👑 GOV.UK

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh

10 June 1921 to 9 April 2021

Read about the arrangements following The Duke of Edinburgh's death (https://www.gov.uk/duke-of-edinburgh)

1. Home (https://www.gov.uk/)
2. Coronavirus (COVID-19) (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon)
3. Rules and restrictions during coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/rules-and-restrictions)

Part of
Work and financial support during coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/work-and-financial-support)

Guidance
NHS Test and Trace in the workplace

What to do if you or someone you employ is contacted by NHS Test and Trace, including self-isolation, sick pay and financial support.

From:
>   Department of Health and Social Care (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care)

Published:
>   27 May 2020

Last updated:
>   5 April 2021,

Applies to:
>   England

Contents

‣ NHS Test and Trace
‣ Guidance for employers
‣ Guidance for workers

Print this page

> The government has published the COVID-19 response – spring 2021 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021) setting out the roadmap out of the current lockdown for England. This explains how restrictions will be eased over time.

From 12 April 2021 some businesses are permitted to reopen (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-businesses-and-venues-in-england/reopening-businesses-and-venues).

The rules on what you need to do when a group enters your venue have changed. You must ask every customer or visitor to scan the NHS QR code using their NHS COVID-19 app, or provide their name and contact details, not just a lead member of the group.

This is to ensure that everyone receives the necessary public health advice in a timely manner.

NHS Test and Trace

NHS Test and Trace:

- provides free testing (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/) for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus 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 contacts they have had
- alerts those contacts, where necessary, and instructs them to self-isolate

You are legally obliged to self-isolate as soon as you show symptoms of COVID-19, and must book a test within 5 days. If you get a positive test result, you must self-isolate for 10 days from the day your symptoms started. By self-isolating when told to do so by NHS Test and Trace, you are protecting your family, friends and local community, and helping to stop the spread of the virus.

See further information on how NHS Test and Trace works (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works).

NHS COVID-19 app

The NHS COVID-19 app is an important part of NHS Test and Trace. App users can check symptoms, order a test, receive results and advice and check in to venues. The app sends anonymous alerts if the user has been in close contact with another app user who has tested positive and will notify them that they should self-isolate, thereby helping to break chains of transmission and keep people safe.

- How businesses should use the app and NHS QR code poster (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance#app-business)
- How workers should use the app (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance#app-worker)
- Download the app (https://covid19.nhs.uk/)

This guidance explains how employers and businesses can support NHS Test and Trace and play their part to slow the spread of the virus, protect the health and care system and save lives.

Guidance for employers

It's critical that employers take steps to keep workers and visitors safe. By following the COVID secure guidelines (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19), employers can reduce the risk of co-workers having to self-isolate if a member of staff tests positive for COVID-19, or is identified as having had close contact with someone who has tested positive.

Working from home, where possible, is essential to limiting mixing between households. People should work from home, unless it is not reasonable to do so. If necessary, workers can travel for work purposes and stay away from home.

It is vital that employers play their part by:

- supporting staff to work from home
- making workplaces as safe as possible (if working from home is not possible)
- not knowingly allow workers who are required to self-isolate to attend the workplace
- encouraging employees to download and use the NHS COVID-19 app

Employers must continue to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees and other people in the workplace. This includes, but is not limited to: workers, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, customers, suppliers and other visitors.

Ensuring your workers self-isolate where necessary

It is an offence for you (as an employer) to allow a worker to attend the workplace if you are aware that the worker:

- has tested positive for COVID-19
- has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive and they have received a notification to self-isolate from NHS Test and Trace

This NHS guidance (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/) sets out how long an individual must self-isolate for.

If you know that a worker has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, it is your legal duty to not allow them to come into work or work anywhere other than where they are self-isolating (usually, their home) for their full self-isolation period. Failure to do so could result in your firm facing a fine, starting from £1,000.

If a worker has received a notification to self-isolate via the NHS COVID-19 app, they should not attend the workplace as the individual may be infectious and could spread the virus.

Close contacts

A close contact (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) is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. You can be a contact anytime from 2 days before the person who tested positive developed their symptoms, and up to 10 days after. This is when the virus can be passed to others.

A contact can be anyone who:

- lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19
- has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19:
  - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre
  - been within 1 metre for 1 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 1 day)
  - travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

NHS Test and Trace will not usually consider someone to be a contact if their interaction with a positive case took place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen as long as there has been no other contact such as those in the list above.

The wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) will not be considered as a mitigation when assessing whether a recent contact is likely to have transmitted the virus. Only full medical-grade PPE worn in health and care settings will be considered.

If any of your workers test positive

Employers should call the Self-Isolation Service Hub on 020 3743 6715 as soon as they are made aware that any of their workers have tested positive.

Employers will need to provide the 8-digit NHS Test and Trace Account ID (sometimes referred to as a CTAS number) of the person who tested positive, alongside the names of co-workers identified as close contacts. This will ensure that all workplace contacts are registered with NHS Test and Trace and can receive the necessary public health advice, including the support available to help people to self-isolate.

If workers cannot work from home

If a worker cannot work from home, you:

- may consider giving them the option to use their paid leave days
- should pay contractual sick pay, where appropriate
- must ensure they receive Statutory Sick Pay as a minimum, provided they meet the eligibility criteria
- should make workers aware of the support available to help them to self-isolate (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/help-and-financial-support-while-youre-self-isolating/)

Employees in self-isolation are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay for every day of work missed for their self-isolation period, provided they meet all the eligibility criteria.

Small and medium employers (with fewer than 250 employees) may be able to reclaim their costs for Statutory Sick Pay (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-your-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19). NHS Test and Trace will provide evidence to your employee that they have been told to self-isolate, and how long for. You may ask your employee to follow the instructions on getting an isolation note (https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/) if you require further evidence.

Find out more about employment rights if someone needs to self-isolate or cannot attend work due to coronavirus. (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/if-you-need-to-self-isolate-or-cannot-attend-work-due-to-coronavirus)

Action cards

The managing and outbreak action card resources have now closed down. Please search GOV.UK (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) for the guidance you need for your setting.

The action card section of this page will be removed on 30 April 2021.

Guidance links

Confirm:

- get a coronavirus test (https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)
- guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance)

Contacts:

- guidance for contacts of people with 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)

Check:

- working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

Call:

- find your local health protection team in England (https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team)

Further guidance:

- guidance for contacts of people with 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)
- COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings)
- coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers)

Collecting contact details for NHS Test and Trace and NHS QR code check-in

Certain organisations are legally required to request contact details of customers, visitors and staff and display an official NHS QR code poster. Organisations within the hospitality sector are required to take reasonable steps to prevent entry to those who refuse to provide their details or scan the NHS QR code.

This applies to establishments in the following sectors:

- hospitality, including pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes
- tourism and leisure, including hotels, museums, cinemas and amusement arcades
- close contact services (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services), including hairdressers, barbershops and tailors
- services provided for social, cultural and recreational purposes in community centres and village halls

See the full list of organisations within scope in these sectors (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace#list-of-settings).

Venues should ask every visitor to check in to their venue using the NHS COVID-19 app if they have it, or by providing their contact details. The NHS COVID-19 app is a quick and simple way to check in to a venue, and it means that visitors can receive public health information as soon as possible if necessary.

Find out more about these requirements and what you need to do to comply with the rules. (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace)

Guidance for workers

Working from home is essential to limit household mixing. You should continue to work from home, unless it is not reasonably possible to do so. If necessary, you can travel for work purposes.

If you develop symptoms, you should order a free test (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/) as soon as your symptoms start.

If the test is positive

If you get a positive test result, you are legally required to self-isolate for 10 days from the day your symptoms started. You will be asked by NHS Test and Trace to provide details of anyone who you have been in close contact with. This will not automatically be all of your co-workers, but anyone who meets the definition of a close contact (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).

NHS Test and Trace will notify those you had close contact with and instruct them to self-isolate. When NHS Test and Trace notifies contacts to self-isolate, it does not tell them the identity of the person who has tested positive. If you are identified as a close contact of a positive case, then you are legally required to self-isolate for 10 days beginning from the last time you were exposed to the positive case.

If you are an NHS COVID-19 app user, please share your result anonymously with other app users so that people you have been in close contact with recently will be alerted.

If you are told to self-isolate you must stay at home

If you are told to self-isolate and are due to work somewhere other than your place of self-isolation, you have a legal duty to inform your employer as soon as possible before you are next due to work. Failure to do so could result in a £50 fine.

If you need to provide evidence to your employer of a positive test result, or the fact that you have been in close contact with a positive case, you can request an isolation note from the NHS (https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/).

If you are self-isolating because you are a close contact but you develop symptoms while you are self-isolating, then you must order a test as soon as possible.

A negative test result does not mean that you can stop self-isolating as you may still be in the incubation period (the time between exposure to the virus and symptom onset), and you could go on to develop COVID-19 in the following days. Do not order a test if you do not have symptoms.

Find out more about employment rights if you need to self-isolate or cannot attend work due to coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/if-you-need-to-self-isolate-or-cannot-attend-work-due-to-coronavirus).

Financial support for people self-isolating

Statutory Sick Pay

If it is not possible for you to work, you may receive Statutory Sick Pay, provided you meet the eligibility criteria.

Some employers choose to offer more than the statutory minimum and provide additional financial support to their workers while they are unable to work. This is known as 'contractual' or 'occupational' sick pay.

If you are not eligible for Statutory Sick Pay, you may be able to claim for other welfare support, such as Universal Credit or New Style Employment and Support Allowance.

Further guidance is available on what to do if you are employed and cannot work (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-what-to-do-if-youre-employed-and-cannot-work).

NHS Test and Trace Self-Isolation Support Payment Scheme

If you are told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app, you may be eligible for a payment of £500 from your local authority through the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme. This scheme is for people who are employed or self-employed, on a low income, unable to work from home and losing income as a result.

More information on the scheme and eligibility criteria (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme).

You will need an NHS Test and Trace Account ID to submit an application.

If you have not tested positive but are a close contact, your employer should call the Self-Isolation Service Hub on 020 3743 6715 to obtain an NHS Test and Trace Account ID for you.

Your employer will need to provide the NHS Test and Trace Account ID of the person who tested positive and your name as a close contact. If you have not been registered with the Self-Isolation Service Hub you will not be able to claim for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

Financial support for the self-employed

If you are self-employed, you must continue to work from home if you can. If you cannot, you should follow the sector-specific advice (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19).

If your business has been affected by COVID-19, you may be eligible for a grant through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme).

Using the NHS COVID-19 app as a worker

Once you have downloaded the app, it should be left on as much as possible to ensure you and your community are protected. If contact tracing is turned off then the app will not work as intended and you will not be notified if one of your close contacts later tests positive for coronavirus.

However, there are some specific workplace scenarios when you should pause the contact tracing feature. These are:

- when you are working behind a fixed Perspex (or equivalent) screen and are fully protected from other people
- if you store your phone in a locker or communal area, for example while working
- if you are a worker in health and social care and are wearing medical grade PPE such as a surgical mask
- if you are a healthcare worker working in a healthcare building such as a hospital or GP surgery

Contact tracing can be paused within the app by moving the contact tracing toggle on the home screen. It's important you turn the contact tracing toggle back on as soon as you are not in one of the above scenarios, for example, when you retrieve your phone from your locker. To help you, you will be given the option to pause the feature for different time periods – after which you will receive a reminder to turn the contact tracing feature back on.

Published 27 May 2020
Last updated 5 April 2021 + show all updates

1. 5 April 2021
   Updated rules for businesses reopening, and for entering a venue.
2. 29 March 2021
   Updated to reflect the change in rules for when a group enters a venue. From 29 March 2021, every customer or visitor should be asked to scan the NHS QR code or provide their name and contact details, not just a lead member.
3. 25 March 2021
   Updated section regarding action cards.
4. 2 February 2021
   Updated section on when to contact your local health protection team.
5. 11 January 2021

Updated to reflect the change from tiers to national lockdown and to update the definition of a close contact.

6. 15 December 2020

   Updated to reflect the change in the self-isolation period from 14 to 10 days.

7. 2 December 2020

   Updated to reflect the end of the national restrictions on 2 December 2020 and the reintroduction of the tiered system.

8. 5 November 2020

   Updated to show that everyone should work from home where possible during the increased national restrictions from 5 November 2020.

9. 26 October 2020

   Updated to reflect employers' legal duties around staff who are self-isolating.

10. 30 September 2020

    Corrected an error implying that the NHS COVID-19 app is mandatory, which it isn't.

11. 29 September 2020

    Updated to reflect the launch of the COVID-19 app and how it should be used in the workplace. Corrected the period that people are infectious to say: from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms.

12. 18 September 2020

    Updated to reflect the new legal requirements for designated venues to collect contact details and display official NHS QR code posters.

13. 22 July 2020

    The guidance has been redrafted for clarity. In addition, there is a new section on collecting customer and visitor data for NHS Test and Trace. The following information has been added to the section headed 'If a worker develops symptoms and orders a test': Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact. Contact tracers will not consider the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) as a mitigation when assessing whether a recent contact is likely to have risked transmitting the virus.

14. 15 June 2020

    Updated the guidance for employers about multiple coronavirus outbreaks in the workplace.

15. 27 May 2020

    First published.

Print this page

Related content

- NHS Test and Trace: what to do if you are contacted (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works)
- Guidance for contacts of people with 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)
- COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance)

- Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance)

Brexit

- Check
- Change
- Go

Check what you need to do

(https://www.gov.uk/transition)

Explore the topic

- Rules and restrictions during coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/rules-and-restrictions)
- Testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/testing)
- Working safely during coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/working-safely)