**Testing and Isolation update for Prisons and Approved Premises in England**

Staff who have been identified as a contact of a positive case will be expected to engage with the DCT or DTCC programmes described below (depending on vaccination status) in order to return to places of work and to help protect each other and to stop the spread of the virus. The Staff Testing manual will be updated to reflect the changes outlined above this week and guidance for Wales will be provided as changes are made.

**For fully vaccinated Staff in Prisons and Approved Premises:** Fully vaccinated staff will no longer be legally required to isolate if they are a contact of an Omicron case. Risk Mitigation Testing (RMT) will no longer be offered- Daily Testing of Contacts of Covid (DTCC) replaces this and involves individuals who are a contact of a positive case undertaking a PCR and 7 daily LFD tests.

**For not fully vaccinated staff in Prisons:** Isolation is still required for non-fully vaccinated contacts of positive cases. However, for prison staff Workplace Daily Contact Testing (DCT) will continue to be made available which involves individuals who are a contact of a positive case undertaking a PCR and 7 daily LFD tests. They must isolate when not attending the workplace.

**For not fully vaccinated staff in Approved Premises:** As DCT is not available in APs, those who are identified as contacts of a positive case will be required to isolate.

*Fully vaccinated is currently defined as having had two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine plus 14 days* *This is being kept under review by the government and we will update you should there be any changes to the definition..* *It is important to note that the booster does provide increased immunity especially to the Omicron variant.*

**All staff that have been identified as a contact of a positive case who attend the workplace must adhere to these requirements:**

* Social distancing should be optimised and, wherever possible, maintained at all times in the workplace.
* Face masks must be worn at all times in the workplace.
* The staff member will not work with clinically extremely vulnerable staff, patients or residents, as determined by the organisation

**Isolation Exemption advice**: In order to underpin our stability as a service, staff will be expected to participate with the DCT or DTCC programmes described below in order to attend places of work. Consideration will be given to vaccination status and other health issues in determining the best option for each member of staff, and so the importance of dialogue between staff and line managers cannot be underestimated. Where staff who are fit to attend the workplace decline to engage with the available options to enable attendance, and decide to self-isolate, paid special leave is unlikely to be supported except in exceptional circumstances. Each case will be considered on a case by case scenario, in line with the Attendance Management Policy

**Daily Testing of Contacts of Covid (DTCC) FOR FULLY\* VACCINATED contacts of a positive case**

* The new model applies to all staff working in prisons and Approved Premises who are fully\* vaccinated
* Taking part in DTCC is voluntary
* These rules apply regardless of whether the contact is within the same household as the positive case
* Fully\* vaccinated prison and AP staff who are close contacts of a positive covid case should take a PCR test
* Prison and AP staff do not have to wait for the initial PCR result before returning to work
* The member of staff should commence daily self-collect lateral flow tests at home for 7 days, from the point they are identified as a contact, using LFD before attending work each day
* They should continue to attend work if the results are negative**.**
* At all other times they are strongly advised to limit close contact with other people outside their household, especially in crowded or enclosed spaces and with anyone who is more vulnerable
* Anyone who has a positive result from an LFD test must isolate and take a confirmatory PCR test to verify the result. If the PCR result comes back negative, contacts can leave self-isolation to attend work but should continue to take LFD tests for the remainder of the seven days

**Workplace DCT FOR NOT FULLY VACCINATED contacts of a positive case**

* The rules apply to all staff working in prisons who are not fully\* vaccinated
* Where DCT is not available, the individual must isolate for the full ten days
* Household contacts of a case confirmed through a positive PCR, cannot take part in DCT
* Staff who are not fully\* vaccinated who are close contacts of a positive covid case should take a PCR test
* They do not have to wait for the initial PCR result before returning to work
* They will commence daily lateral flow tests for 7 days at the prison’s dedicated DCT ATS (self-collect is not permitted) prior to starting work each day. They should attend work if the results are negative but must isolate at all other times
* If any LFD is positive the individual should isolate immediately and take a confirmatory PCR test
* On days where the member of staff is not scheduled to work, they will not be expected to attend the prison to take an LFD (see testing manual for advice for part time workers)
* For those participating in DCT, they will be permitted to make essential trips out of their home on the day they have received a negative LFD test result. (See Testing Manual for examples)
* Those that are not fully vaccinated must be issued with an isolation exemption letter
* Individuals who decline to take part in testing must isolate for the full 10 days

**Additional Advice:**

* If staff have tested positive on a PCR within the past 90 days, they do not need to take an initial PCR when commencing DCT or DTCC, however, if they receive a positive LFD result they should take a confirmatory PCR.
* Prisons and Approved Premises should review test kit stock levels of required test kits and re-order new supplies if they are approaching low levels, considering advice provided on Christmas and New year ordering dates. If sites have any difficulty in placing orders they should contact the HMPPS Testing Team without delay