

Coronavirus (COVID-19) (/coronavirus)

Guidance and support

1. [Home \(https://www.gov.uk/\)](https://www.gov.uk/)
2. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon\)](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon)

Guidance

Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread

Find out how to stay safe and help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

From:

[Cabinet Office \(/government/organisations/cabinet-office\)](/government/organisations/cabinet-office)

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Applies to England

[Guidance for Wales \(https://gov.wales/coronavirus\)](https://gov.wales/coronavirus)

[Guidance for Scotland \(https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/\)](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)

[Guidance for Northern Ireland \(https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19\)](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19)

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What has changed

In England, temporary measures have been put in place to respond to the Omicron variant to slow its arrival and spread.

This means that:

At midday 26 November

- South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zimbabwe and Namibia were added to the [red list](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories) of countries.

At 4am 28 November

- Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Angola were added to the red list of countries.

From 4am Tuesday 30 November

- International arrivals from non-red list countries who are fully vaccinated will need to isolate at home and take a PCR test on or before day 2 following your arrival. You are only permitted to leave isolation if this test result is negative. If your test result is positive, you will need to isolate for 10 days. This is the law.
- Face coverings are a legal requirement in shops and on public transport. This is the law.
- Those who have come into contact with an individual who may have been infected with the Omicron variant will need to self-isolate. This will apply even if you are fully-vaccinated or aged 18 or under. This is the law.

These temporary measures will be reviewed in 3 weeks' time.

COVID-19 remains a risk

It is still possible to catch and spread COVID-19, even if you are fully vaccinated.

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result should [stay at home](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) and self-isolate immediately. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should arrange to [take a PCR test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) as soon as possible, even if you've had one or more doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Those who have come into contact with an individual who may have been infected with the Omicron variant will need to self-isolate. This will apply even if you are fully-vaccinated or aged 18 or under. NHS Test and Trace will contact you if this is the case.

COVID-19 will be a feature of our lives for the foreseeable future, so we need to learn to live with it and manage the risk to ourselves and others.

All of us can play our part by understanding the situations where risks of COVID-19 infection and transmission are likely to be higher, and taking action to reduce these risks.

Following this guidance will help you to understand situations where there is a greater risk of catching or spreading COVID-19 and the steps that you can take to stay safe and protect others. Every action you can take to help reduce the spread will help reduce pressure on the NHS during the winter months.

Understanding the risks of COVID-19

The risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 can be higher in certain places and when doing certain activities. COVID-19 is spread by airborne transmission, close contact via droplets, and via surfaces. Airborne transmission is a very significant way that the virus circulates. It is possible to be infected by someone you don't have close contact with, especially if you're in a crowded and/or poorly ventilated space.

Close contact with an infected person is also a significant way COVID-19 is spread. When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles containing the virus that causes COVID-19. The particles can come into contact with the eyes, nose or mouth or can be breathed in by another person. The particles can also land on surfaces and be passed from person to person via touch.

In general, the risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 is higher in crowded and enclosed spaces, where there are more people who might be infectious and limited fresh air.

In situations where there is a higher risk of catching or passing on COVID-19, you should be particularly careful to follow the guidance on keeping yourself and others safe as we return to normality. Every little action helps to keep us all safer.

Keeping yourself and others safe

There are still cases of COVID-19 in England and there is a risk you could catch or pass on the virus, even once you are fully vaccinated. This means it is important that you understand and consider the risks of catching or spreading COVID-19 in all situations.

While no situation is risk free, there are easy and effective actions we can take to protect ourselves and others around us.

If you are worried about going back to a more 'normal' life, there is information from the NHS on [how to cope with anxiety about lockdown lifting \(https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/tips-to-cope-with-anxiety-lockdown-lifting/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/tips-to-cope-with-anxiety-lockdown-lifting/).

Get vaccinated

All adults in England have now been offered at least 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccines are safe and effective. Getting fully vaccinated is the best way of protecting you and others against COVID-19.

If you have not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine, you should [get vaccinated](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/) (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>). Evidence indicates that 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine provide very effective protection against hospitalisation. It usually takes around 2 to 3 weeks for your body to develop its protective response. To maintain this high level of protection through the coming winter, you should also get a booster vaccine for COVID-19 when offered. Winter is a difficult time when our immunity is weaker. Getting the booster vaccine is an essential part of ensuring immune defence this season.

However, even if you have been fully vaccinated, you could still get COVID-19 and pass it on to others. Whilst the vaccines provide a high level of protection against severe disease, hospitalisation and death, a recent PHE report shows that around 1 in 5 people who have had both doses are still vulnerable to getting infected with the Delta variant and showing symptoms. You can also still spread COVID-19 to others. We all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to protect others and to reduce the risk of new variants developing and spreading.

Following the advice in this guidance will help you to protect your friends, family, and communities, including those who have been vaccinated.

Let fresh air in if you meet indoors. Meeting outdoors is safer

When a person infected with COVID-19 coughs, talks or breathes, they release droplets and aerosols which can be breathed in by another person. Meeting outdoors vastly reduces the risk of airborne transmission, but this may not always be possible. If you're indoors, you should let fresh air in to reduce the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19.

The more fresh air you let into your home or other enclosed spaces, the less likely a person is to inhale infectious particles.

You can let in fresh air by uncovering vents and opening doors and windows. Opening your windows for just 10 minutes, or a small amount of time continuously where you can, makes a significant difference. This is particularly important before, during and after meeting people you do not live with indoors.

Do not prop fire doors open. If you have an extractor fan at home, for example in your bathroom or kitchen, think about leaving it running for longer than usual with the door closed after someone has used the room. If you are concerned about the costs of heating, opening windows for shorter periods of time can still help to reduce the risk of the virus spreading. Wearing extra layers can help you to keep warm. You may be able to change the layout of your room so that you do not sit close to cold draughts from open windows or doors.

There is [guidance for the public on how to ventilate indoor spaces to stop the spread of COVID-19, including if someone is self isolating](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus>). This includes advice on how to claim financial and practical help on heating your home.

Wear a face covering

In England, face coverings must now be worn in shops and shopping centres, in transport hubs and on public transport. [See further details on the settings in scope](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>).

In indoor settings where a face covering is not required, the Government continues to expect and strongly recommend that you wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, where you may come into contact with other people you do not normally meet.

Where food or drink is consumed in part of a premises, you do not need to wear a face covering in the area wholly or mainly used for eating and drinking.

Some people, including children under 11, are exempt from having to wear face coverings in any setting. Furthermore, anyone with a health condition or disability, which means they cannot wear a face covering, has a reasonable excuse for not wearing a face covering.

These changes apply to England only. You can find out more about the different rules across the UK on the relevant websites of the relevant nation:

- [Northern Ireland \(https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19\)](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19)
- [Scotland \(https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/\)](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)
- [Wales \(https://gov.wales/coronavirus\)](https://gov.wales/coronavirus)

Get tested and self-isolate if required

If you have symptoms or test positive

If you develop [COVID-19 symptoms \(https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/), self-isolate immediately and [get a PCR test \(https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test), even if your symptoms are mild. This is because many people experience mild symptoms from COVID-19, but may still pass on the virus to others.

The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell

You should self-isolate at home while you [get a PCR test \(https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) and wait for the results. You must self-isolate if you test positive. You must self-isolate from the day your symptoms started and the next 10 full days, or from the day your test was taken if you do not have symptoms and the next 10 full days. This is the law, regardless of whether you have been vaccinated. Self-isolating is important because you could pass the infection on to others, even if you do not have symptoms. You must stay at home for the full amount of time you are told to, because this is the period when the virus is most likely to be passed on to others.

If you are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace

You must also self-isolate if you are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace. Find out:

- [what you should do if you live in the same household as someone who has tested positive \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)
- [what you should do if you've come into contact with someone outside your household who has tested positive \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-)

[for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person\)](#)

Guidance on self-isolating

When self-isolating, follow the:

- [stay-at-home guidance for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>)
- [stay-at-home guidance for non-household contacts of people with confirmed COVID-19](#)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>)

This will help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 to other members of your household and community. In both cases you must stay at home at all times and not have contact with other people. There are only very limited circumstances when you do not have to do this, such as seeking medical assistance. If you do leave your home during your period of self-isolation for a permitted reason, you should maintain social distancing, keep 2 metres apart from other people, and wear a face covering where possible.

You may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme if you are required to stay at home and self-isolate, or you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been told to self-isolate. You should [visit your local authority website](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>) for information on Test and Trace Support Payments and other practical support offered in your area including help accessing food. If you require prescription medication there is a medicine delivery service available through pharmacies and dispensing GPs.

You could be fined if you do not self-isolate after being told to by NHS Test and Trace.

Self-isolation exemptions

In most cases, you're [not required to self-isolate](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#exemptions-from-self-isolation-for-contacts>) if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- you're fully vaccinated
- you're below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- you've taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

However, if you live in the same household as someone with a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, or are a close contact of someone with a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, you will be required to self-isolate regardless of your age or vaccination status. NHS Test and Trace will contact you if this is the case.

[NHS Test and Trace will contact you](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>) to let you know that you have been identified as a contact and check whether you are legally required to self-isolate. If you're not legally required to self-isolate, you will be provided with

advice on testing and given guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Even if you do not have symptoms, you will be advised to [get a PCR test \(https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) as soon as possible.

You should not arrange to have a PCR test if you have previously received a positive PCR test result in the last 90 days, unless you develop any new symptoms of COVID-19, as it is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection.

You can find further [guidance for household contacts \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) and [guidance for non-household contacts \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person) of people with confirmed COVID-19 infections.

Take tests if you do not have symptoms to help manage your risk

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms. This means they could be spreading the virus without knowing it. Testing regularly increases the chances of detecting COVID-19 when you are infectious but are not displaying symptoms, helping to make sure you do not spread COVID-19 by staying at home and self-isolating immediately.

Rapid lateral flow testing continues to be available free of charge. You can get tests from pharmacies or online. [Find out more about how to get rapid lateral flow tests \(https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/).

You are at higher risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 in crowded and enclosed spaces, where there are more people who might be infectious and where there is limited fresh air.

You may wish to take a rapid lateral flow test if it is expected that there will be a period of high risk that day. This includes spending time in crowded and enclosed spaces, or before visiting [people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19 \(https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/).

Certain places such as health and social care settings, schools and prisons are likely to have their own specific testing rules and guidance. You should always make sure you are aware of this guidance if you visit or work in these places.

If you develop [COVID-19 symptoms \(https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/), self-isolate immediately and [get a PCR test \(https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test).

Try to stay at home if you're feeling unwell

If you develop [COVID-19 symptoms \(https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/), self-isolate immediately and [get a PCR test \(https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/), even if your symptoms are mild. You should self-isolate at home while you book the test and wait for the results. You must self-isolate if you test positive.

If you feel unwell but do not have COVID-19 symptoms, or your COVID-19 test is negative, you may still have an illness which could be passed on to other people. Many common illnesses, like the flu or the common cold, are spread from one person to another. This can happen:

- when someone infected with an illness breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, releasing respiratory particles which can cause infection in another person
- through surfaces and belongings which can also be contaminated when people who are infected with an illness cough or sneeze near them or if they touch them, the next person to touch that surface may then become infected

Staying at home until you feel better reduces the risk that you will pass on an illness to your friends, colleagues, and others in your community. This will help reduce the burden on our health services.

Wash your hands regularly and cover coughs and sneezes

Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day. Regular hand washing is an effective way to reduce your risk of catching illnesses, including COVID-19.

It is particularly important to wash your hands:

- after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose
- before you eat or handle food
- after coming into contact with surfaces touched by many others, such as handles, handrails and light switches
- after coming into contact with shared areas such as kitchens and bathrooms
- when you return home

Where possible, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. If you do need to touch your face, for example to put on or take off your face covering, wash or sanitise your hands before and after.

Coughing and sneezing increases the number of droplets and aerosols released by a person, the distance they travel and the time they stay in the air. Covering coughs and sneezes will help reduce the spread of particles carrying COVID-19 and other viruses, including those that cause coughs and colds.

Use the NHS COVID-19 app

Using [the NHS COVID-19 app \(https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-covid-19/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-covid-19/) helps stop the spread of the virus by informing you that you have been in close contact with someone who has since tested positive for COVID-19, even if you do not know each other. You can also use it to check in to venues with an NHS QR code and receive advice if there has been an outbreak. The app is free and easy to use and doing so can help you protect your loved ones and others.

The app also allows people to report symptoms and order coronavirus tests. To help protect yourself and others, [download and use the latest version of the NHS COVID-19 app \(https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/\)](https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/).

Limit close contact with other people

When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles containing the virus that causes COVID-19. These particles can be breathed in by another person.

You may choose to limit the close contact you have with people you do not usually live with. You may also choose to take a lateral flow test before being in close contact and also encourage those people you are meeting with to do so, which will help to manage periods of risk. This includes close contact in a higher risk environment, or when spending prolonged periods of time with a vulnerable individual.

These are personal choices which can help reduce your risk of catching or spreading COVID-19. It is important to consider that others may wish to continue to take a more cautious approach. We should all be considerate of this and provide the opportunity and space for others to reduce close contacts if they wish.

Understanding your personal risk in different settings and scenarios

Working from home and returning to the workplace

Since Step 4 we have seen a gradual return to offices and workplaces. As workers return to their workplaces, employers should continue to follow the [working safely guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19>). When considering a return to the workplace, employers should:

- reflect this in their workplace risk assessment
- take action to manage the risk of COVID-19 spreading, in line with the guidance

If you were previously identified as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV)

Following expert clinical advice and the successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, people previously considered to be CEV are not being advised to shield again. If you were previously identified as CEV, you should continue to follow the guidance contained in this page. You should take advice from your health professional on whether additional precautions are right for you.

If you are pregnant

If you're pregnant, your chance of getting COVID-19 is not higher than anyone else and it's very unlikely you'll get seriously ill with it.

As a minimum, you should follow the same guidance as everyone else. If you are more than 28 weeks pregnant, or if you are pregnant and have an underlying health condition that puts you at a greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19 at any point in pregnancy, you may want to consider limiting close contact with people you do not normally meet with regularly.

If you live in an area receiving an enhanced response to COVID-19

The government will work with local authorities in areas which need an enhanced response to COVID-19 to avoid the NHS facing unsustainable pressure. It is particularly important for people living in these areas to follow the guidance on this page which will help to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to help protect yourself and others. Enhanced Response Areas will also receive additional targeted support, such as surge testing and logistical resources to maximise vaccine uptake, for a 5 week period. If you live in one of the affected local authority areas, you should read the local COVID-19 information and advice for your area:

- [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough](https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/news/category/covid-19/) (<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/news/category/covid-19/>)

- [Suffolk \(https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/\)](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/)

Travelling in the UK and abroad

International travel

You must follow the [rules for international travel \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19). You should not travel to countries or territories on the red list.

Travelling to England from outside the UK

What you must do when you arrive in England from abroad depends on where you have been in the last 10 days before you arrive.

People planning to travel to England should follow the [guidance on entering the UK \(https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control\)](https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control).

[Find out which list the country you are travelling from is on and what you need to do \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england).

Travelling in the UK, Ireland and Channel Islands

There are no restrictions on travel within England.

You should check the rules at your destination if you're planning to travel to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, or to Ireland or the Channel Islands as there may be restrictions in place.

Do not travel if you have COVID-19 symptoms or are self-isolating. [Get a PCR test \(https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) and [follow the stay at home guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).

Businesses and venues

All businesses and venues, including nightclubs and adult entertainment venues, are able to open. All capacity limits at sporting, entertainment, or business events have been lifted.

Hospitality venues such as pubs, restaurants and bars are no longer required to provide table service or follow other social distancing rules.

All businesses should follow the principles set out in the [working safely guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19).

Employers still have a legal duty to manage risks to those affected by their business. The way to do this is to carry out a health and safety risk assessment, including the risk of COVID-19, and to take reasonable steps to mitigate the risks you identify. The working safely guidance sets out a range of mitigations employers should consider including:

- identifying poorly ventilated areas in the venue, for example by using a CO2 monitor, and taking steps to improve air flow in these areas
- ensuring that staff and customers who are unwell do not attend the workplace or venue

- providing hand sanitiser to enable staff and customers to clean their hands more frequently, and cleaning surfaces that people touch regularly
- communicating to staff and customers the measures you have put in place

Settings in which face coverings are required must display signage or take other measures to ensure customers are aware of the requirement to wear a face covering on their premises where there is no applicable exemption or reasonable excuse.

Businesses are also encouraged to continue displaying NHS QR codes for attendees wishing to check in using the NHS COVID-19 app so they are alerted if there's an outbreak and can take action to protect others, however this is no longer a legal requirement.

NHS COVID Pass

The NHS COVID Pass allows people to check their COVID-19 status and demonstrate that they are at lower risk of transmitting to others through full vaccination, a recent negative test, or proof of natural immunity. Some places may ask for the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry.

We encourage organisations in certain settings to use the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry to reduce the risk of COVID-19. This will especially be the case in large, crowded settings (such as nightclubs) where people are likely to be in close proximity to others outside their household.

There are some settings where the NHS COVID Pass should not be used as a condition of entry to ensure access for all. This includes essential services and essential retailers which have been able to stay open throughout the pandemic.

Published 29 March 2021

Last updated 30 November 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 30 November 2021

Updated to provide detail of new measures implemented in response to the Omicron variant.

2. 29 November 2021

Added summary of expected or upcoming updates to COVID-19 rules that aim to prevent the spread of the Omnicron COVID-19 variant.

3. 17 November 2021

Guidance updated to reflect the move from recommending twice-weekly lateral flow testing to a risk-based approach.

4. 5 November 2021

Latest easy read document added to this page to reflect beyond step 4.

5. 5 November 2021

The easy read guide has been updated to the latest version that reflects beyond step 4.

6. 1 November 2021

Added 'Cambridgeshire and Peterborough' and 'Suffolk' as local authority areas receiving an enhanced response to COVID-19.

7. 15 October 2021

Translations added for latest version.

8. 4 October 2021

Updated link to current international travel guidance and removed reference to 'traffic light system' for international travel as this no longer exists.

9. 1 October 2021

Removed Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Council of the Isles of Scilly, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council as local authority areas receiving an enhanced response to COVID-19.

10. 14 September 2021

Updated guidance following Prime Minister's statement on the autumn and winter plan.

11. 13 September 2021

The following languages have been added or updated to reflect the latest step 4 guidance. - Arabic - Bengali - Farsi - Gujarati - Hindi - Polish - Punjabi Gurmukhi - Punjabi Shahmukhi - Slovak - Somali - Urdu - Welsh - French - Portuguese - Tamil We removed reference to Enhanced Response Areas as these were out of date.

12. 31 August 2021

Removed Darlington Borough Council, Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, South Tyneside Council, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Sunderland City Council as local authority areas receiving an enhanced response to COVID-19.

13. 27 August 2021

Added Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Council of the Isles of Scilly, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council as local authority areas receiving an enhanced response to COVID-19.

14. 20 August 2021

Updated structure and clarified language throughout to improve readability.

15. 16 August 2021

Removed references to 16 August in the self-isolation exemption criteria section. This is because the changes are now current.

16. 13 August 2021

Added information on self-isolation changes from 16 August

17. 11 August 2021

Added easy read version of 'how to stay safe and help prevent the spread' guidance.

18. 4 August 2021

Edited get tested and self-isolate. The length of time 18 year olds who are a contact of a positive case will be exempt from self-isolation has changed from 4 months after their 18th birthday to 6 months after.

19. 28 July 2021

Added Gujarati translation.

20. 27 July 2021

Corrected the 'International travel' section which said people should not travel to countries or territories on the red or amber lists. It now says "You should not travel to countries or territories on the red list."

21. 27 July 2021

Removed Greater Manchester Combined Authority from areas receiving an enhanced response (covering Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan)

22. 27 July 2021

Added translations for Step 4 guidance.

23. 26 July 2021

Added local authority areas receiving an enhanced response (Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council, Sunderland City Council, Darlington Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council). Removed areas no longer receiving an

enhanced response (Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Borough Council, Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Liverpool City Region, Warrington Borough Council, Bedford Borough Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Bolton Council).

24. 22 July 2021

Updated with information for people who are pregnant.

25. 21 July 2021

Removed Birmingham City Council from areas where the new variant is spreading.

26. 19 July 2021

Guidance updated for the move to COVID-19 rules step 4 on 19 July.

27. 12 July 2021

Guidance updated following the announcement of a move to step 4 on 19 July.

28. 12 July 2021

Added Brighton and Hove City Council to the areas where the Delta variant is spreading fastest.

29. 12 July 2021

Added Oxford City Council to the areas where the Delta variant is spreading fastest.

30. 8 July 2021

Removed Leicester City Council and North Tyneside Council from areas where the new variant is spreading.

31. 30 June 2021

Updated to clarify that a PCR test should be taken even if symptoms are mild.

32. 28 June 2021

Translations updated

33. 25 June 2021

Removed Kirklees from list of areas where there's an enhanced response to the spread of the Delta variant.

34. 23 June 2021

Updated international travel section with a link to new simplified guidance on international travel.

35. 22 June 2021

Removed Hounslow from list of areas where there's an enhanced response to the spread of the Delta variant

36. 21 June 2021

Translations updated to guidance published on 14 June.

37. 21 June 2021

Updated in line with new rules from 21 June. There are updates to the rules on weddings and civil partnership ceremonies and wedding receptions or civil partnership celebrations, commemorative events following a death such as a wake, stone setting or ash scattering, care home visits and domestic residential visits for children.

38. 17 June 2021

Updated to reflect the publication of revised guidance on arranging or attending a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic.

39. 15 June 2021

Updated to reflect the publication of revised wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations guidance and new guidance on what you need to do if you're planning a wedding or civil partnership or funeral, wake or commemoration in venues such as gardens or marquees on private land.

40. 14 June 2021

Updated the list of areas where the Delta variant is spreading with new councils.

41. 14 June 2021
Updated summary with information on changes from 21 June.
42. 8 June 2021
Added guidance for people living in areas with variants of concern.
43. 28 May 2021
Page updated to align with updated travel guidance in Northern Ireland.
44. 28 May 2021
Updated to provide clarity on the type of test to be used for those with or without symptoms. Changed the order of paragraphs in the support bubble section. Clarified the guidance on staying overnight in other people's homes.
45. 25 May 2021
The guidance for areas where the new COVID-19 variant is spreading has been updated to make it clearer we are not imposing local restrictions
46. 21 May 2021
Updated guidance for areas where the new COVID-19 variant is spreading
47. 17 May 2021
Step 3 guidance updates
48. 14 May 2021
Added additional guidance on new variant
49. 10 May 2021
Updated with new summary: "How the rules will change on 17 May".
50. 26 April 2021
Scottish Government travel restrictions updated.
51. 16 April 2021
Updated translated versions of guidance in accordance with 12 April changes.
52. 14 April 2021
Updated guidance on in-person teaching at universities and higher education.
53. 12 April 2021
Updated in line with the latest government guidance.
54. 6 April 2021
Updated with additional information on travelling within the Common Travel Area (CTA).
55. 5 April 2021
Updated to include how coronavirus restrictions will change from April 12th.
56. 2 April 2021
Added full translations to guidance.
57. 1 April 2021
Updated to clarify the rules on indoor mixing with members of your support bubble.
58. 1 April 2021
Updated with new advice for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable and clarification on the rules for staying overnight with members of your support bubble.
59. 30 March 2021
Coronavirus restrictions page updated to include translated summaries of 29 March guidance changes.
60. 29 March 2021
First published.

Related content

- [Travel abroad from England during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(/guidance/travel-abroad-from-england-during-coronavirus-covid-19\)](#)
- [Approved COVID-19 vaccines and countries and territories with approved proof of vaccination \(/guidance/countries-with-approved-covid-19-vaccination-programmes-and-proof-of-vaccination\)](#)
- [How to quarantine at home after international travel \(/guidance/how-to-quarantine-when-you-arrive-in-england\)](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support \(/coronavirus\)](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection \(/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance\)](#)

Collection

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for local government \(/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government\)](#)

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- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(/coronavirus-taxon\)](#)

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