



## Key changes to COVID-19 policy

### Vaccines

Vaccination as a condition of deployment (VCOD) is no longer a legal requirement for health. However, Appletree support staff are all required to have both doses of the covid vaccine as well as all booster jabs. Getting vaccinated, and getting a booster, remains a crucial part of the defence against COVID-19 and the government strongly encourages everyone to do so.

The COVID-19 supplement sets out that providers should:

- Encourage and support all staff to get a COVID-19 vaccine and a booster dose as and when they are eligible and receive a Spring booster.
- Put arrangements in place to facilitate staff access to vaccinations for COVID-19 (and seasonal influenza) where possible and regularly review the immunisation status of their workforce, in line with 'The Green Book', available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>
- Undertake risk assessments to ensure the safety of people who receive care wherever possible, considering the COVID-19 vaccination status of both staff members and the people they care for.
- Consider taking additional steps such as wider IPC measures and prioritising the deployment of vaccinated staff to care for those who are higher risk of severe COVID-19 infection where proportionate.
- **PPE**
- Recommendations on the use of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) remain broadly unchanged. As previously announced, the government will provide free PPE for COVID-19 needs until the end of March 2023, or until guidance is substantially amended.

From 4 April, FFP3 masks will continue to be recommended when carrying out Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP) on people who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, or other infections spread by the aerosol or droplet route. However, FFP3 masks will no longer be recommended when undertaking AGPs if the person is not suspected to have a relevant infection. In this situation, a Type IIR fluid resistant surgical mask will provide appropriate protection.

- Clarity has also been provided about the PPE recommended when caring for a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, compared to standard precautions. Providers should refer to the guidance for recommendations for specific scenarios.



- **Test**

Over the course of the pandemic testing has played a key role in helping to prevent transmission and contain the spread of COVID-19. From 4 April, the government will continue to provide tests to the sector to help manage the spread of COVID-19, prioritising groups most at risk of infection, and reducing testing requirements where possible to ease the additional burden testing places on care services. As set out in the guidance:

- Testing will remain available for staff in domiciliary.
- Asymptomatic staff testing will be changed from daily LFDs before work to twice weekly LFDs during periods of high prevalence. This will ensure testing continues to identify positive cases to protect those most vulnerable to COVID-19 and staff.
- Symptomatic testing will be changed to two LFDs taken 48 hours apart, available for all staff.

For those who test positive, free LFDs will continue to be available to allow staff to return to work earlier. Individuals should test from day 5, ending isolation early after two consecutive negative tests taken 24 hours apart.

## **Staff movement**

During the pandemic, the movement of staff providing direct care has been restricted to mitigate the risk that staff will transmit infection from one setting to another. This has been a critical measure to reduce the spread of infection, but I am aware it has impacted on the ability of providers to manage staffing levels and restricted the ability of staff to work flexibly across locations. From 4 April, there will no longer be a requirement to restrict the movement of care staff between settings. Staff movement still carries a risk, and there may be circumstances where providers are asked to limit staff movement - for example, if there is high prevalence of COVID-19 locally or in an outbreak. Staff are advised to continue to take part in their service's regular testing regime to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and to receive their COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, if they have not already, as soon as they become eligible.



<b>POLICY DETAILS</b>	
Name:	Covid Policy
Date of Issue:	April 2022
Date of Review:	TBC
<b>Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014</b>	
<b>Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment</b>	
<b>Regulation 17: Good governance</b>	