

COVID-19: Guidance Updates

After approximately 17 months of the UK battling a spread of the Coronavirus, it seems as though normality may be just around the corner. The nation has so far succumb to a number of national and local lockdowns, as well as continually changing restrictions and guidance from the government. This uncertain time is likely to cause stress and anxiety across the nation, whilst we wait for our next instruction. Therefore, at Care first we want to do what we can to help reduce stress and bring about clarity where we can. The purpose of this article and the webinar that will support it, is to provide a summary of the UK Government's current guidelines surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic.

The general advice for all

Coronavirus remains a serious health risk to all. It is important to do what you can to protect yourself and others. To help limit the spread of the virus, the UK government have set a number of tips to act as a general guideline for the nation:

1. Meet outside, or open windows and doors for indoor visitors.
2. If you think you have symptoms, stay at home and take a PCR test.
3. Wear face coverings in crowded places and on public transport.
4. Check in to venues when you go out.
5. Wash your hands with soap regularly, for at least 20 seconds.
6. Get vaccinated.
7. If you've been fully vaccinated in the UK, US or most of Europe you do not need to quarantine or take a day 8 test when returning from amber list countries.
8. 16 or 17 year olds can now get their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.
9. If you're fully vaccinated or under 18, you no longer need to self-isolate after close contact with someone who has COVID-19. If you have symptoms, you should still isolate and take a PCR test.

How do the guidelines change across the nation?

The advice above is general and can be applied to the entirety of the United Kingdom, however each country has taken its own approach to the pandemic and introduced different restrictions throughout. Please see a breakdown of the restrictions below.

England

- Restrictions were lifted on the 19th of July 2021.
- The use of the NHS COVID Pass is being introduced as a requirement for entry to venues and events where people will be in close proximity.

Northern Ireland

- Current regulations require a minimum of one metre social distancing in retail and shopping centres, indoor hospitality settings and indoor visitor attractions.
- You can now meet outside in a private garden, however indoors you can only have a maximum of 3 households.
- Masks are still mandatory.
- You should continue to work from home where possible.
- Funerals and weddings are permitted, but must comply with the guidelines.

Scotland

- Restrictions were lifted on the 9th of August 2021.

Wales

- Restrictions were lifted on the 7th of August 2021.
- Masks remain a legal requirement to be worn indoors, except for in hospitality venues.

What can you do to stay safe and reduce stress?

The gradual relaxation of the Covid-19 restrictions across the UK has been greeted with a mixture of excitement and fear, as coronavirus still remains a threat to all. However, there are things you can do to feel safe and at ease.

Firstly, make sure to test for the virus regularly to keep yourself and loved ones safe. Rapid lateral flow test kits are available for free from pharmacies across the UK and can be stored and used at home. This is a quick and convenient way for you to test yourself if you feel concerned.

Secondly, follow the guidelines as best as you can that have been set by the government and any healthcare professionals.

Lastly, be sure to use the Care first Freephone line for in the moment support from a counsellor to help with any stress. No issue is too big or too small and the line is open 24/7, every day of the year. You can find out the Freephone line telephone number from the HR team at your organisation.

More information

If you would like to hear more about this topic, please join our live Webinar on 'Covid-19: Guidance support' on Thursday 2nd September at 12:00pm-12:30pm. To register, please use the following link

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/74451647928753678>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.

If you feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

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