# HMPPS HR Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Core Guidance (Product) V3

## Introduction

This document sets out an approach to managing COVID-19 from 1 April 2022.

The intention is that departments will use the Core Guidance in conjunction with their own COVID-19 policy, guidance and advice products. Please also refer to the relevant HMPPS HR model policy/guidance COVID-19 products:

[Staff and managers - HMPPS Intranet (gsi.gov.uk)](https://intranet.noms.gsi.gov.uk/covid-19-coronavirus/staff-and-managers2) for HMPPS HR Policy document and HMPPS HR Travel Guidance

[Absences - HMPPS Intranet (gsi.gov.uk)](https://intranet.noms.gsi.gov.uk/covid-19-coronavirus/staff-and-managers2/absences) for HMPPS Supporting Attendance Guidance

[Latest updates – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/latest-updates/) for operational guidance

The Core Guidance will be updated in line with any relevant changes in Government advice and shared with departments.

This is version 3.

Updates;

This guidance has been updated and refreshed in response to the lifting of all remaining restrictions and the publication of new public health advice from 1 April 2022. The Civil Service key principles and framework for managing COVID-19 in the workplace are set out in **Annex A**, which is aligned to the public health guidance.

**NB; HMPPS have not adopted the Civil Service framework fully as set out in Annex A. This HMPPS Core Guidance V3 should be followed by HMPPS staff and managers.**

In the [Living with COVID-19 plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19) published on 23 February 2022, the Government set out the following changes which have now been implemented:

* From **24 March**, the COVID-19 provisions within the Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance regulations have been removed.
* From **1 April**:
	+ The guidance on voluntary COVID-status certification in domestic settings has been removed and it is no longer recommended that certain venues use the NHS COVID Pass.
	+ The Government has issued new guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people. This aligns with the changes to testing.
	+ Free, universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing is no longer available for the general public in England.
	+ Consolidated guidance to the public and businesses has been provided, in line with public health advice.
	+ The health and safety requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments has been removed.
	+ The set of ‘Working Safely’ guidance has been replaced with new public health guidance.

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## **Devolved Administrations**

The information in this product primarily refers to the position in [England](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus). There are differences in the devolved administrations and the table at **Annex B** summarises the position in each nation. Changes are anticipated within each of the devolved nations over the coming weeks - he latest position for each can be found at:

* [Scotland](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)
* [Wales](https://gov.wales/coronavirus)
* [Northern Ireland](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19)

## **Working safely**

### In the workplace

All departments must comply with the relevant [Coronavirus (COVID-19) government guidance](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus), [HSE workplace safety guidance](https://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm), BEIS workplace guidance: [Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19) and GPA property and facilities guidance. Departments should ensure their employees are aware of the latest departmental risk assessments and the provisions in place to support employees in the workplace and reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the workplace.

Departments must conduct appropriate workplace risk assessments that include the risk from COVID-19 to ensure the health and safety of staff, visitors and commercial partners.

Departments should also refer to the GPA property and facilities guidance, Smarter Working guidance and their own Hybrid Working guidance. The Civil Service is committed to supporting people to take up hybrid working where this suits the role they do, the business need and their personal circumstances. Some roles may require the employee to be in the workplace either full-time or at specific times.

Departments should be planning for employees returning to the workplace, taking into account their implementation of smarter/hybrid working.

If an employee becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 whilst at work, they should follow their departmental workplace guidance.

### COVID-19 Individual Risk Assessment

Employees returning to the workplace are encouraged to have a COVID-19 Individual Risk Assessment discussion (or any similar risk assessments departments may have in place) with their manager. The risk assessment can also be revisited as needed, either at the employee or manager’s request. This will help to identify any personal risk factors and possible measures to mitigate these, as well as discuss any other concerns they have about attending the workplace.

### Face coverings

Departments should consider face coverings and their use for employees within the workplace as part of their workplace risk assessment and in line with [public health advice on living safely with respiratory infections including COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19#when-to-consider-wearing-a-face-covering-or-a-face-mask)[.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19) People can reduce the risk of catching and passing on COVID-19 by wearing a face covering when coming into contact with people who are at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, when in close contact with others, especially in crowded and enclosed spaces, when there are a lot of respiratory viruses circulating.

Anyone with [symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 or a positive COVID-19 test result](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-a-positive-covid-19-test-result) should wear a face covering if they have to leave their home.

HMPPS staff should refer to the [HMPPS Face Mask (FRSM) Strategy](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/2020/10/12/face-masks/) for further guidance.

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### Working at home

Departments should follow government guidance on whether working from home is required or encouraged. Where there is an instruction or encouragement from the government to work from home, civil servants who can do so, where this is reasonable and practicable. Departments should consider which employees need to be in the workplace and/or which roles need to be undertaken in workplaces, considering those needed to support and maintain full delivery of public services, and other essential activity.

Departments should be supportive of employees who ask to attend the workplace due to personal circumstances.

Working from home is a measure that can be considered where risks have been identified and cannot be mitigated.

If risks cannot be adequately mitigated and individuals cannot work at home in their current role, it may be appropriate for individuals to take up an alternative role or adjust their working pattern temporarily. Where employees cannot work from home either in their own or an alternative role and cannot attend the workplace safely as identified through their personal risk assessment and in line with the departmental workplace risk assessment, other options should be considered including paid special leave.

Departments should be aware that different instructions may be in place regarding working from home in the devolved administrations.

## **Employee testing**

In line with the closure of the universal testing offer, free workplace testing will end in England on 1 April 2022.

This forms part of the [Living with Covid Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19) which sets out the government’s strategy to live with and manage the virus.

From 1 April, anyone with symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, and a high temperature or who feels unwell, should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature.

People at risk of serious illness from COVID-19, and eligible for treatments, [will continue to get free tests](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-covid-19-testing-in-england-from-1-april) to use if they develop symptoms, along with NHS and adult social care staff and those in other high-risk settings.

Some departments with vulnerable or high-risk settings may continue to provide workplace testing, or may be participating in specific testing schemes, use the following link for up to date guidance

<https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/28/staff-testing-in-england/>

Refer to the NHS guidance - [Regular rapid lateral flow coronavirus (COVID-19) tests](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/) for further information.

## **COVID-19 Vaccinations**

Employees are encouraged to continue to take up the offer of COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters.

Vaccinated people must still follow any government guidelines and advice and measures implemented as a result of the department’s workplace health and safety risk assessment.

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### Vaccination status declaration and recording

Government guidance does not require employers to know or record the vaccination status of their employees, other than in some specific settings, e.g. when working in care homes.

However, as part of the return to the workplace discussion, employees are encouraged to share their vaccination status. Take-up of the vaccine is voluntary and there may be employees who are not vaccinated, either through choice or because they are unable to have the vaccine for medical reasons. This may cause some employees to feel more vulnerable and/or anxious about being in the workplace.

Using the COVID-19 Individual Risk Assessment can help the employee and manager assess individual risk factors when in the workplace and when looking at a return to the workplace. Note: The fact that an employee has been vaccinated or not, should not on its own influence whether or not an employee can return to a workplace. Carrying out a risk assessment is particularly important for employees at a [higher risk](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/) from (COVID-19).

### Time off to attend a vaccination appointment

Time off to attend an appointment for a vaccination, including for boosters, should be granted in line with departments’ usual time-off for medical appointment policies. This may mean granting paid time-off where appointments are not able to be made outside of an employees’ working hours or are arranged at short notice. This should also apply where an employee needs to accompany a dependent or someone they provide care for to a vaccination appointment.

Following a vaccination, employees should be able to resume their normal activities, including working, if they feel well enough. This means that employees should return to work as soon as they can after their vaccination appointment. If it is not practical for the employee to return to work immediately after their appointment, for example if it is towards the end of their working day, they should discuss alternative arrangements with their line manager.

###

### Absence following a vaccination

If the employee is not fit to attend work due to sickness as a result of any adverse side effects following vaccination/vaccine booster, the absence should be recorded via the daily reporting spreadsheet. It is expected that these symptoms should last for 24-48 hours, if the symptoms last longer you should book a COVID test and follow the 10-day guidance until you receive confirmation of either being negative or positive. If staff are unable to access a test than they will remain on the daily reporting spreadsheet for the full isolation period.

Refer to the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/) for information on COVID-19 vaccine side effects.

### Use of the COVID Pass

An [NHS COVID Pass](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-pass/) shows an individual's COVID-19 vaccination details or test results.

Use of the [NHS COVID Pass](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-pass/) is voluntary for individual organisations, although it is not expected that it will be required in departmental workplaces.

## **Attendance**

Where an employee has [symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19-and-have-not-taken-a-covid-19-test), departments should encourage and enable employees to follow public health advice and stay at home.

They should not attend work. People may be infectious for up to 10 days from when symptoms start, although many will no longer be infectious after five days. Employees are encouraged to do a [rapid lateral flow test](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/#:~:text=Do%20rapid%20tests%20on%20days,seriously%20ill%20from%20COVID%2D19) from 5 days after symptoms started (or the day they tested positive if they do not have symptoms) and follow [government guidance](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/) on when they can resume their normal routine, including going to work.

Where an employee is infectious but remains fit and able to work, they should work from home where possible if this can be supported by the business. If this cannot be supported, then paid special leave would apply. If they are not well enough to work their absence should be recorded on the daily reporting spreadsheet.

Close contacts of positive cases are no longer advised to undertake daily testing or to self-isolate if they are not fully vaccinated. They should follow [Government guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 or a positive test result](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-a-positive-covid-19-test-result) on minimising the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others. This includes working from home where possible.

For Approved Premises and prison establishments see <https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/28/staff-testing-in-england/>

Additional guidance is also available for contacts of people with confirmed COVID 19 infection who do not live with the person <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts> which includes information about testing.

**Action for employees who have COVID-19**

Employees (and agency workers) who are unable to attend the workplace must notify their manager, as soon as it is reasonably practicable and no later than their next working day. This includes notifying the start and end dates of the isolation period. They must self-isolate, as well as supply [an isolation note from the NHS](https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/).

In the case of agency workers, the recipient of the notification must inform others in the agency chain.

**Self-isolation at the request of a surgeon or health care team - pre (and post, where appropriate) surgical procedure**

​​Departments should grant paid special leave where an employee:

* is fit for work and advised to self-isolate, at the request of their surgeon or care team before, for example, surgery/a surgical procedure, and cannot work from home and/or
* has been advised to self-isolate as a member of their household is due to undergo surgery/a surgical procedure and needs to self-isolate, and cannot work from home.

The period for which the employee needs to stay at home and avoid contact with others will be determined by the relevant NHS trust and/or a registered medical practitioner.

###

### Sickness Absence

Where an employee is sick with any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive and is unfit for work, the absence is automatically disregarded during the period of [self-isolation](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/). [Government guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 or a positive test result](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-a-positive-covid-19-test-result) should be followed, which sets out the approach to testing and when they can return to their normal routine, including work.

If COVID-19 symptoms continue after an employee receives a negative result, and they remain unfit for work, the absence should be reclassified under the main symptom/s and managed under business-as-usual processes from the date the employee receives the negative test result. Managers can use their discretion around this period of absence triggering formal action, based on the circumstances. The period of absence up to the test result being received should continue to be recorded as COVID-19 and disregarded.

If an employee, who is currently off sick with a non-COVID-19 related illness, develops COVID-19 symptoms this should be managed as a COVID-19 absence from the onset of symptoms.

Where employees are hospitalised with COVID-19, the absence is disregarded for the period in hospital. There may be other ongoing cases after the self-isolation period, where employees are undergoing medical treatment for severe symptoms, that can also continue to be disregarded.

Employees may be sick with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms more than once and this guidance should be followed each time as necessary.

**Fit notes/isolation notes**

If an employee is absent with any of the main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), or has tested positive for COVID-19 and has atypical symptoms, they must not contact their GP for a ‘Fit Note’. Managers can ask employees to obtain an isolation note instead.

If an employee remains ill after the end of the self-isolation period, they should then be asked to provide a Fit Note in line with guidance on [Taking sick leave](https://www.gov.uk/taking-sick-leave).

**Return to work**

A return to work discussion should be held to explore whether the employee needs further support as well as providing updates on important developments and work priorities.

Where an employee remains unfit for work after 10 days managers should treat any ongoing sickness as a new period of absence, using the most prominent symptoms. The absence is no longer automatically disregarded although managers can use their discretion around this period of absence triggering formal action.

**Long term health effects (long COVID)**

[Long COVID](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-help-and-support-if-you-have-long-covid?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=23e33777-109f-4d4b-8ca4-1051220ef752&utm_content=daily) is commonly used to describe new or ongoing symptoms four weeks or more after a COVID-19 infection. Long COVID can affect an employee's ability to work, cause them to take sickness absence and the effects can come and go. Managers should view such cases sympathetically and in line with their business as usual absence procedures, in the same way they do for other long-term health conditions or illnesses.

Because of the duration and impact of symptoms, employees may need a gradual return to work, also known as ‘phased return’ or Part Time on Medical Grounds (PTMG). After COVID-19, people may need a longer phased return than average. Workplace adjustments should be tailored to the employee, taking into consideration what their health problems are, how their ability to do things and their job role are affected. Employees with a disability can apply for disability leave if they are fit for work but need time off to attend appointments for treatment, rehabilitation and assessment.

### Special Leave

The following key principles apply in relation to special leave with pay for reasons related to COVID-19:

* Special leave should not be used where an employee is not fit for work.
* Where an employee’s ability to work is impacted by circumstances arising directly from COVID-19 and therefore beyond their control, departments should consider the use of special leave, e.g. for employees who are advised to stay at home because they have COVID-19, or who are caring for dependents who have COVID-19 or children who have an adverse reaction to the vaccination etc. This will apply where other options including working from home, working from a different workplace, working different attendance patterns/more flexibly or redeploying to a suitable alternative role cannot reasonably be achieved.
* Employees may need to take more than one period of special leave, or a continuous period where this is necessary. The usual limits on special leave do not apply where it is COVID-19 related.

Each case should be considered sensitively and on its own merits within HR guidelines.

In all cases of special leave relating to coronavirus (COVID-19), managers must keep in touch with their employees, and employees should take all practicable steps to resume duty as soon as possible - taking account of advice and guidance from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) related special leave can be paid or unpaid and should be recorded using the appropriate special leave category.

**Volunteering**

There may be instances when the Civil Service is asked to provide support in times of crisis, for example to support the NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Programme in December 2021.

Departments should support such requests for volunteering from employees, where possible and business needs allow for this. It is for Departments to decide who they are able to release, and the duration, to undertake volunteering in response to any such “call to arms”.

### Annual Leave

When applying current policies, and in particular in relation to the carry over of untaken annual leave, departments will need to take into account [The Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/365/made) which came into effect on 27 March 2020. These allow workers to carry over up to a maximum of 20 days leave into the next two leave years following the leave year in which it was due, where it is not reasonably practicable for them to take some, or all, of the holiday they are entitled to by law due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

If an employee can take leave, normal departmental rules for carrying over leave should still apply. Rules regarding, for example, sickness and maternity leave and accrual of annual leave remain unchanged.

### Recording absence

Where an employee has developed and is sick with any of the main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (as described by [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/)[)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/), or tests positive and is unfit for work for up to 10 days the absence must be recorded using the daily reporting spreadsheet.

Where an employee remains unfit for work at the end of the 10 day period, managers should treat any ongoing sickness as a new, reclassified period of absence, using the most prominent symptoms.

#### **Pay and absence**

It is recommended that departments:

* provide full contractual pay for sickness absence associated with COVID-19 that is recorded under the recommended category: **Sickness absence - Respiratory System - Epidemic/Pandemic.** This includes those individuals who may have previously been receiving half/nil pay or sickness pay at pension rate or who would otherwise have gone on to half/nil pay. The symptoms are those outlined in the People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
* pay full contractual pay for absences recorded under the recommended categories of:
	+ Special Leave With Pay - Epidemic/Pandemic - Self Isolation (where not ill) or Quarantine on Official Health Advice
	+ Special Leave With Pay - Epidemic/Pandemic - Caring Responsibility or
	+ Special Leave With Pay - Epidemic/Pandemic - Other reason.

##

## **Vulnerable people and those at high risk**

### Protecting employees at higher risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)

Employees who were previously defined as clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to follow government guidance titled: [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do). They should also consider advice from their health professionals on whether additional precautions are right for them.

Employees whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness if they become infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) should follow the [guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk).

Departments should give consideration to employees at [higher risk](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/) and, more generally, to employees facing mental and physical health difficulties. Managers should ensure individual risk assessments for staff at [higher risk](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/) are reviewed regularly as other members of the team return from COVID 19 related absences/isolation. Click on the link for guidance on Personal Management Plans for staff at higher risk. [Staff – Family Shielding & Vulnerable Staff – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/15/staff-family-shielding/)

For pregnant workers please also refer to this guidance [Pregnancy - HMPPS Intranet (gsi.gov.uk)](https://intranet.noms.gsi.gov.uk/covid-19-coronavirus/staff-and-managers2/pregnancy)

**Note:** This information applies to England. There is different guidance available for people living in [Scotland](https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-highest-risk/), [Wales](https://gov.wales/shielding-extremely-vulnerable-people) and [Northern Ireland](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-and-vulnerable-people).

### Living with someone who is at higher risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)

Employees who live with someone who may have been identified by a medical/healthcare professional as being at [higher risk](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus/) from coronavirus (COVID-19) should be able to attend the workplace in accordance with their departmental guidance and smarter working arrangements but this will depend on their individual circumstances. Departments should encourage managers to be supportive in these types of situations and may find it helpful to use the COVID Individual Risk Assessment (or similar) to inform such discussions.

## **Other HR advice**

### School, early years provision and childcare guidance

Where an employee’s ability to work is impacted by circumstances arising directly from COVID-19 and therefore beyond their control, departments should consider the use of paid special leave. This will apply where other options including working from home, working from a different workplace, working different attendance patterns/more flexibly or redeploying to a suitable alternative role cannot reasonably be achieved.

### Other caring responsibilities

Employees should talk about their caring responsibilities with their manager as part of the COVID 19 Risk Assessment discussion.

### Conduct and standards of behaviour

Failure to take care and putting others at risk could be considered to be misconduct. This applies in relation to COVID-19 related regulations and requirements and applies both during working hours and when “off duty” where evidence of breaches may be observed by an employer's contacts and customers (i.e. the general public in the case of a civil servant).

### Death in service

Departments should follow their own death in service guidance if an employee dies due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

###

### Travel

**Travel to and from the workplace**

Managers should advise employees to follow government guidance on [Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19)

**Travelling for work**

Where departments have employees who are required to travel to different locations for work related reasons on a regular basis as part of their role, they should advise them that they must follow any relevant government travel advice in place at the time, including the requirements of devolved administrations.

Departments can continue to use video and telephone conferencing and other digital channels as this has shown to be an effective way of working.

**Employee develops symptoms of COVID-19 whilst working away**

Where departments have employees working away from home, including where this involves overnight stays, managers must discuss with the employee what would happen in the event that they develop symptoms of COVID-19 whilst away from home.

### Travelling overseas

**Travelling for work**

Departments should ensure they are aware of the latest [government guidance on international travel](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do#travelling-in-the-uk-and-abroad), both for the country being visited and returning to the UK.

Where there are COVID-19 travel requirements, some employees may be exempt such as for testing or quarantine because of the job they do or because they are fully vaccinated under a recognised vaccination scheme.

If an employee is required to quarantine on return to the UK, they should work from home or their quarantine hotel if possible (in their usual role or another suitable role). If this is not possible, they should receive paid special leave for the quarantine period.

Departments should meet any costs associated with travel overseas for work purposes, such as tests or hotel quarantine, in line with their usual expenses policies.

**Non-work related travel**

All employees are expected to follow Government guidance on [international travel](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-abroad-from-england-during-coronavirus-covid-19), including testing and quarantine.

**Devolved Administrations:** Departments and employees should also be aware there may be different rules for the devolved nations and employees should check these prior to travelling: [England](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus), [Scotland](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-international-travel-quarantine/), [Wales](https://gov.wales/arriving-wales-overseas)and [Northern Ireland](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-international-travel-advice).

Prior to travel, employees should discuss with their manager any risks and requirements associated with travelling or returning from overseas and how this may impact on their ability to return to work.

Employees can use annual/flexi leave and/or agree with their manager a period of special leave, or a combination of these, to cover any additional time-off required. Special leave is likely to be unpaid but managers should consider this on a case-by-case basis.

Refer to the Travel Guidance under this link [Staff and managers - HMPPS Intranet (gsi.gov.uk)](https://intranet.noms.gsi.gov.uk/covid-19-coronavirus/staff-and-managers2)**.**

Employees are responsible for any costs associated with travel overseas for personal reasons, such as tests and quarantine.

##

## Annex A: Civil Service Key Principles and Framework for managing COVID-19 in the workplace

NB; HMPPS have not adopted this framework fully. This HMPPS Core Guidance V3 should be followed by HMPPS staff and managers

### Key Principles

CSHR have set out a Civil Service Framework for the post-1 April approach, based on the following key principles to ensure that CSHR advice and guidance:

* continues to be aligned, as it has been throughout the pandemic, to Government guidance
* uses a risk-based approach to ensure compliance with best practice and with Health and Safety legislation and guidelines
* ensures broad parity of treatment between COVID-19 and other illnesses.

## Civil Service Framework

### Health and Safety

Civil Service employers continue to have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and other people who might be affected by their business. All employers must do whatever is reasonably practicable to achieve this. This should include:

* conducting standard building risk assessments, that consider the risk of COVID-19 or spreading of other infectious diseases.
* continuing to encourage the use of the COVID-19 Individual Risk Indicator (CIRI) tool or similar to assist in identifying personal risk factors and mitigations.
* adopting policies and practices which are in line with the following public health advice:
	+ Promoting good hygiene including hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes and cleaning surroundings frequently.
	+ Encouraging people who have symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 and a high temperature or who do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities to stay at home. Where this is not possible, people are advised to adopt protective behaviours such as:
		- avoiding contact with those at high risk of severe outcomes if infected
		- wearing a face covering when in contact with other people
		- practicing good hand and respiratory hygiene
		- avoiding crowded, enclosed and poorly ventilated spaces and if possible, meet people outside.
* considering the risk to others where employees are in direct contact with the public/customers.

### HR Policy

* Employees that have symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 and a high temperature or who do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, should follow the public health advice and try to stay at home. They should try and not attend the workplace. Departments should encourage and enable employees to follow this advice through their policies and practices on sickness absence and sick pay.
* Employees with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 and who are unfit for work should take sickness absence. Employees who have mild symptoms, do not have a high temperature and are fit for work should work from home, where possible.
* Employees can return to the workplace as soon as they feel well enough and as long as they no longer have a high temperature (if they had one).
* For COVID-19 related sickness absences, departments should start to shift back to a BAU policy position. In summary:
	+ The day one right to Statutory Sick Pay has been withdrawn from 24 March. Occupational Sick Pay should revert to normal rules.
	+ Take steps to remove the automatic disregard for COVID-19 related absences. This means that absences which may be attributed to COVID-19 would count towards trigger/consideration points. However, departments should advise managers to support a reasonable level of absence and exercise caution around these absences triggering formal action.
	+ Use existing arrangements, such as extending sick pay or awarding Sick Pay at Pension Rate, to temporarily adjust sick pay and maintain an appropriate rate of pay and ensure that those employees with possible COVID-19 infection do not suffer any financial detriment from being advised not to attend the workplace.
* Departments should continue to record and report COVID-19 sickness absence using either:
	+ the code ‘Sickness absence - Respiratory System - Epidemic/Pandemic’ should NOT be used once the sickness disregard processes are removed and should be reserved for a future pandemic, or
	+ a new sickness code Coronavirus (COVID-19) which has the same status as other sickness categories.
* Special leave provision should revert to ‘business as usual’ provision and the usual limits in the following cases:
	+ Where children or other dependents are unwell with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 and an employee needs to take time off to care for them, departments should apply their usual policies on emergency leave for dependants. This may apply for example if a child cannot attend school or childcare, or where the usual care arrangements are not available while a dependent is unwell. Employees should be granted a reasonable, limited amount of special leave to enable them to make alternative caring arrangements. If additional time off is required employees should use annual leave or flexi leave.
* Departments should grant paid special leave while an employee is likely to be infectious (usually 5 days) where:
	+ an employee has symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 and/or has a positive COVID-19 test result, and is well enough to work, but is unable to undertake their usual or alternative duties from home and/or
	+ the employer is unable to put measures in place to enable an employee with symptoms to attend the workplace safely and protect others.

## Annex B: Summary of COVID-19 position in the devolved administrations

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | [**Scotland**](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/) | [**Wales**](https://gov.wales/coronavirus) | [**Northern Ireland**](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19) |
| Advice for individuals who are Asymptomatic | Take a LFT twice a week, and if visiting someone vulnerable or going to a crowded place. | Do a test before seeing others. | Use regular rapid lateral flow testing to help manage periods of risk such as after close contact with others in a higher risk environment, or before spending prolonged time with a more vulnerable individual. |
| Advice for individuals who are Symptomatic  | Self-isolate, book a PCR test. | Self-isolate, book a PCR test. | Self-isolate, book a PCR test. |
| Face coverings | Must be worn in most indoor spaces and on public transport. | Still required by law in health and social care settings. Voluntary wearing of a face covering is strongly advised in other crowded or enclosed indoor public settings. | Wear in indoor public places. |
| Work | Work from home as well as the office if you can – businesses and workplaces should follow the [safer workplace guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/).  | Enable and facilitate working from home. | If you can work from home, you should. |
| **Changes from** | **N/A** | **18 April** | **22 April** |
| Changes overview |  | If the current public health situation remains stable, all remaining restrictions will be removed | Changes to test and trace arrangements |