**Changes to Isolation rules for COVID-19 positive cases in England 22.12.21**

**Update 31.12.21:** These rules also now apply in Wales, and align with previously issued guidance

In line with the most recent update to Government guidelines; from Wednesday 22.12.21 self-isolation rules have changed for anyone notified by NHS COVID-19, (or HMPPS Contact Tracing), or through home kit LFD testing as a COVID-19 positive case.

As advised by UKHSA, the self-isolation period for positive cases has moved from ten to seven days, with the mitigation in place that the individual must return a negative lateral flow test on both **Day 6** and **Day 7** of their isolation period. These tests should be taken 24 hours apart and must both show a negative result.

This guidance will apply to all staff working in the prison and further will apply to prisoners who have tested positive and been instructed to isolate. Once they have returned two negative tests, on Day 6 and Day 7, they will be able to leave isolation.

Isolating staff must isolate in line with government guidance from Day 1 to Day 7. Equally, from Day 1 to Day 7 confirmed prisoner cases will still need to isolate in line with compartmentalisation guidance, which can be found [here.](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/15/cohorting-and-population-management/)

**If a positive case does not return a negative LFD test,** or can only **return 1 negative LFD flow test over the two days,** their isolation must continue either until they can return two negative LFD flow tests 24 hours apart\* or until Day 10. After this period only 1 negative test is needed to return.

DCT and DTCC programs are not affected by this updated, existing guidance regarding staff and prisoner testing can be found [here](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/28/staff-testing-in-england/).

This move is irrespective of an individual’s vaccination status. Existing guidance on vaccinations can be found [here](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2021/01/22/vaccinations/). This guidance is also irrespective of present positive COVID-19 variant.

Those who return to work following their period of self-isolation are reminded that social distancing should be optimised and, wherever possible, maintained at all times.

The v8 HMPPS SOPs detail circumstances where the 2-metre social distancing rule cannot be maintained and the controls that should be in place to manage specific activities. These are accessible [here.](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/15/safe-operating-procedures-sop-using-ppe/) The key mitigation in these circumstances is the use of face masks as PPE to allow sub-2 metre contact.

\*This note was added on 31.12.21 to clarify that once two negative tests can be returned, after Day 6 and day 7, an individual is able to come out of isolate.