

## Living with COVID-19 – update 23 February 2022

The original of the letter to NHS employees and contractors can be found [HERE](#)

Below is a similar summary for those in fully Private practice who may not have received this letter.

As everyone is aware, the Prime Minister announced the guidelines [Living with COVID-19](#), in his [statement to the House of Commons](#) recently.

### Points to note for the dental profession:

1. There are no immediate changes to the current IPC Guidelines
2. If you Test Positive OR have Covid-19 Symptoms

Due to the potential higher risk within some situations in health and social care settings, the advice for staff members working in these settings has not changed.

- If a team member develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#) (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of or change in taste or smell OR commonly in the case of Omicron: runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, headache), they are advised to stay at home and arrange to have a PCR test.
- If at home, they should notify their employer immediately and should not attend work while awaiting their PCR test result.
- If at work, they should inform their employer or line manager and return home as soon as possible and arrange to have a PCR test.
- Stay at home while awaiting your PCR test result
- Dental Team Members who had symptoms of COVID-19 and who received a negative PCR test result can return to work providing they are medically fit to do so, subject to discussion with their line manager or employer and a local risk assessment
- Dental Team Members who **have persistent symptoms** and who received a negative PCR test result should start the 10 day LFD regime i.e. undertake a LFD test every day for the 10 days following the onset of symptoms (even on days you are not at work). The test should be taken before going to work and the result should be negative if you are attending work. It would be prudent, where possible, to avoid working with patients who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

- Dental Team Members who receive an inconclusive PCR test result should not attend work and should arrange another PCR test
- Dental Team Members who have tested positive for COVID-19 should not attend work until they have had two negative LFD test results taken 24 hours apart from Day 5 onwards. The return to work testing requirements can be found [here](#) under point 2 :

[2.2 If a staff member receives a positive LFD or PCR test result](#)

[2.3 If a staff member receives a negative or inconclusive PCR test result](#)

The instructions are very clear and cover most, if not all, eventualities.

### 3. If a Team Member is a 'contact' of someone with COVID-19

- If the team member was wearing the correct PPE appropriately, in accordance with the [UK infection prevention and control \(IPC\) guidance](#) and [How to work safely guidance](#), they will not be considered a 'contact' for the purposes of contact tracing and isolation. This applies regardless of the vaccination status of the team member.
- Breach of PPE in Patient facing areas: If there has been a breach of recommended PPE during the care episode then the team member would be **considered a contact** and should follow the advice below
- Breach of PPE in Non-patient facing areas: if IPC precautions have been compromised, or PPE has been worn incorrectly or breached, the team member should be **considered a contact** and follow the advice below
- Contact outside of work, for example in a social setting or at home: the staff member should be **considered a contact** and follow the advice below

#### 4. What to do if you are a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case as defined above:

- inform your line manager or employer immediately
- immediately arrange to have a PCR test and the result of this PCR test should be negative prior to returning to work ( if you have had COVID-19 infection in the past 90 days, you should not have a PCR)
- stay at home while awaiting your PCR test result
- If your PCR test result is NEGATIVE, you should undertake a LFD test every day for the 10 days following your last contact with the case (even on days you are not at work). The test should be taken before going to work and the result should be negative if you are attending work.
- continue to comply with all relevant infection control precautions and wear your PPE properly throughout the day
- where possible, avoid working with patients who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. A risk assessment should be undertaken, and consideration given to a non-patient-facing role (reception is considered patient-facing) during the 10 days following your last contact with the case
- follow the guidance in Point 2. above ( [section 2.1](#) of the Official Guidelines) if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 or have a positive LFD test during this 10 day period

#### LFD Testing for Team members

The letter sent out to NHS contractors addresses the issue of the recommended ongoing twice weekly LFD tests and states that *“For now, NHS staff should continue to access their tests via the universal offer online until advised otherwise and community pharmacies will continue to provide a supply of tests until 31 March. In extremis, regional testing leads will have a supply of tests to be accessed on an emergency basis provided to them by UKHSA. We will communicate further about testing provision for NHS staff and patients as this is agreed with UKHSA and DHSC.”*

*“Reporting test results remains a requirement and we should encourage all staff to report the results of their twice weekly asymptomatic tests whether positive or negative at <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> ”*

The BAPD will be observing developments around this testing recommendation for the dental team and will represent the interests of its members accordingly.