

COVID-19 Regulations Update



RetailNI

Standing up for Independent Retailers

Following an Executive meeting on 12th August the following changes have been made to the COVID-19 Regulations. As previously stated, Retail NI continues to lobby for the removal of what are punitive restrictions and additional support.

From Monday 16th August 2021 the following changes came into effect

- The limit of numbers permitted at tables will be removed in hospitality venues
- Conference centres can reopen allowing conferences and exhibitions to resume
- Isolation rules will change – updated guidance below



Isolation Regulations

People are considered to be fully vaccinated if it is more than 14 days since they received the second dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine. From Monday 16th August people who are fully vaccinated will no longer need to self-isolate for 10 days if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 provided they are asymptomatic. Instead, they should get a PCR test on day two and day eight of the 10-day period. Instead, they should book PCR tests on days 2 and 8 from the last contact with the positive case. People who are not fully vaccinated will still need to self-isolate for the full 10 days, even if they have had a negative PCR test.

This policy change applies to close contacts only. Anyone who has symptoms, whether vaccinated or not, should immediately book a PCR test. Anyone who has had a positive PCR test should self-isolate for a full 10 days after

the symptoms started. If the individual did not have symptoms but has tested positive, they should self-isolate for 10 days from their PCR test date.

You can end self-isolation 10 days after your symptoms started if you do not still have a high temperature. If you still have a high temperature, you need to continue to self-isolate until your temperature has returned to normal for 48 hours.

You do not need to continue self-isolating for more than 10 days if you only have a cough or loss of sense of smell/ taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

Young people aged 5 – 17 who are not fully vaccinated and are identified as a close contact should self-isolate and book a PCR test. If the PCR test is positive, they should

isolate for 10 days. If the PCR test result is negative, they can end their self-isolation but must book a follow up PCR test on day 8.

Should anyone develop symptoms after the negative PCR test, they should self-isolate and take another PCR test. If the PCR test is positive, they must complete a full 10 days of self-isolation. If the PCR test is negative, they can stop isolating.

Children under the age of 5 who are close contacts will be encouraged but not required to take a PCR test. They will not be expected to self-isolate, unless a PCR test comes back positive, or they develop symptoms.

For more information visit <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-self-isolating>



Definition of a close contact

- A person who lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Or

- Anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 from 2 days before the person developed symptoms until 10 days after the onset of symptoms.
 - Face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - Skin-to-skin physical contact for any length of time
 - Been within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact
 - Sexual contact
 - 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 plane

The cumulative 15 minutes contact added up together over 1 day (instead of continuous 15 minutes) was a national change made in the close contact definition some time ago to reflect evidence for transmission occurring because of cumulative contact within 2 metres.

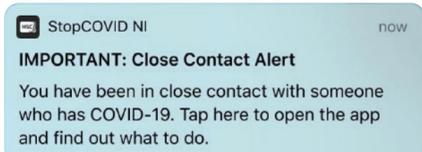
Note that in the event of a cluster or outbreak (defined as 2 or more cases in a setting), the Public Health Agency (PHA) Contact Tracing Service may advise isolation of a wider group of individuals in a workplace or other setting, based on a risk assessment. Flights will also be escalated for a more detailed risk assessment.



Proof of Notice to isolate

If a person is identified as a close contact by the PHA Contact Tracing Service, they will receive a text from HSC Contact Tracing Service which should be adequate evidence for the employer (blank example below). The exception to this would be if the Contact Tracing Service are not able to obtain contact details for the close contact, in which case they wouldn't be able to generate a text.

The app is led by the Department of Health, but they will get an alert which again can be showed to the employer.



For more information visit [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): StopCOVID NI proximity app | nidirect](#)



Pay entitlement

If a member of staff tests or is required to self-isolate they are entitled to statutory pay or as detailed in their contract of employment.



Multiple Cases – Cluster/Outbreak

If cases such as an outbreak or cluster are linked to your premises, the PHA Health Protection Duty room should be contacted on **0300 555 0119** for Risk Assessment and then your local Environmental Health Officer will contact you and work with you regarding the measures you are required to take.



Staff Member – Individual Case

If you become aware that a staff member has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19:

There is no requirement for you to contact PHA Contact Tracing Service in respect of the staff member with the COVID-19 diagnosis. All positive test results are sent to the Contact Tracing Service. Staff there will contact the person to find out who they have had close contact with over a defined time period known as their 'infectious period'. Further self-isolation guidance can be obtained on the NI Direct website – [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): self-isolating | nidirect](#)



Customer – Individual Case

If you become aware that a customer has symptoms or has tested positive for Covid 19:

There is no requirement for the business owner to contact PHA Contact Tracing Service in respect of the customer with the Covid-19 diagnosis. All positive test results are sent to the Contact Tracing Service where staff contact the person to find out who they have had close contact with over a defined period. If that person has identified a staff member and there has been contact that meets the definition of "close" PHA will contact the business with advice.



Closing for Additional Cleaning

You should already have enhanced Covid deep cleaning regime in place, with all surfaces, equipment etc cleaned between individual use etc. It is therefore not necessary for you to close unless directed to close local Environmental Health Officer (i.e., multiple cases or a cluster/outbreak). However, you may wish to carry out an additional clean to reassure staff and customers.

For guidance on cleaning refer to the following website

COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings outside the home - [GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://GOV.UK)



Free Staff Testing

Business can now take up Free Lateral Flow test offer to keep staff and customers safe. These tests should not be used in place of PCR tests and should only be used in people who are asymptomatic & who have not been identified as 'close contacts'.

Why is it important?

- Asymptomatic (showing no symptoms) testing seeks to identify these individuals quickly and ensure that they and their unvaccinated close contacts can self-isolate. This approach helps to break chains of transmission in the workforce and beyond.
- Workforce asymptomatic testing is in addition to, and does not replace, a range of other measures in place in wider society, such as social distancing, hand hygiene and face coverings.



All businesses are eligible

- Find out how you get your free tests by visiting the website [Rapid Tests | Department of Health](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/rapid-tests) <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/rapid-tests>
- For businesses with fewer than 10 employees: a range of options are currently available including the Lateral Flow Device Collect services from Local Testing Sites and the LFD Direct Service – tests can be delivered to the employees' home.
- Businesses with more than 10 employees are now able to access the Workforce Asymptomatic Testing Programme.



What's on Offer?

- A supply of rapid tests provided, free of charge, to eligible businesses and employees.
- If you want to set up a test site or workplace collect system, then we will provide staff training for those who will oversee the process.



Next steps

- Expression of interest form: All employers who wish to participate in the workforce testing schemes need to complete an online expression of interest form Workforce Asymptomatic Testing Programme: register an interest in delivering workplace testing | Department of Health <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/forms/workforce-asymptomatic-testing-programme-register-interest>
- Once the Department of Health receives this form, the team will work with employers to identify the most appropriate form of testing available based on their requirements and support you through the programme.

Further details can be found by visiting the website [Rapid Tests | Department of Health](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/rapid-tests) <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/rapid-tests>

if you would like to speak to a member of the team please email: asymptomatic.testing@health-ni.gov.uk

RetailNI.com

For further information and guidance contact us on **Retail NI, 245 Upper Newtownards Road, Ballyhackamore, BELFAST, BT4 3JF**

E: glyn@retailni.com or joelene@retailni.com T: **028 9022 0004**