

October 2022

Public Health Guidance for Autumn/Winter 2022/23 for Vulnerable Group Settings

This guidance has been introduced in order to assist staff, residents and service users in vulnerable settings to live safely with Covid-19 and seasonal influenza and to understand the current testing advice.

- **Vaccination** - The best protection against Covid-19 is vaccination. If you have not already done so, encourage your residents, service users and staff to get vaccinated. It is important that everyone who is eligible takes up a booster this autumn, whichever vaccine is on offer. This will increase your protection from being severely ill from Covid-19 as we move into winter.

[Reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, in the workplace - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/reducing-the-spread-of-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19-in-the-workplace)

[Living safely with illnesses like COVID-19 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/guidance/living-safely-with-illnesses-like-covid-19)

- **Seasonal Influenza or flu** could infect your staff and service users and the best protection against this is vaccination, see the link below on eligible groups for free vaccination.

[Flu vaccines for the 2022 to 2023 season - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/flu-vaccines-for-the-2022-to-2023-season)

- **Handwashing** - Handwashing on a regular basis is a basic but very effective hygiene measure to prevent the spread and transmission of Covid-19. Please ensure that there are appropriate handwashing facilities for both residents, service users and staff in your setting.
- **Ventilation** - Good ventilation provides a flow of fresh air which reduces the possibility of spread and transmission of Covid-19. Ensure, where appropriate, that windows and doors remain open in order to facilitate good air flow.

- **Cleaning** - Regular cleaning of all touch points is strongly recommended as an effective method to reduce the spread and transmission of Covid-19.
- **Symptomatic Testing** - Symptomatic testing should take place for residents, service users and staff who present with symptoms of a respiratory illness and have a high temperature or who are too unwell to carry out their normal activities and should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test as soon as they feel unwell. However, it should be noted that there are many vulnerable service users who are unable to access free testing. If this first LFD test is negative, they should take another LFD test 48 hours later. During this period:
 - Staff should stay at home
 - Residents and service users should be supported to stay in their accommodation and avoid contact with other people, particularly those whose immune systems means that they are at higher risk of serious illness from Covid-19, despite vaccination.
 - If the second LFD test result is also negative they can return to their normal activities once they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to do so.

[COVID-19 testing in homelessness, domestic abuse refuge, respite room and asylum seeker accommodation settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[COVID-19: testing during periods of low prevalence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- **Outbreak Testing:**
- Outbreak testing of **staff and residents** should be used if your setting is a:
 - Homeless hostel, hotel and other temporary accommodation or respite room
- Outbreak testing for **staff only** should be used if your setting is a:
 - Night Shelter
- Outbreak testing should be undertaken where 2 or more people have had a positive Covid-19 test result (or clinically suspected) and are linked to the same place within a 14-day period. This includes residents, service users and staff who have been in the same setting. However, it should be noted that there are many vulnerable service users who are unable to access free testing.

- If an outbreak is suspected then the local UKHSA health protection team (HPT) should be contacted on the following telephone number **0300 303 8537** or at **EastOfEnglandHPT@ukhsa.gov.uk** . They will conduct a risk assessment, including on whether the cases are likely to be linked and provide further advice.
- Testing should be performed on Day 1 of the outbreak and then between day 4 and 7, with a final round at least 10 days after the last Covid-19 case or newly symptomatic individual to confirm the outbreak has ended. UKHSA will advise which individuals should test.
- **Staff member tests positive** – If a staff member has a positive LFD test, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms, they are advised not to attend work for 5 days. They do not need to take a PCR test.
- Staff should only return to work after they have had two consecutive negative LFD test results (taken at least 24 hours apart), they feel well and they do not have a high temperature. The first test should be taken 5 days after the day their symptoms first started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms). If both LFD tests are negative, they may return to work immediately after the second negative LFD result on day 6 as long as they feel well enough and do not have a high temperature.
- **Resident or service user tests positive** – residents or service users with a positive Covid-19 test result should be advised to avoid contact with other people for 5 days.
- Where possible, staff should support residents and service users with Covid-19 to avoid contact with others and practice safe behaviours to reduce the spread of infection as outlined above.

If LFD tests are required an order can be placed by visiting the ordering portal:

[Apply for coronavirus test kits - GOV.UK \(test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk\)](https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk)