



# NHS Test and Trace service

## Frequently asked questions for workplaces

*Correct as of 16/06/2020*

*The NHS Test and Trace service undergoes constant review and can change as circumstances change. We are being led by the science and we will make changes to the guidance when they are needed as determined by the science and as we learn best practices from businesses.*

*We welcome views on the guidance. If there are specific points you want to make about safer working then please send them to:*

[TTDHSCexternalaffairs@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:TTDHSCexternalaffairs@dhsc.gov.uk)

*Please note: the service is for England only.*

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## Self-isolation

### What is a contact?

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 7 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). For example, a contact can be:

- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- sexual partners
- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
  - being coughed on
  - having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
  - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
  - contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

### Who will be told to self-isolate?

- Contacts of a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) must self-isolate at home because they are at risk of having the virus and could spread the virus to others before symptoms begin or without developing symptoms.
- Everyone must continue to follow the social distancing guidelines by remaining 2m apart from others and wearing a mask on public transport or in settings where social distancing is not possible. Wearing a mask does not replace the need for social distance and is not a guarantee of not contracting the virus, so all possible precautions should be taken.
- The NHS Covid-19 app, which we will roll out shortly, will enable us to anonymously alert app users who have come into close contact with other app users who test positive for coronavirus.

### **Would employees sitting back-to-back in a canteen but closer than 2 meters be classed as a contact if one of them tested positive and they were next to one another for longer than 15 minutes?**

- A contact includes anyone who has been between 1 and 2 metres from someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) for more than 15 minutes



## **Is there an exemption for people in large households, e.g., a house of 10 people living together?**

- No, if one person in the house is displaying COVID-19 symptoms, they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and request a test. Anyone else in the household must self-isolate for 14 days from when the individual started having symptoms. If the test result is positive, the individual must complete the remainder of the 7-day self-isolation. Anyone in the household must also complete self-isolation for 14 days from when the first person started having symptoms. Of course, if the test is negative, that person and other household members no longer need to self-isolate.

## **If a segregated ‘household group’ of seasonal workers are all traced as contacts, but are all asymptomatic, could they continue to work together in a group?**

- The evidence shows that a person can be asymptomatic and infectious. In this example, if one of these individuals is asymptomatic but infectious, there is a risk that this individual could pass on COVID-19 to the rest of the group. This could affect the safety of the group, be even more problematic for the business, and have greater impact on the NHS.

## **What if an employee gets notified while at work?**

- The person should leave work to self-isolate straight away and, if possible, wear a face covering en route and avoid public transport.

## **What happens if an employee is unable to come into work?**

- Employers should support workers who need to self-isolate and must not ask them to attend the workplace.
- Workers must isolate if they:
  - have coronavirus symptoms and are awaiting a test result
  - have tested positive for coronavirus
  - are a member of the same household as someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for coronavirus
  - have been in close recent contact with someone who has tested positive and received a notification to self-isolate from NHS test and trace.
- Employers should continue to communicate with workers in self-isolation and provide support. This includes allowing people to work from home if they remain well and if it is practicable to do so. This might include finding alternative work that can be completed at home during the period of self-isolation.
- If people can't work from home, employers must ensure any self-isolating employee is receiving sick pay and give them the option to use their paid leave days if they prefer. Further guidance is available on what employees should do if they cannot work.
- Employees in self-isolation are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay for every day they are in isolation, as long as they meet the eligibility conditions.
- [Information for employers on reclaiming Statutory Sick Pay.](#)



- An employee can ask to take their paid holiday for the time they're off work, entitling them to full pay for the duration of their leave, as opposed to Statutory Sick Pay, if they choose.

### **Does this apply to key workers as well?**

- Key workers must follow the same rules as all people. It is vital that, if asked to self-isolate, people do so for the full 14 days. If they don't, this risks spreading the virus amongst the workforce.

### **Can someone who is self-isolating be tested and if they are negative return to work?**

- No. The incubation period for the virus varies between individuals. If you have a test and the result is negative, you must still complete the full period of self-isolation, as you may still become infectious at a later point in the 14 day period. You must complete the full period of self-isolation.
- 14 days has been agreed by the Chief Medical Officer and the expert group SAGE as the appropriate time someone needs to isolate to minimise risk of further transition.
- This is in line with international best practice.

### **Can I get evidence that my employee has been asked to self-isolate?**

- Employees can use this link to request an isolation note to show their employers: <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>. Employers may need this if they are going to claim a Statutory Sick Pay rebate.

## PPE

### **I am an employer – should I be encouraging my employees to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to mitigate the likelihood of them being identified as a contact and being asked to self-isolate?**

- Only full medical-grade PPE worn in health and care settings will be considered when the NHS Test and Trace service assesses whether a recent contact is likely to have risked transmitting the virus. Even if face visors are worn, this does not prevent the risk of infectious individuals passing on COVID-19. Employees of businesses that use face visors or other forms of PPE must self-isolate if the Test and Trace service tells them to do so.
- Our rules are clear that businesses must not seek to purchase medical-grade PPE. This would disrupt the crucial supply of medical-grade PPE to the NHS and social care sector - and it would not prevent the requirement for employees to self-isolate.
- Where an interaction between two people has taken place through a perspex screen, the other individual will not be asked to self-isolate.

### **Do retailers have to install perspex screens at till points?**



- Businesses should review their risk assessments in line with the new guidance and introduce any additional measures they consider reasonably practicable to mitigate the risks identified related to COVID 19.

**Will perspex screens be taken into account when determining whether or not they are asked to self-isolate if they are identified as having interacted with someone who tests positive?**

- Where an interaction between two people has taken place through a perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact to require someone to self-isolate, provided that they have had no other form of contact with the person who has tested positive.

**Is there any further information that can be provided on how the app will be able to distinguish between a perspex screen and there not being one?**

- The app will not be able to distinguish if there is a screen. The user will need to turn off their Bluetooth / phone if they are behind a perspex screen and turn it on again when they leave from behind the screen. Further guidance on the app will be issued in due course.

**What protective equipment should employees use who are not behind perspex screens?**

- Each business should undertake a risk assessment to determine what additional measures are reasonably practicable.

**Is there an exemption for industries with existing high levels of hygiene, e.g. food industry?**

- There are no exemptions. If someone is identified as having had close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus, they must self-isolate, unless the contact took place behind a perspex screen.

**Can I get a fine if I don't provide PPE?**

- No. Although there may be some benefit to using PPE, it does not prevent the risk of transmission of the virus and it will not prevent the need to self-isolate if someone has had close recent contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus.

**Do my employees have to wear the PPE we provide? Are we able to discipline them if they don't?**

- That is a matter for individual businesses as it relates to terms of employment.

**Can I insist on customers wearing masks and/or using hand gel before they come in?**

- Your shop/cafe/restaurant is private property and, just as at any other time, you have the right to refuse entry to anyone for any reason or to insist customers comply with specific guidelines in order to enter.

**How will Test and Trace work if someone is wearing medical grade PPE?**



- People working in health and social care professional roles who have correctly used PPE as part of their professional duties are not considered to be a close contact. This does not apply to other types of PPE such as that worn in the construction trade.
- If someone who tests positive for coronavirus works in a health or care setting, their case will be referred to local public health experts who will liaise with the relevant service provider to agree on the most appropriate action, taking into account whether appropriate PPE was being worn at the time of any contacts.

## Contact tracing

### **Does the NHS Test and Trace service apply to non-UK residents?**

- This is guidance for England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own contact tracing programmes. The app, when launched, will be able to be used in all four nations.

### **If an employee tests positive for coronavirus, what information will they be asked to provide to the NHS Test and Trace service?**

- If they test positive for coronavirus, the NHS Test and Trace service will contact them and ask for information about their illness, where they have been and who they have met. It will ask about their symptoms, who they live with, work and leisure activities and who they have had recent close contact with. It will also ask for details of how to get in touch with their close contacts.
- The NHS Test and Trace service will never ask for financial information or social media login details.
- The NHS Test and Trace service will:
  - Ask them to sign into the NHS Test and Trace contact tracing website: <https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk>
  - Ask for their full name to confirm their identity, and postcode to offer support whilst self-isolating
  - Ask about any COVID-19 symptoms they might have been experiencing
  - Ask if they are in a clinically vulnerable category
  - Ask them about people they have had close recent contact with
  - Ask if anyone they have been in contact with is under 18 or lives outside England.

### **If my employee is told to self-isolate but does not have symptoms, can they book a test so if they test negative they can come back to work?**

- They should only book a test if they develop symptoms of COVID-19. Even if they take a test and get a negative result, they must still complete the 14-day period of isolation. They may still have the virus and could still become infectious during the 14-day period.



Completing the 14-day isolation period is crucial to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus.

### **Do contract tracers have the ability to communicate in any foreign languages?**

- All contact tracers have access to translation services which will be used wherever necessary.

### **Is there a way employers can be involved with their employees on contact tracing calls (particularly about those living on site/ English isn't their first language)?**

- If an employee gives consent for their employer or next of kin to be involved in a discussion with the Test and Trace service, then they would be allowed to.

### **Have GDPR rules been relaxed for contact tracing?**

- The law on protecting personally identifiable information, known as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), allows Public Health England to use the personal information collected by the NHS Test and Trace service. Public Health England also has special permission from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to use personally identifiable information without people's consent where this is in the public interest.
- By choosing to share information, people will help identify, contain and control coronavirus, reduce the spread of the virus and save lives.
- Contact tracing is a proven way of slowing the spread of an infection and protecting the community.
- Background:
  - The section of the GDPR that applies is: Page 5 of 5, Article 6(1)(e) 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller'.
  - As information about health is a special category of personal information, a further section of the GDPR applies. Article 9(2)(i) provides that 'processing is necessary for reasons of public interest in the area of public health, such as protecting against serious cross-border threats to health or ensuring high standards of quality and safety of healthcare'.
  - Public Health England also has special permission from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to use personally identifiable information without people's consent where this is in the public interest. This is known as 'Section 251' approval and includes the use of the information collected by NHS Test and Trace to help protect the public from coronavirus.

### **What if an employee tests positive for coronavirus and self-isolates but asks their employer not to share their medical information? Does data confidentiality mean that the employer can't alert other employees that this person has been in contact with so they can self-isolate?**

- The employer should honour the employee's right to privacy. The employee would submit the details of close contacts to the Test and Trace service, which would then let a co-worker know if they have been in close contact with a positive case and should





self-isolate, without disclosing the identity of the person who has tested positive. This protects the privacy and anonymity of those who test positive while still enabling close contacts to be informed.

### **Can I request information to see who has potentially infected my employees - e.g. other employees/ customers?**

- The NHS Test and Trace system will not share any data with employers for privacy reasons.

### **Who in the local authority should I contact if there are multiple positive cases in my workplace / multiple employees self-isolating; environmental health, public health officers etc.?**

- If there is more than one case of COVID-19 associated with a workplace, employers should contact their local Health Protection Team to report the suspected outbreak. The Health Protection Team will undertake a risk assessment, provide public health advice and where necessary establish a multi-agency Incident Management Team to manage the outbreak. You can find your local health protection team here: <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>.

### **Will local health protection teams contact employers?**

- The current escalation criteria to tier one local health protection teams includes escalation if exposure is in the workplace where the case is unable to name contacts (this is both automated if self completed and via the case workers if phone based). Tier 2 and tier 3 case workers are also advised to escalate if it is likely to have a significant impact on the public sector. The current process includes two examples to guide staff – staff in power plant and staff in a school which are meant to be illustrative.

### **How fast would employers be contacted by local health protection teams?**

- This will depend on the nature of the situation and actions required – the health protection team would seek to make contact if needed as quickly as possible to ensure the appropriate risk assessment and advice is provided.

### **Is this service 24/7 – would an employer be contacted at the weekend for example?**

- The health protection team does provide a seven day a week service and would contact the employer if deemed necessary. The Test and Trace programme runs from 8am-8pm 7 days a week. It is unlikely that employers would be contacted after 8pm unless it was deemed to be a public health emergency.





## Workplace

### **How do I know what measures I should take? For example should I be taking employees' temperatures before they start work each day?**

- You have a legal duty to carry out a risk assessment. All businesses must now consider the COVID-19 risks and undertake an assessment before reopening.
- Businesses should review their risk assessments in line with the new guidance and introduce any additional measures they consider reasonably practicable to mitigate the risks identified related to COVID 19.
- Risk assessment is about identifying sensible measures to control risk in the workplace. General guidance on how to complete them is available on the HSE website, and this guidance sets out the steps employers should consider in relation to the risks of COVID-19. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/#>

### **What should I be doing in regard to touch screen tills?**

- Touch screen tills, and any other shared equipment, should be wiped down using proper cleaning products, before and after each use.

### **What additional measures can I put in place for those in working environments less than 2 metres apart - e.g kitchen staff?**

- Guidance has been published to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

### **Should I be carrying out new risk assessments with employees?**

- Before restarting work you should ensure the safety of the workplace by carrying out a Covid-19 risk assessment:
  - carrying out a risk assessment in line with the [HSE guidance](#)
  - consulting with your workers or trade unions
  - sharing the results of the risk assessment with your workforce and on your website.

### **Am I able to make an employee redundant while they are in self-isolation?**

- The law relating to redundancy hasn't changed. The same requirements would apply.

### **What about toilets - do they need to be cleaned every time someone uses them? Does someone need to make sure only one person goes in at a time?**

- Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible. Use social distance marking. Manage customers to prevent indoor queuing.

### **How do I know how many people can work in the office at any one time?**



- The important point is to reduce team size if necessary to ensure that social distancing can take place and ensure that the same people work together on subsequent shifts or tasks to reduce mixing between teams.
- Where it's not possible for people to be 2 metres apart, you should do everything practical to manage the transmission risk by:
  - considering whether an activity needs to continue for the business to operate
  - keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
  - using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
  - using back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible
  - staggering arrival and departure times
  - reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering'.

### **What do I do where call centre employees work shifts and share equipment?**

- Shared equipment should be wiped down using proper cleaning products, before and after each use.

### **Can I ask an employee to go home if I suspect they are unwell but not declaring symptoms?**

- Yes, if there are reasonable grounds for that suspicion. Employers have the duty as far as reasonably practicable to provide a safe place of work. It is better for an employer to have a policy and to have clearly communicated that employees shouldn't attend with COVID-19 symptoms and may be asked to leave if they exhibit such symptoms.

### **If there is an outbreak what should I do?**

- If there is more than one case of COVID-19 associated with a workplace, employers should contact the local PHE Health Protection Team (HPT) to report the suspected outbreak. The HPT will undertake a risk assessment, provide public health advice and where necessary establish a multi-agency Incident Management Team to manage the outbreak. Please look here for your team - <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>

## **NHS COVID-19 App - *more details to be released in due course***

### **How will the app work alongside the Test and Trace service?**

- The NHS Test and Trace service allows us to identify known contacts of anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 and alert those who need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of this virus. When we roll out the app, it will complement existing forms of contact tracing, enabling us to increase the speed of contact tracing and reach people who cannot be reached through traditional forms of contact tracing, such as someone you do not know but have sat next to on public transport.

### **Should employees keep their mobiles on them on shop floors/while working?**



- Guidance will be issued when the app is rolled out.
- We recognise there will be some circumstances where it is not possible to carry a mobile phone or keep it switched on.

### **Do employees need to have their phone on them if they are wearing PPE?**

- Guidance will be issued when the app is rolled out.
- There will be some circumstances, for instance where a health or care worker is wearing PPE as part of their professional duties or where someone is working behind a perspex screen, where app users will be advised to turn off Bluetooth.
- Current advice for health and care workers using the app on the Isle of Wight is as follows:
  - Health and care workers should install the NHS COVID-19 app
  - When wearing PPE as part of their professional duties, staff should turn their Bluetooth off.
  - In all other settings, Bluetooth should be switched on including
    - When working without the requirement for PPE
    - In communal settings (e.g. staff rooms)
    - Travelling between home visits
    - When off duty
  - In summary: when you put PPE on in a health care setting, Bluetooth can be turned off.

### **What about workplaces that for safety reasons do not allow their employees to have phones on them while they are working?**

- In workplaces that do not allow mobiles, the worker should turn off their mobile while it is not with them. Standard contact tracing will still apply – if someone tests positive for COVID-19, then those they have been in contact with will be asked to self-isolate, regardless of whether they have the app. The NHS Test and Trace service will work with the person to establish who they may have been in contact with.

### **If my employees work behind a perspex screen, do they need to keep their phone on them in case they get an alert from the app or the Test and Trace service needs to contact them?**

- Where an interaction between two people has taken place through a perspex screen, this does not count as a contact.
- Guidance will be provided when the app is rolled out.

### **Will the app be available in different languages?**

- The initial release of the NHS COVID-19 App will be in English only but we are looking to make it available in different languages.

### **Should employees be downloading the app on both their personal and work mobile?**

- People will be asked to download the app on either their work phone or personal phone, not both. This should be the one carried with them most often throughout the day.



**Are there any materials available for me to place in communal areas encouraging them to download the app?**

- PHE campaign resource centre: <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>
- Sign up for an account, where you'll then be able to access materials to circulate within your organisation and place within your workplaces. Materials for the following campaigns are provided:
  - NHS Test and Trace service
  - Symptoms
  - Stay Alert to Stay Safe
  - Looking out for each other
  - Return to School
  - More now than ever Every Mind Matters
  - Points of entry and exiting the UK
  - NHS campaigns and materials

**What evidence do I need from someone that the app has told them to self isolate?**

- Guidance will be provided when the app is rolled out.

**Is it a legal requirement to download the app?**

- The decision to use the app will be a voluntary decision for each individual. We will, however, be encouraging as many as people as possible to use the app. The more people who use the app, the more successfully we will be able to contain the spread of the virus and help go further in easing lockdown measures.



## General Q&A

**My employees are exposed to people every day, are they more likely to be told to self isolate?**

- It is important for employers to play their part by making workplaces as safe as possible and by following the 5 steps to working safely.

**If an employee is notified, do they have to report to us?**

- If an employee is notified to self-isolate for 14 days because they have come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus, and are unable to work as a result, they should notify you that they are unable to work within the deadline you have set in your sickness absence policies (or normally within 7 days if you have not set one).

**Will my whole workforce be told to self-isolate if someone tests positive?**

- Only those who have had close recent contact with someone who then tests positive for COVID-19 will be asked to self-isolate.

**What's the minimum and maximum time an employee can be told to self-isolate for?**

- As now, those who test positive for coronavirus will be asked to isolate for 7 days from the onset of symptoms. After 7 days, or longer, if you still have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste, you must continue to self-isolate until you feel better.
- Those who have had close recent contact with someone who went on to test positive for coronavirus will be asked to self-isolate for the period ending 14 days after they came into contact with the person who has tested positive.

**If an employee is told to self-isolate do I have to note this as sick leave?**

- If an employee is not sick and they are able to work from home, they can continue to work and be paid by their employer as normal.
- Statutory Sick Pay is available to employees who have been contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service as they have come into contact with someone who has coronavirus, and are unable to work as a result. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) eligibility conditions apply. More information is available in the NHS Test and Trace workplace guidance document.
- Some employers may also apply their own sickness policies and continue to offer full pay for all or some of your isolation period.

**Can I claim furlough if any of my employees are told to self-isolate and are unable to work from home?**

- Statutory Sick Pay is available to employees who have been contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service as they have come into contact with someone who has coronavirus, and are unable to work as a result. More information is available in the NHS Test and Trace workplace guidance document (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance>).



- Some employers may also apply their own sickness policies and continue to offer full pay for all or some of your isolation period.
- An employer can furlough someone who is self-isolating, with their agreement, and claim the Job Retention Grant once the person is no longer receiving Statutory Sick Pay.

### **What happens if an employee self-isolates for the time asked to but then feels unwell?**

- If someone in self-isolation develops symptoms, they should report their symptoms and order a test. Anyone that they live with should go into self-isolation immediately.

### **If my employee is told to self-isolate, do I have to continue to pay them if they can't work from home?**

- If an employee can't work from home, employers should ensure any self-isolating employee is receiving sick pay and give them the option to use their paid leave days if they prefer.
- Statutory Sick Pay is available to employees who have been contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service as they have come into contact with someone who has coronavirus, and are unable to work as a result. More information is available in the NHS Test and Trace workplace guidance document (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance>).
- Some employers may also apply their own sickness policies and continue to offer full pay for all or some of your isolation period.

### **Won't it be expensive if I keep having to pay SSP to isolating employees?**

- Employers are legally required to pay SSP to eligible employees who are off work sick, where employees meet the qualifying conditions. Employers can claim a rebate from HMRC for the first 14 days of absence if this is due to coronavirus. The rebate is not available for multiple periods of absence.

### **What help is available to my employees if they have to self-isolate?**

- Statutory Sick Pay is available to employees who have been contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service as they have come into contact with someone who has coronavirus, and are unable to work as a result. More information is available in the NHS Test and Trace workplace guidance document. – suggest link to SSP Guidance
- Some employers may also apply their own sickness policies and continue to offer full pay for all or some of your isolation period.
- Other Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) eligibility criteria apply. Local community support will be available for those who need it, for example through the delivery of food and medicine.

### **If I find out that my employee hasn't adhered to the self-isolation rules, do I need to report them? If so, who to?**

- We are asking anyone who has been told to self-isolate to follow the advice they have been given and we believe the vast majority will do so. We do not currently envisage the necessity for enforcement.



**Will the service appropriately assess relative risk levels given the use of different protective measures to reduce the risk of transmission?**

- The service will alert those contacts who meet defined risk criteria, based on the proximity and duration of the contact they've had, and tell them what steps to take. Employers should continue to protect the health and safety both of their workers and of other people who may be affected by their business. To help employers, guidance has been developed on the 5 steps for working safely (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely>). Employers should also consult the guidance on Test and Trace in a workplace setting (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance>).

**What happens if large numbers of my workforce have to isolate at the same time, threatening the delivery of critical national services?**

- Only those who have had close recent contact with someone who then tests positive for COVID-19 will be asked to self-isolate. If multiple cases of coronavirus appear in a workplace, an outbreak control team from either the local authority or Public Health England will, if necessary, be assigned to help the employer manage the outbreak. Employers should seek advice from their local Health Protection Team in the first instance.

**How many cases constitute multiple; is it an absolute number of cases, or a percentage of the workforce?**

- This will vary depending on the size and nature of business. Employers should decide whether to seek support from their local Health Protection Team.

**Who in the local authority should companies contact; environmental health, public health officers etc.?**

- Outbreaks should be reported to the local Health Protection Team (HPT) and will be jointly managed by the HPT, local authority and workplace.

**What are the expectations of employers with the rollout of contact tracing?**

- It is vital that employers play their part by making their workplaces as safe as possible, by encouraging workers to heed any notifications to self-isolate and by supporting them when in isolation.
- Employers should continue to follow health and safety workplace guidance for their sector, such as:
  - Making every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option.
  - Where working from home isn't possible, identifying sensible measures to control the risks in the workplace.
  - Keeping the workplace clean, maintaining safe working separation, and preventing transmission through unnecessary touching of potentially contaminated surfaces.
  - Employers should also continue to protect the health and safety both of their workers and of other people who may be affected by their business - e.g. agency workers, contractors, volunteers, customers, suppliers and other visitors. To help





employers, guidance has been developed on the 5 steps for working safely (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely>). Employers should also consult the guidance on Test and Trace in a workplace setting:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance>.

**What if an employee tests positive for coronavirus and self-isolates but asks their employer not to share their medical information? Does data confidentiality mean that the employer can't alert other employees that this person has been in contact with so they can self-isolate?**

- The employer should honour the employee's right to privacy. The employee would submit the details of close contacts to the NHS Test and Trace service, which would then let any co-worker know if they have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 and should self-isolate, without disclosing the identity of that person. This protects the privacy and anonymity of those who test positive while still enabling close contacts to be informed.

**Will my employee be absent for the full 14 day period ?**

- If your employee has symptoms and gets a negative test they can end your self-isolation, and so can those in their household.
- If you are identified as a contact of someone with coronavirus, you must isolate for the full 14 days, even if you get a negative test during that time. Even if you develop some symptoms, it might be that those symptoms are something else. You could still have COVID-19 and become infectious during the 14-day period.

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## NHS TEST AND TRACE

### GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESSES

The NHS Test and Trace service forms a central part of the Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy, which seeks to help the nation return to normal as soon as possible for as many people as possible, in a way that is safe and protects our NHS and social care sector. Once launched, this service will also play a vital role in providing an early warning if COVID-19 activity is increasing locally, regionally or nationally. This information will then be used to inform the Government's approach to stop the spread of the virus.

This guidance explains how employers and businesses can play their part in the NHS Test and Trace programme to slow the spread of the virus, protect the health and care system and save lives. This guidance should be used in conjunction with Link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>. By following the BEIS guidance employers can reduce the risk of co-workers having to self-isolate if a member of staff tests positive for COVID-19.



This guidance is for England only, though there are equivalent arrangements for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## What is the NHS Test and Trace service?

The NHS Test and Trace service:

- provides testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) to find out if they have the virus.
- gets in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to help them share information about any close recent contacts they have had.
- alerts those contacts, where necessary, and notifies them they need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus.

By following instructions to self-isolate, people who have had close recent contact with someone with coronavirus will be protecting their family, friends, colleagues and other people around them, and will play a direct role in stopping the spread of the virus.

### 1. The role of employers

The NHS Test and Trace service will help to manage the risk of the virus re-emerging as restrictions on everyday life are eased, as far as it is deemed safe to do so.

It is vital that employers play their part by making their workplaces as safe as possible, by encouraging workers to heed any notifications to self-isolate and by supporting them when in isolation. Although this may seem disruptive for businesses, it is less disruptive than an outbreak of COVID-19 in the workplace will be, and far less disruptive than periods in lockdown.

The NHS Test and Trace service is designed to support businesses and economic recovery by:

- providing testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus, so that if they have been tested positive, they and their household member know to continue to self-isolate.
- helping to stop the onward spread of the virus in the workplace and wider society, so that fewer people develop coronavirus and have to self-isolate.
- enabling the Government to go further in safely easing or lifting lockdown measures, as far as it is deemed safe to do so, thereby allowing the nation to return to normal as quickly as possible.

To facilitate the NHS Test and Trace service, employers should encourage workers to heed any notifications to self-isolate and provide support to these individuals when in isolation.

It is important the employers continue to protect the health and safety both of their workers and of other people who may be affected by their business - e.g. agency workers, contractors, volunteers, customers, suppliers and other visitors. To help employers, guidance has been



developed on the 5 steps for working safely (link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely>) and sector-specific guidance can be found here (Link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>). It is important to follow this guidance to help to reduce the risk of a spread of infection in the workplace.

Employers must continue to follow health and safety workplace guidance for their sector such as:

- Making every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option.
- Where working from home isn't possible, identifying sensible measures to control the risks in the workplace.
- Keeping the workplace clean, maintaining safe working separation, and preventing transmission through unnecessary touching of potentially contaminated surfaces.

The measures employers put in place to maintain social distancing will depend on their individual business circumstances, including their working environment, the size of the site and the number of workers. The guidance will support employers to make an informed decision. The NHS Test and Trace service does not change the existing guidance about working from home wherever possible.

Further in-depth guidance on making sure your workplace is safe for your workers and others affected by your business can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

## 2. Workplace risk

COVID-19 is a new risk that must be incorporated into workplace risk assessments. Employers must therefore carry out a new COVID-19 risk assessment if they have not already done so. Health and Safety Executive has guidance to help you conduct a risk assessment here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

Employers have a duty to consult their workers, and unions where applicable, as part of their risk assessment. Involving workers in this will help build trust and confidence that all reasonably practicable steps are being taken to reduce risks of COVID-19, so that people can return to work safely. Employers should share the risk assessment with workers and consider publishing the risk assessment on their website.

The NHS Test and Trace service supplements the risk mitigation measures taken by employers by identifying people who have had close recent contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus and advising them to self-isolate. This will reduce the risk of a rise in infections among the general population.

## 3. Multiple outbreaks in the workplace



If there is more than one case of COVID-19 associated with a workplace, employers should contact their local Health Protection Team to report the suspected outbreak. The Health Protection Team will undertake a risk assessment, provide public health advice and where necessary establish a multi-agency Incident Management Team to manage the outbreak. You can find your local health protection team here: <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>.

#### 4. Supporting workers who need to self-isolate

Employers should support workers who need to self-isolate and must not ask them to attend the workplace.

Workers will be told to isolate because they:

- have coronavirus symptoms and are awaiting a test result;
- have tested positive for coronavirus;
- are a member of the same household as someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for coronavirus; or
- have been in close recent contact with someone who has tested positive and received a notification to self-isolate from NHS Test and Trace.

Employers should continue to communicate with workers in self-isolation and provide support. This includes allowing people to work from home if they remain well and if it is practicable to do so. This might include finding alternative work that can be completed at home during the period of self-isolation.

If people can't work from home, employers must ensure any self-isolating employee is receiving sick pay and give them the option to use their paid leave days if they prefer. Further guidance is available on what employees should do if they cannot work.

Employees in self-isolation are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay for every day they are in isolation, as long as they meet the eligibility conditions. Information for employers on reclaiming Statutory Sick Pay can be found in this guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-your-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

The NHS Test and Trace service will provide a notification that can be used as evidence that someone has been told to self-isolate.

An employee can ask to take their paid holiday for the time they're off work, entitling them to full pay for the duration of their leave, as opposed to SSP, if they choose.

#### 5. Guidance for the self-employed



If you are self-employed, you must continue to work from home if you can. If this is not possible, the guidance on the 5 steps for working safely and sector-specific advice (Link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>) must be implemented for your work environment. As part of this, you must continue to think about how you can observe government guidance on social distancing for the people that you meet, such as customers and suppliers.

To help stop the spread of coronavirus, you will be told to self-isolate if you or another household member develop symptoms or test positive for coronavirus, or if the NHS Test and Trace service tells you to do so because you have had close recent contact with someone with coronavirus. If it is possible for you to amend your working practices and work from home, then you must do so.

If your business has been adversely affected by coronavirus, you may be eligible for a grant through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. More information on this Scheme, and other support available if you are not eligible, is available here (link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>)

## 6. Contact tracing: contact with co-workers

The NHS Test and Trace service will follow up with people who need to self-isolate because they have had close recent contact with someone, who might be a colleague, who has tested positive for coronavirus. It will do this through:

- dedicated contact tracing staff;
- local public health experts;
- online services; or
- the new NHS COVID-19 app, which will be rolled out nationally after the trial period in the Isle of Wight

When someone first develops symptoms and orders a test, they will be encouraged to alert the people that they have had close contact with in the 48 hours before symptom onset. If any of those close contacts are co-workers, the person who has developed symptoms may wish to (but is not obliged to) ask their employer to alert those co-workers. At this stage, those close contacts should not self-isolate, but they:

- must avoid individuals who are at high-risk of contracting COVID-19, for example, because they have pre-existing medical conditions, such as respiratory issues.
- must take extra care in practising social distancing and good hygiene and in watching out for symptoms.



- will be better prepared if the person who has symptoms has a positive test result and if they (the contact) receive a notification from the NHS Test and Trace service explaining they need to self-isolate.

If the person who has symptoms has a positive test result for COVID-19, the NHS Test and Trace service will ask them to share information about their close recent contacts.

If they work in – or have recently visited or attended – one of the following settings, the contact tracing process will be escalated to local public health experts, who will liaise as necessary with the manager of the relevant setting:

- a health or care setting, for instance a hospital or care home
- a prison or other secure establishment
- a school for children with special needs
- any setting where there is a risk of a local outbreak.

In other cases, any non-household contacts who need to self-isolate will be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service. They will receive a formal notification (either a phone call, letter, email or text message) setting out how long they need to self-isolate for. Workers can use this notification to inform their employer that they

have been told to self-isolate. Employers will need this evidence if they are going to claim a rebate for Statutory Sick Pay.

The period of self-isolation will be for 14 days from the point of most recent contact with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus.

## **7. The NHS COVID-19 app**

The NHS COVID-19 app will form one component of the NHS Test and Trace service. It will complement other forms of contact tracing, helping to speed up contact tracing and to reach people who cannot be reached through traditional forms of contact tracing, such as someone you do not know but you have sat next to on public transport. The app is currently being trialled in the Isle of Wight before a national rollout.

For further information on the app please check the NHS Covid-19 App website:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/covid-19-response/nhs-covid-19-app/>

## **GUIDANCE FOR WORKERS**

### **Self-isolation**



Workers who are self-isolating because they have symptoms of coronavirus or live with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus, can get an isolation note through NHS111 online. Workers who are told to self-isolate should share the evidence provided by NHS Test and Trace to show that they have been told to self-isolate and explain to their employer that this means that they cannot come to work.

Workers who are already unable to work and have a 'Fit Note' which says they are not fit for work covering the period for which they have been told to self-isolate, must follow the public health advice they have been given.

Workers must self-isolate whenever they receive a notification from the NHS Test and Trace service asking them to do so. If this happens on multiple occasions, they should consider how you can better follow social distancing requirements.

Workers who think the contacts that have triggered these notifications are workplace contacts, should ask their employer to consider what further mitigating actions could be taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19, such as using screens to separate people or "cohorting" to reduce the number of people each person has contact with. Further suggestions can be seen at the safer workplace's guidance [Link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>].

## Sources of financial help

An employee who is self-isolating who can work from home must do so, by agreement with their employer. If it is not possible for them to work, employees can

get Statutory Sick Pay. This is paid at a flat rate of £95.85 per week by employers for up to 28 weeks per period of sickness.

Some employers choose to offer more than the statutory minimum and provide more financial support to their employees while they are off work sick – either in terms of the rate of pay or the duration. This is known as "contractual" or "occupational" sick pay.

When an individual's entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay ends, depending on their individual circumstances they may be able to claim Universal Credit and/or Employment and Support Allowance.

Agency workers or workers on zero hours contract who have been told to self-isolate must work from home, unless it is impossible for them to do so. If they are unable to work from home, they may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay or Universal Credit whilst self-isolating in line with Government guidance. Link to SSP guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>

Further information on guidance and support for employees during coronavirus can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-and-support-for-employees-during-coronavirus-covid-19>