**Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) considerations**

This briefing provides details on the current isolation advice for prisoners on ROTL who may be either identified as close contacts of a positive case or become positive for covid. This advice has previously been circulated but now includes **further detail on isolation requirements for close contacts of suspected or confirmed cases of the Omicron variant of concern as well as additional considerations where ROTL takes place across borders within the United Kingdom.**

ROTL continues to be offered at prisons/secure settings that have been approved to do so. National restrictions are being kept under review and the current Government restrictions imposed can generally be managed through standard licence conditions. Governors must remain vigilant about any emerging risk, including identified variants of concern in the local area of the prison and locations where ROTL activity has been approved to take place, this includes being mindful of differential guidance that may exist where ROTL is proposed to take place within another country within the United Kingdom (these are detailed below but are subject to change).

Governors may be required on occasion to review, amend or suspend ROTL activity that had previously been approved to mitigate the COVID risk to individuals or the prison.

**ROR Isolation advice:** If, during ROR a prisoner **develops symptoms** of Covid 19, under their ROTL licence conditions, they must isolate immediately at their licence address and arrange for a PCR test. The prisoner must notify the prison that they have arranged the PCR test as soon as possible and again when the result is received. They must isolate at the licence address whilst they await the result but must return to the prison by their licence return date and time, even if the result has yet to arrive.

If the prisoner **tests positive** they must notify the prison immediately and return that day if practicable (due to the time of day the result is received and the distance from the prison- the prison will discuss this with the prisoner when they make contact) and in any event within 24 hours in order to self-isolate. Once they have returned, they must notify contact tracers of the names of each person living at the licence address.

If, during ROTL, a prisoner becomes aware that they are **a contact of a positive case** (either due to a person at the licence address or by notification from the contact tracing service), they must inform the prison immediately and then test and isolate **in line with the actions required for their vaccination status and the country** they are licenced to as detailed in the links below. Note that different isolation rules are in place for contacts of suspected or confirmed Omicron cases. If the prisoner is required to isolate they must notify the prison immediately and return that day if practicable, or in any event within 24 hours in order to self-isolate.

For example, in England, if the prisoner is identified as a close contact of a positive case **AND** the prisoner is not fully vaccinated\* **OR** if the positive case is suspected or confirmed as the Omicron variant, the prisoner must notify the prison immediately and return that day if practicable, or in any event within 24 hours in order to self-isolate and take a PCR.

HMPPS has a responsibility to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and to offer additional support to help prisoners reach the prison when required. The prison OMU team is responsible for ensuring appropriate transport arrangements are in place for those who are required to isolate and communicating those plans appropriately. Options include:

* Where friends or family of the prisoner on ROTL, using private vehicle to return the prisoner to prison, appropriate PPE provided, and advice offered to them on cleaning the vehicle after use.
* Official vehicles, (non-PECS vehicles), may be used to transport individuals, the use of PPE and subsequent cleaning of vehicles should follow HMPPS advice outlined in the *COVID-19 Cleaning and Infection Control Guidance*
* Using transport arrangements through local taxi or private hire firm. (These must be Covid Safe vehicles)

Those who have close contact with a positive case whilst on ROTL (including household contact) and are not required to isolate, can continue their ROTL period but should **test on return** to the establishment as required by the licence.

Any prisoners who are granted ROTL who are not already subject to twice weekly LFD testing are recommended to undertake twice weekly LFD for the 14 days following their return from ROTL. This Is in addition to the LFD test taken on the morning of the ROTL release. Prisoner Risk Mitigation Testing (PRMT) may also be used for non-Omicron cases upon return where suitable for those that have been identified as contact of a non-omicron positive case. **The testing regime frequency for prisoners on ROR and RDR are set out in the** [**prisoner testing manual**](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/28/staff-testing-in-england/) **which will be updated to reflect this briefing.**

The below links outline the current community guidelines in the UK. These are subject to frequent change and so prisons should use the links provided for reference to understand the testing that prisoners will be expected to participate in whilst in the community. Prison testing regimes and frequency will apply on their return to the establishment.

[England](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/)

[Wales](https://gov.wales/self-isolation#section-83763)

[Scotland](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-contact-tracing)

[Northern Ireland](https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-information-public)

*\*Please note that fully vaccinated is defined as having received both doses of an MHRA approved vaccination, with 14 days having elapsed since the final dose*