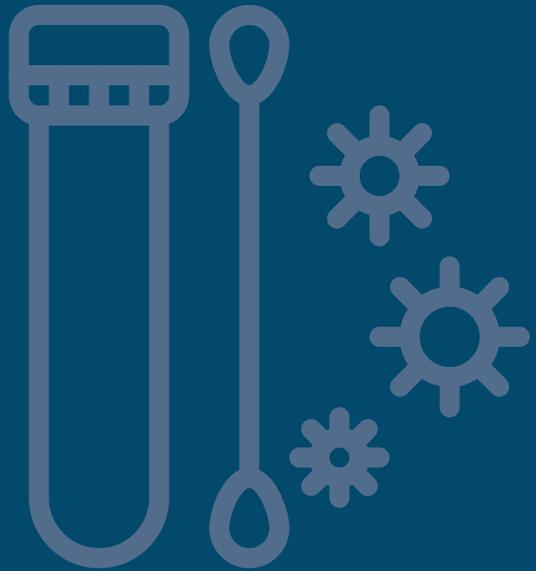

Managing the workplace risk



A guide to COVID-19 case management, issued by the Construction Industry Collective Voice (CICV)

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Introduction

The Scottish Government made significant changes to the management of the coronavirus pandemic earlier this summer, in May 2022.

As we now enter autumn and winter, it is expected that case numbers may again start to increase and this reference document sets out the current guidance with a view to assisting employers in managing cases within their workforce as they arise.

In accordance with the timeframes set out in the Test and Protect Transition Plan, from Sunday 1 May 2022 onwards most people no longer need to take a coronavirus test and should follow guidance on 'staying at home' if unwell. Consequently, clearly defined self-isolation periods for untested employees suffering from COVID-19 are no longer set and have been replaced by a system which places more responsibility on the individual and their decision making.

In addition, the familiar contact tracing procedures through Test and Protect have concluded, publicly available PCR test centres have closed, free lateral flow device tests are no longer available and the COVID-19 High Risk List, previously the Shielding List, has ended, although specific advice for immunosuppressed people remains in place. More details are available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-highest-risk/pages/guidance-for-immunosuppressed-people/> 

While this 'stay at home' public health message represents a further positive step towards normality, it is recognised that these changes may cause challenges for some employers, particularly in industries such as construction where working from home is often not an option for many operatives.

As a result, the Construction Industry Collective Voice (CICV) has prepared this Q&A guidance document to offer some initial support to employers as they attempt to navigate the latest COVID-19 rules and recommendations.

However, due to the many complexities and nuances involved, this guidance will not be able to cover every eventuality. Employers are therefore encouraged to contact their trade federation or association for further support on a case-by-case basis.

Further information

More information on the latest COVID-19 advice in Scotland can also be found here:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid19> 

Q&A

What should I do if an employee feels unwell and has COVID-19 symptoms?

Most people in Scotland no longer need to test for COVID-19. However, testing will remain available to a limited number of people including:

- Those who have underlying health conditions which [qualify for new COVID-19 treatments](#)
- Those that work in the NHS or social care with symptoms
- Those wishing to apply for the Self-Isolation Support Grant.

For eligible individuals, lateral flow COVID-19 tests can be ordered online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests> 

Consequently, it is expected that the majority of employees in the construction industry will no longer require a COVID-19 test to confirm their COVID-19 status.

Untested individuals who feel unwell with COVID-19-related symptoms and have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities should stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Employees should do this until they no longer have a high temperature, if they had one, or until they feel better.

Employees should tell people, including work colleagues, that they have recently been in contact with that they are feeling unwell. This means they can be aware of signs or symptoms.

What should I do if an employee has a positive COVID-19 test result?

Employees with a positive coronavirus test result, should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for five days after the day they took their test, or from the day their symptoms started, whichever was earlier. Employees should count the day after they take their test as Day 1.

Individuals do not need to have a negative test result to end the period of staying at home. However, individuals who have a high temperature or still feel unwell after the five days should follow the 'stay at home' advice until they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature, if they had one, or until they feel better.

For employees aged 18 years or younger with a positive COVID-19 test, the recommended 'stay at home' period is reduced from five days to three days. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Although many people will no longer be infectious to others after the relevant 'stay at home' period, some individuals may be infectious to other people for up to 10 days from the start of their infection.

Consequently, employees should avoid meeting people at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19, especially [those whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness from coronavirus](#) for 10 days after the day they took their test.

Q&A

What are the recognised symptoms of COVID-19?

The 'stay at home' message extends to those individuals who have symptoms of a respiratory infections such as COVID-19 (*see right*) and have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities. Such employees should stay at home until they no longer have a high temperature, if they had one, or until they feel better.

It is noted that employees might continue to have a cough or feel tired after their other symptoms have improved. This does not mean that they are still infectious.

Employees who feel unwell should also be encouraged to drink fluids to keep hydrated, get plenty of rest and take over-the-counter medication like paracetamol if required, while always following the manufacturer's instructions. Antibiotics will not relieve their symptoms or speed up their recovery.

Employees should speak with their GP if:

- Their symptoms worsen
- They are concerned about symptoms
- Symptoms are no longer manageable at home
- They are concerned about children.

If their GP is closed, they should phone **111**.

In an emergency, they should phone **999**.



SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- Continuous cough
- High temperature, fever or chills
- Loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath
- Unexplained tiredness and/or lack of energy
- Muscle aches or pains not due to exercise
- Not wanting to eat or not feeling hungry
- Headache that's unusual or longer lasting than usual
- Sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
- Diarrhoea
- Feeling, or being, sick

Q&A

Do employees need to provide proof of COVID-19 illness?

The usual sickness absence process applies for employees who need to self-isolate and cannot work from home or are not well enough to work.

Employers might need to be flexible if asking for proof, e.g. if someone is very ill they might not be able to get proof straight away.

If someone is off work due to COVID-19 and you require them to provide proof, they can get an isolation note from [the NHS website](#).

What if an employee doesn't want to follow the 'stay at home' advice?

Many employees may suffer financially if they do the right thing and follow the 'stay at home' messaging when unwell. The three-day waiting period before accessing Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) payments has now been reintroduced and many of the sector's collectively bargained agreements also have waiting periods before contractual sick pay is accessible.

Consequently, some employees who are unwell may not wish to stay at home in accordance with the guidance for financial reasons. Others may simply wish to continue to work. In such circumstances, employers have a number of options available such as:

- Facilitating working from home if practical to do so
- Mutually agreeing to utilise annual leave entitlement
- Making arrangements for the employee to undertake lone working if it is safe to do so.

Ultimately, if the employer is genuinely concerned about the health of the infected employee or their colleagues, the relevant employee could be suspended on medical grounds with full pay.

In the first instance an employer should always enter into a level of dialogue with the employee to better understand their issues and concerns and to stress the importance of adhering to the public safety guidance and advice to stay at home.



Q&A

How does someone access the Self-Isolation Support Grant?

Workers with a positive PCR test result who earn a lower level of income, i.e. less than or close to £1,608.75 per month before deductions, or who are in receipt of certain benefit payments, can apply for the Self-Isolation Support Grant.

Employees who do not meet the low income threshold may still be eligible for support depending on their circumstances, e.g. if they have children who they live with or care for.

A grant payment of £225 can be made for each eligible period of isolation and is offered to help cover lost earnings. Individuals can only apply for the grant once in any isolation period but can apply again for each separate time they, or someone they care for, has a positive PCR test result, up to a maximum of three grant payments for any individual.

The grant can be applied for through the relevant local authority and does not need to be paid back. It is the relevant employee's responsibility to claim the grant if they believe that they are eligible.

Further details on how to apply and book a PCR test in addition to the full eligibility criteria can be found here:

<https://www.mygov.scot/self-isolation-grant> 

What can I do to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace?

While the specific COVID-19-related requirements that were in law have now been removed, it is strongly recommended that employers risk assess their premises and working arrangements with a view to taking sensible precautions and actions to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

For example, employers should continue with appropriate protective measures such as:

- Encouraging vaccination uptake
- Using face coverings where appropriate
- Adapting operations and workplace practices identified by risk assessments
- Maintaining a clean workplace
- Encouraging good personal hygiene such as regular hand washing and covering noses and mouths when coughing or sneezing
- Following the 'stay at home' guidance.

In addition, employers may wish to consider improving ventilation to increase the amount of fresh air entering a building, such as opening windows, doors or vents in order to help minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Lone working may also be considered where appropriate but employers must be mindful of this approach and ensure that they train, supervise and monitor lone workers with a view to managing the associated risks.

Further information on safer workplaces can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/> 

Further guidance

Employers in the construction industry can contact their trade federation or association for further detailed advice and guidance. The links below may also provide useful information.

ACAS - Self-isolation for coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation-and-sick-pay> 

Health and Safety Executive - Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advice for workplaces

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/> 

NHS Inform - Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19> 

Scottish Government - Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advice for people who were on the Highest Risk List

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-highest-risk/> 

Scottish Government - Coronavirus (COVID-19): Safer workplaces and public settings

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/> 

Scottish Government - Coronavirus (COVID-19): Staying safe and protecting others

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/> 

Scottish Government - Coronavirus in Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/> 



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Further information



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