

Last Revised – Monday, 11th January 2021

COVID-19 INFORMATION ACCURATE AT 11th January 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on all aspects of our daily life, in this document we try to answer some of the questions that effect our people and services. We are now in a position where different restrictions are in place in different parts of the country.

The [Tier System has five levels: Tiers 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4](#). Areas in the higher tiers have a higher level of restrictions. To find out which Tier you are in and the restrictions apply in your area use the [Scottish Government Postcode Checker](#).

How can I reduce the risk?

You can reduce your risk of getting and spreading the infection by:

- Maintaining social distancing by keeping 2 metres from others
- Washing your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds with soap and hot water to maintain good hand hygiene.
- Avoiding direct hand contact with your eyes, nose & mouth by avoiding touching.
- Avoiding direct contact with people that have a respiratory illness and avoiding using their personal items, such as their mobile phone.
- Cleaning toilets after each use or using a separate toilet if available.
- Covering your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing with disposable tissues.
- Wash your hands with soap and hot water or alcohol including hand sanitiser before eating & drinking – and after sneezing & coughing and using the toilet.

How can COVID-19 be passed on?

The main way COVID-19 can be passed on is by droplet and contact spread. The two main routes by which COVID-19 is transmitted:

- Direct close contact – If you are close to an infected person (within 2 metres) they can pass on the infection through coughs or sneezes, you can then be infected through the droplets through the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Indirect contact – If you touch a surface, object or the hand of an individual that is contaminated with the virus and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes, you could contract the virus.

To prevent infection COVID-19 you must apply the basic precautions above and maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature (above 37.8°C) – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature).
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

How long can coronavirus survive outside the body?

Coronavirus is a newly emerging virus so there haven't been any studies on how long it might survive outside the body. Other coronaviruses have been shown to survive on hard surfaces for up to 72 hours, so proper cleaning is very important.

What are we doing to minimise the risk of infection?

We have carried out risk assessment that outline the precautions to take to minimise the likelihood of exposure. We have also provided Service staff with the required Personal Protective Equipment to ensure the safety of themselves and the people we support. Make sure you know what PPE to wear and when to wear it. We have provided supplies of gloves, aprons and Type IIR surgical masks.

We have produced a [guide to PPE](#) to provide clarity around what is required, in line with the latest Guidance from the Scottish Government. The latest Scottish Government guidance is that a Type IIR surgical mask should be worn at all times when you are on shift.

What should I do if I am showing symptoms or live with someone who has symptoms?

If you've developed a new or continuous cough, a fever or a high temperature or if you notice a loss or change in your sense of taste or smell, you must stay at home for 10 days from the start of your symptoms, even if you think your symptoms are mild. Do not go to your GP, pharmacy or hospital. You should arrange a test for COVID-19 by contacting your line manager if you are a Frontline Keyworker. If you are a Keyworker, you can arrange a test by [applying here](#).

If after 10 days of developing symptoms, you do not have a high temperature, you do not need to continue to self-isolate. If you still have a high temperature, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal. You do not need to self-isolate if you just have a cough or a loss of sense of taste or smell after 10 days, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

How can I get tested for COVID-19?

As a key worker, you and anyone in their household with symptoms, can [access testing through their employer](#) in the first instance and will be given priority. If you test positive for the virus your close contacts will be traced as part of the national Test and Protect approach to containing the virus.

I've had contact with someone who has been confirmed as having coronavirus what should I do?

If in the past 48 hours you have been in close contact with someone who has been confirmed as having coronavirus, you are likely to be contacted by the Trace and Protect team at Public Health Scotland. You will be asked to self-isolate for 10 days. If you develop symptoms, arrange for a test, remain at home, and follow the official guidance linked below. You should not go to your GP practice in person. [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection.](#)

If someone we support, or a colleague, tests positive for COVID-19, we have committed to letting staff know that this diagnosis has happened, whilst protecting confidentiality, and the suspected/confirmed staff member in that instance would be asked to self-isolate for 10 days. The Scottish Government has committed to providing testing for staff and their families who find themselves in that position. The Government have increased testing capacity to extend this as widely as possible to include social care staff.

Your line manager can arrange a test, as a key worker you have access to the NHS testing procedure.

What is contact tracing?

Contact tracing is carried out by Health Protection Scotland through Test and Protect, this will help to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the community by:

identifying cases of COVID-19 through testing

tracing the people who may become infected by spending time in close contact with those who test positive supporting close contacts to self-isolate, so that if they have the virus, they are less likely transmit it to others

Test and protect will allow us to gradually change the restrictions that suppress the virus, the aim is to contain it so that society and the economy can avoid a return to lockdown.

How will I know if the Contact Tracer is genuine?

Contact tracers will always introduce themselves, tell you why they are contacting you and address you by your name.

They will never ask you any of the following:

- for information other than your movements, and the people you have been physically close
- to phone a premium rate number
- to make a purchase, payment or donation
- for your medical history unrelated to coronavirus
- for your bank details
- for your social media identities or login details, or those of your contacts
- for your passwords or PIN numbers, or to set up any
- for control of your computer, smartphone or tablet, or to download anything
- to visit a website that does not belong to NHS Scotland or the Scottish Government

Is there a risk of passing on infection through shared use of or contact with towels or bed linen used by a person who develops symptoms of the coronavirus?

Yes. Therefore, cleaning and decontamination should take place of all areas and surfaces and materials that the person with symptoms has come into contact with. Washing towels and bed linen at 60°C with a detergent is effective at killing viruses and bacteria on towels, bedding and other fabrics which should be washed after each use by the infected person. The infected person should have their own bathroom if possible and if not, it should be decontaminated after each use.

The infected person should self-isolate for 10 days. Staff should wear appropriate PPE ([See Staff Portal](#)) when supporting that person and maintain a distance of 2 metres from all individuals whenever possible.

Is it OK to wear a face covering at work?

No. While at work, care workers should use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided for activities that bring them into close personal contact with those who show symptoms, and those who are suspected to have COVID19/Coronavirus. Personal contact includes activities such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids. Aprons, gloves (nitrile where there is a risk of contact with blood/body fluids and vinyl gloves for social contact and other activities) and Type IIR fluid resistant masks should be used in these situations. If there is a risk of splashing, then eye protection will minimise risk.

Updated Government guidance on PPE for staff recommends wearing Type IIR masks and eye protection if it is considered necessary for their own and the individual's safety. Personal protective equipment can be used for each episode or session of personal care. It is essential that used personal protective equipment is put securely within disposable rubbish bags for disposal.

If the PPE has been used where there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID19 these bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin.

Can I go outside without any restrictions?

There are different restrictions depending on where you live in the Country. The general advice is still to stay at home as much as possible:

- When you go outside maintain the 2 metre physical distancing from other households.
- Face coverings are now compulsory in shops, on public transport and most indoor premises. You can take exercise as often as you wish and for leisure and recreation.
- You can leave your home for medical reasons or to care for a vulnerable person.
- Where you can't work from home, return to places of work that have facilitated the 2 metre physical distancing rule and other appropriate hygiene controls.
- Outdoor gatherings are restricted in most areas – including public places and in gardens. They are limited to meeting one other household in a group of no more than 6 people aged 12 and over. No indoors visits to people's homes are allowed.
- People should not travel in a car with anyone from another household (except one household group using a taxi).

What premises have re-opened?

Again, this depends on where you are in the Country, most areas are in Tiers 3 or 4, which means only essential shops and services are open. To check the different restrictions are in place in different parts of the country.

Check the restriction for your area on the Scottish Government weblink [Tier System has five levels Tier 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4.](#)

Places of worship have re-opened, with limited numbers for services, communal prayer and contemplation.

Ceremonies such as marriages & civil partnerships and christenings can take place with restricted numbers. Attendances at funerals are still restricted.

Can I catch Coronavirus from food packaging?

Current guidance from the Government and Food Standards Scotland states that indirect contact with COVID-19 through touching a surface or object that has the virus on it is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. If you have been shopping, there should be no need to sanitise the outer packaging of food. Thorough and frequent hand washing will help to minimise the potential for indirectly spreading the virus from any surfaces that may have become exposed, including packaged and unpackaged foods.

It should be noted that hygienic handling of food is important to prevent the transmission of any bacterial or viral infection – not just COVID-19.

It is advised to wash your hands thoroughly after handling food deliveries or unpacking your food and drink at home on returning from the supermarket.

Try not to touch your face while you are unpacking the products and disposing of any outer packaging. Follow good food hygiene and wash fruit and vegetables by rubbing under water and peeling the outer layers or skins, if appropriate.

I am pregnant – what should I do if I come into contact with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms?

COVID-19 is one of a range of Coronavirus strains that is common across the world. Generally, Coronavirus and other similar viruses such as influenza (flu) can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, including those who are pregnant. You should take extra care with your hygiene during pregnancy to avoid all respiratory infections especially influenza (which is much more common).

Pregnant women who can work from home should do so. If you can't work from home, if you work in a public-facing role that can be modified appropriately to minimise your exposure, this should be considered and discussed with your line manager. A pregnant workers risk assessment should be carried out and this assessment should include the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

The Government has produced guidance at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for pregnant employees](#) it outlines what should be considered when assessing the risks to pregnant employees.

More detailed advice and a list of frequently asked questions for pregnant women, including those who cannot work from home has been provided by the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#), this was most recently updated on the 30th December 2020. It recommends that if you are in your first or second trimester (less than 28 weeks pregnant), with no underlying health conditions, you should practice physical distancing but can continue to work in a public-facing role, provided the necessary precautions are taken.

If you are in your third trimester (more than 28 weeks pregnant) or have an underlying health condition – such as heart or lung disease - you should work from home where possible, avoid contact with anyone with symptoms of coronavirus, and significantly reduce unnecessary social contact. You should discuss any concerns with you line manager.

Will I get paid if I self-isolate?

Yes – you do not need to provide certification if you are self isolating for 10 days if you have symptoms, 10 days if you live with someone who has symptoms or a further 10 days if you then develop symptoms. Please notify your line manager straight away.

I have an underlying health condition (asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc.) and I am concerned about COVID19/Coronavirus, what does that mean for me at work?

If you are non-frontline staff, you must work from home and follow Government Guidance.

If you are frontline staff, you need to speak to your line manager to make sure that a risk assessment is in place and, it is reviewed to see if any additional support may be required. Most controls will be in place already and any review would be to make sure that any particular concerns could be noted and managed.

An employee is self-isolating because of mild asthma, but their condition does not fall into the category where this is recommended. What action should be taken?

The initial shielding guidance changed, and the government recommendation was that all people, in a defined group, should undertake 'shielding' which meant staying at home for 12 weeks.

However, shielding is now paused in Scotland which means that the people in that category can now enjoy the same freedoms as non-shielding people. Maintaining strict hygiene and following physical distancing measures is still crucial to maintain.

In terms of asthma, we know that this has caused some confusion, as asthma was included in the original list. Our priority is your wellbeing, so we have adopted the Asthma UK guidance on this, which they have developed in partnership with the UK Government:

If you were admitted to hospital for your asthma in the last 12 months and/or have ever been admitted to an intensive care unit for your asthma - they should have been shielding and would therefore have been paid their contracted hours for the period they were shielding.

If I have been told to self-isolate by my GP/NHS 24. Where do I obtain a self-isolation note?

Please visit the [NHS website](#) to obtain your self-isolation note.

What happens if staff who want to self-isolate but have no symptoms or underlying health conditions?

We know that you are on the frontline, and we know that you will be worried about your own safety. Throughout the coronavirus outbreak, our job at ENABLE Scotland is to keep you and the people we support protected from contracting COVID-19 by focusing on excellent infection control and keeping people safe. Our aim is to keep people well, and out of hospital as far as possible.

What happens if an individual refuses to work?

You should speak to your line manager about leave or unpaid leave. If neither are available, and you do not turn up to work, then this would be an unauthorised absence.

What is the position on Sessional Staff?

Under the current circumstances, sessional staff who were on a rota to work and are unable to work due to self-isolation will be paid for up to 10 days. The payment will be calculated based on the shift pattern that they are on a rota for across the 10 day period of their self-isolation.

Shielding - If a Staff Member is in the High-Risk Category

What measures are in place for members of staff who are shielding or in high-risk categories?

The Scottish Government has defined a list of conditions that they believe puts people in the most vulnerable category. People in the highest risk category will have received a letter from the NHS or their GP.

These individuals were advised to follow strict self-isolation procedures for the period they were advised to shield.

If a staff member thinks that they have a condition that makes them extremely vulnerable and do not have this letter, they are advised to contact their GP and if the GP agrees, they will notify the NHS to add the staff members name to the High-Risk Group and a letter will be sent out. If a staff member has this this letter, they are strongly advised by the Scottish Government to shield themselves to reduce their chance of getting coronavirus.

If a staff member was in that category and they were shielding they will have been paid. Staff members have received a letter from ENABLE Scotland confirming their position, and they will be required to check in with HR every two weeks to see how they are.

The Government put in place support to help you to access medicine and food supplies if you do not have any family members or neighbours who can help you. You can find the details about how to access that service [here](#). Shielding is now paused in Scotland which means that those people in that category can now enjoy the same freedoms as non- shielding people. Maintaining strict hygiene and following physical distancing measures is still crucial to maintain. However, those who received a letter on shielding will be sent further advice in relation to the recent changes in guidance.

What measures are in the recent changes in guidance for members of staff who are shielding or in high risk categories?

The last Scottish Government advice for those shielding was to extend the 12 week period until the 31st of July. However, the Government recognised the difficulties this placed on individuals and therefore, transitioned to a new approach. Shielding became paused on the 1st of August.

This approach gives more information and advice to those shielding, allowing you to regain more control over your life. There is more support and advice to allow you to make informed decisions about living in a world with COVID19. This support allows you to translate those decisions into your daily lives. Those individuals shielding were contacted by letter with information on all changes to advice.

People who were shielding can now consider going outdoors for exercise if you are taking the following precautions: If going outdoors for a walk, wheel, run or cycle. You can also take part in non-contact outdoor activities such as golf, hiking, angling, etc. You:

- No longer have to physically distance from those you live with.
- Single parents and those living alone will be able to form an extended household with one other household, with whom they do not need to physically distance and can stay the night.
- Holiday accommodation can be booked, and a second home can be visited, provided neither has shared facilities. It was strongly advised this was only done with the same household or extended household.
- Outdoor gatherings – including in gardens – are limited to meeting one other household in a group of no more than 6 people aged 12 and over. No Indoors visits to people's homes are allowed.
- Can go out on your own or with someone you live with and should choose times and areas that are quiet, if you can. Should maintain strict physical distancing, also known as social distancing, from all other people apart from your household or extended household. This means keeping 2 metres (or three steps) away from other people
- Should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds as soon as you get back home.

Are social care services operating as normal?

Yes. ENABLE Scotland has continued to work and to provide its social care services as normal where possible. We are continuously monitoring Government Guidance to ensure the health and safety of all is protected. Contingency plans have been put in place should the situation change and affect the delivery of a service. We will take these on a case-by-case basis. Our ACE & ACE Youth group meetings are currently suspended and continue to meet virtually via ACE Connect.

I am a family member of someone who is supported by ENABLE Scotland. If their service is affected – how will I know?

Should the status of any service we provide be affected, every effort will be made to mitigate the effect this has on the people we support. Our Services team will contact the family members and keep them updated them on the situation and contingency plans put in place.

What are the arrangements for visiting a person who is admitted to hospital?

The Scottish Government guidance permits people to receive visitors in hospital. At present, this is restricted to a single visitor and anyone visiting a hospital or healthcare premises should wear a face covering. Visitors are permitted for patients who have a learning disability where there would be added distress should they not have important people in their life around them.

What help can we offer if someone requires to go to hospital?

Our PAs can support someone to get to hospital, using the appropriate PPE – if not being there would cause the person you support unnecessary distress. Latest guidance confirms that people who have learning disabilities and who are in hospital can receive visitors. This could be family, or it could be PAs. If we are in the position of caring for an individual who has COVID-19 at home, we would consider allowing family visitors. They must wear appropriate PPE and follow the measures in our risk assessments. In all cases, if you are displaying symptoms of coronavirus then you must not go near a hospital premises.

Will wearing a face covering in public help to prevent spreading coronavirus?

There is limited evidence to say that using face coverings will be a useful preventative measure for the public. However, the Scottish Government has published guidance on the use of face coverings. The guidance emphasises this does not mean you have to wear a surgical, or other medical grade mask, but a facial covering of the mouth and nose, that is made of cloth or other textiles and through which you can breathe - for example, a scarf.

Wearing a face covering is mandatory on public transport, in shops and most other indoor premises. We should also consider using face coverings in certain circumstances as a precautionary measure where physical distancing is more difficult and where there is a risk of close contact with multiple people you do not usually meet. There are exemptions in place for those who have medical condition which make wearing a face covering difficult. Details of legitimate exceptions can be [found here](#). You can download our face covering exemption graphics from the [ENABLE Scotland website](#).

Based on existing evidence there is limited evidence of face coverings lowering rates of infection. There is no evidence to suggest there might be a benefit outdoors, unless in an unavoidable crowded situation, where there may be some benefit.

Physical distancing, hand washing, and respiratory hygiene are the most important and effective measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Wearing face coverings must not be used as an alternative to any of these other precautions.

When applying or removing the covering, it is important that you wash your hands first and avoid touching your face. After each use, you must wash the face covering at 60 degrees centigrade or dispose of safely. Face coverings should not be used for children under the age of two years. There are also exemptions for those with health conditions. [We have provided cards and downloadable screensavers for the People We Support](#).

What does this mean for ENABLE Scotland?

The effects of COVID 19 has an impact on all aspects of our services and people, this section includes some details. There are additional precautions that need to be considered for those who are shielding.

What does this mean for Staff – Frontline

Our frontline staff are classed as a Category 1 Key Worker by the Scottish Government which, defines people working in health and social care provision or welfare services as key workers. Unless you are self-isolating - you can travel to and from work and during your working duties. You should follow guidance from your line manager on supporting people safely at home in line with Government guidance.

What does this mean for Staff – All Others

All ENABLE Scotland offices are now closed and staff should be working from home. If for any legitimate reason, you have a need to enter an ENABLE Scotland office – you must seek the approval of your Director via your Line Manager. Strict approval is required for anyone to be onsite in an office environment.

What does this mean for People We Support?

We are all just being asked to change our routine for a while. We know that you might be worried by the new rules the Government have asked us to follow. Try not to worry – there are lots of people here to support you.

- Your PAs will help you with the new routines which will involve following the safety guidelines and rules to keep you safe when you visit public places.
- You can go for a walk or to get some exercise as often as you wish, and your PAs will help you do this safely.
- Outdoor gatherings – including in gardens – are limited to meeting one other household in a group of no more than 6 people aged 12 and over.
- People should not travel in a car with anyone from another household (except one household group using a taxi).
- No indoor visits to people's homes are allowed.
- We are all being asked to keep our distance from other people to keep everyone safe

Remember we have [easy read information available](#) about COVID-19.

What does this mean for Family Members of People we Support?

We continue to work to provide our social care services as normal where possible. We are continuously monitoring Government guidance to ensure our measures protect the health and safety of everyone.

As we have moved through the various phases of the Scottish Government Route Map, we continue to update our guidance for staff. Phases 1 and 2 of the Scottish Governments Route Map allowed limited contact with other households. Outdoor gatherings – including in gardens – are limited to meeting one other household in a group of no more than 6 people aged 12 and over. No Indoors visits to people's homes are allowed.

Outdoor gatherings – including in gardens – are limited to meeting one other household in a group of no more than 6 people aged 12 and over. No Indoors visits to people's homes are allowed.

For those living on their own, such as single-parents or older people, an extended household can be formed with one other household. These extended households can meet indoors without physical distancing and stay overnight if needed. The extended household can include someone that is shielding. If one member of the extended household comes down with symptoms, each family member must self-isolate.

What does this mean for Members?

We know that you might still be worried by the rules the Government have asked us to follow. Do not worry – there are lots of people here to support you including ENABLE Scotland. We are all just being asked to continue to change our routine for a while. You can go out to public places but must maintain physical distancing – if you had to go the Doctor for example.

If you use public transport, you must wear a face covering when travelling, unless you have a health exemption meaning you do not.

You can go shopping for essentials but must wear a face covering indoors, unless you have a health exemption meaning you do not – ask your support, family member or a neighbour you trust to go for you if possible.

You can also go for a walk or to get some exercise as often as you wish, but this should be on your own or with people you live with and not in a large group.

We are all being asked to continue to keep our distance from other people to keep everyone safe.

Remember, you can download our free Face Covering exemption card and phone image from the [ENABLE Scotland website](#). Remember we have [easy read information available](#) about Coronavirus.

What advice should I give to a person I support who is worried about the situation?

Tell them not to worry and reassure them that we are here for them. Refer to the Easy Read document (available on the [staff portal](#) or [ENABLE Scotland website](#)). Chat with them about this.

Where can I get more information?

General Advice

[NHS Inform](#) and [NHS Inform-General Advice](#)

Stay at Home Advice

[NHS Inform-Stay At Home](#)

Advice for Pregnant Workers

[RCoG-COVID & Pregnancy](#)

Advice for People Shielding

[NHS Inform - Shielding](#)