacts and those under the age of 18 to test daily for 7 days, and remove the legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate.
 - End self-isolation support payments and national funding for practical support.
 - Revoke The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations. Local authorities will continue to manage local outbreaks of COVID-19 in high risk settings as they do with other infectious diseases.
- From 24 March, the COVID-19 provisions within Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance regulations will end. People with COVID-19 may still be eligible, subject to the normal conditions of entitlement.
- From 1 April, the Government will update guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people

Test & Trace

- From 21 February, the Government is removing the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice weekly asymptomatic testing.
- From 1 April, the Government will no longer provide free universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England
- From 1 April, there will be some limited ongoing free testing:
 - Limited symptomatic testing available for a small number of at-risk groups - the Government will set out further details on which groups will be eligible.
 - Free symptomatic testing will remain available to social care staff
- From 24 February, routine contact tracing will end. Those testing positive for COVID-19 will be encouraged to inform their close contacts so that they can follow that guidance.
- Local health teams continue to use contact tracing and provide context-specific advice where they assess this to be necessary as part of their role in managing infectious diseases.
- From 1 April, the Government will remove the current guidance on domestic voluntary COVID-status certification and will no longer recommend that certain venues use the NHS COVID Pass.

Safe behaviours

- Continued focus on:
 - Getting vaccinated
 - Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meeting outside
 - Wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where you come into contact with people you do not usually meet, when rates of transmission are high
 - Trying to stay at home if you are unwell
 - Taking a test if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and staying at home and avoiding contact with other people if you test positive
 - Washing your hands and following advice to ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’.
- From 1 April, guidance to the public and to businesses will be consolidated in line with public health advice.

Businesses and other organisations

- From 24 February, workers will not be legally obliged to tell their employers when they are required to self-isolate.
- From 1 April, the Government will remove the health and safety requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments.
- From 1 April, the Government will replace the existing set of 'Working Safely' guidance with new public health guidance. Employers should continue to consider the needs of employees at greater risk from COVID-19, including those whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.
- Employers and businesses should continue identifying poorly ventilated spaces and take steps to improve fresh air flow.

Adult social care

- The Government will continue to support the adult social care sector with the following protections:
 - Supporting and encouraging the take-up of vaccines amongst care recipients and staff, including any further doses that may be recommended by JCVI for COVID-19 and other infections
 - Guidance on precautions for visitors and workers in adult social care
 - Providing access to free PPE to the end of March 2023 or until the UK IPC guidance on PPE usage for COVID-19 is amended or superseded (whichever is sooner).
- The role of the Government in managing the COVID-19 response in adult social care has been unprecedented. As a part of living sustainably with COVID-19, by 1 April the Government will publish updated IPC guidance. This will replace current COVID-19 IPC guidance for care homes, home care and other adult social care services.
- Revoke regulations making vaccination a condition of deployment across health and social care (including care homes) ahead of April 1st. Regulators to review how responsibility can be strengthened through their guidance.