

Lancashire & South Cumbria ICS Close Contact, Self-isolation and Testing Guidance – COVID-19

Staff briefing notice for all NHS and Social Care staff in all settings on the definition of close contact and when staff need to self-isolate and get a test for COVID-19

This notice is to provide clarity to all staff on the protocols they must follow in order to provide the safest possible environment for staff and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic and to comply with the primary objectives of the NHS Test and Trace service. This applies to all staff regardless of previous COVID-19 test results/infections.

The key points are as follows:

Testing positive for COVID-19: -

- If you test positive for COVID-19 you will need to self-isolate for 10 days
- For staff testing positive using lateral flow devices, this is from the date of the positive lateral flow test and not from the date of your confirmatory PCR test
- You should notify your Trust, Practice, workplace etc. (if they do not already know), who should immediately begin work to identify and instruct any workplace contacts to self-isolate for 10 days (see close contact definition below). This is likely to be faster than NHS Test and Trace
- Isolation for staff (and all patients) admitted to hospital will be for the longer period of 14 days, due to their higher levels of infection and being more likely to have pre-existing conditions
- Residents in care homes who test positive must isolate for 14 days but staff in care homes follow the 10-day isolation period outlined above

When contacted by NHS Test and Trace: -

- You will be contacted by the NHS test and trace service and must share the information requested to help track contacts and reduce the spread of the virus
- Testing of contacts is only required if contacts develop symptoms
- A negative test for a contact during the 10-day period does not change the requirement to self-isolate for 10 days
- If, as a contact, you test positive, you must continue to stay home for 10 days

Staff who have received any of the COVID-19 vaccines: -

- Staff who have received a COVID-19 vaccine should continue to follow current guidance on the wearing of PPE, self-isolation, hygiene, and social distancing measures, and continue to follow the regular asymptomatic testing programme

- Staff should be aware that the COVID-19 vaccine may cause a mild fever which usually resolves within 48 hours. This is a common, expected reaction and isolation is not required unless there are epidemiological or other clinical reasons to suspect a COVID-19 infection. The most commonly reported COVID-19 symptoms are: a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste. If someone experiences any of these symptoms they should get tested. The COVID-19 vaccine will not interfere with testing for COVID-19 infection.

The **definition of a contact** is any of the following **without appropriate PPE** being used **during the infectious period (from 48 hours before onset of symptoms [or date of test if asymptomatic] and 10 days after onset of symptoms/date of test)**:

- anyone who lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19
- anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 with a PCR test:
 - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
 - sexual contacts
 - been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
 - travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

Appropriate PPE is the level of PPE as described in the IPC guidance ([Gov UK IPC guidance](#)) for a healthcare setting for staff who have been trained to don and doff. Staff should ensure they are following the guidance at all times.

It is important to consider when the contact took place, as it may have occurred when you were not in full PPE i.e. talking in handover meetings; coffee/lunch breaks; car sharing to work.

Antibody testing:

Please note that staff who have had a positive antibody test should follow the above protocols in the same way as other staff. Testing positive for antibodies does not infer any level of immunity and all staff must continue to follow PPE, hand washing and social distancing guidance as before.