**Gold Briefing – Changes to Self-Isolation Guidance for Staff and Prisoners in Wales (20.08.21)**

This guidance applies **only** in Wales. Separate protocols are in place for England.

**Purpose**

As of 7th August, in Wales, individuals in the community who are fully vaccinated and those under 18 years old are no longer required to self-isolate following contact with a positive COVID case. Fully vaccinated means they have received their final dose of an MHRA-approved vaccine in the UK vaccination programme at least 14 days prior to contact with a positive case. On 17th August we issued a Gold briefing which published an updated position for prisoners and staff in England. We have since been working with Welsh Government and Public Health Wales and are now in a position to issue updated guidance for staff in Wales, which is set out below.

**Self-Isolation for Prisoners**

The holding position issued on 7th August stated that fully vaccinated prisoners would no longer be required to self-isolate following contact with a positive case in line with community guidance, although sites with an active outbreak should seek advice from their local OCT. We have been seeking further public health advice and expect further guidance to be issued next week, but until then prisons should continue with the current position. We apologise for any disruption this may cause.

**Voluntary Routes to Return to Work (Staff)**

The flow chart below is intended to summarise the options available to staff in Wales and the criteria and requirements surrounding each option.

This flow chart introduces a new form of testing called Risk Management Testing (RMT). From 7th August in Wales, fully vaccinated adults are no longer required to self-isolate in the event they are identified as a contact of a positive case by NHS Test and Trace, prison Health Resilience Leads or ‘pinged’ by the Covid- 19 app. However, due to the high-risk nature of prison and Approved Premises settings, a model of Risk Mitigation Testing (RMT) will be implemented to mitigate against the risk of transmission of the virus into these settings.

Undertaking RMT testing is by consent and is voluntary, although staff are encouraged to take part. If the member of staff does not wish to take part in this model, they can continue to attend work as scheduled but the mandatory requirements outlined in the guidance linked below must be adhered to.

Staff taking part in RMT will be required to wear FRSMs. In line with the existing staff Face Mask Policy, establishments must mandate use of FRSMs for staff taking part in this scheme under the local mandation tier of the model.

**Flow Chart for Staff Options to Return to Work**

Provides evidence of self-isolation notification

Fully vaccinated

**START**

If able to, the staff member may work from home in line with flexible working

Business needs require workplace attendance

Single vaccinated or unvaccinated

Medically exempt from vaccine and testing

Self-isolates and referred to occupational health

Self isolates

Staff member flags close contact notification

Options for returning staff to places of work

PCR test recommended –

returns to work. Offered RMT

Required to wear FRSM and consideration given to change of duties

**Operational Guidance**

All COVID-19 operational guidance for prisons continues to be accessible [here](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/) and testing specific guidance is available [here](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/2020/04/28/staff-testing-in-england/).

The operational guidance documents referred to in the flow chart are included below for ease.

**Risk Management Testing (RMT) Guidance:**

 

Please continue to direct any general COVID-19 queries to [COVID19.RegimesOpsGuidance1@justice.gov.uk](mailto:COVID19.RegimesOpsGuidance1@justice.gov.uk). Testing specific queries should be directed to [HMPPSTesting@justice.gov.uk](mailto:HMPPSTesting@justice.gov.uk).