

Coronavirus - COVID-19 Housing Frequently Asked Questions

Effective from 19 July 2021

The safety and wellbeing of our residents and colleagues is our main priority. We are taking every possible step to safeguard this while continuing to support our residents.

We are continuously monitoring the pandemic and official advice and sharing updates with colleagues when government guidance changes.

We hope that this document will help answer some of the most common questions that residents and families have asked. We will continue to regularly update them as and when the guidance changes.

- **NEW - Has the national lockdown ended?**

Yes, the national lockdown in England ended on Monday 19 July 2021, when we moved to Step 4 of the government's roadmap out of lockdown.

In line with government guidance, we have resumed our full services and lifted restrictions in place across our retirement communities.

It's important to remember the pandemic is not over and everyone should continue to exercise caution to help prevent the spread of coronavirus and keep each other safe. Your local manager will continue to keep you updated with information as to whether any restrictions are introduced at a local level and how that would impact you.

You can keep up to date with the guidance published by the government on their website here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

- **UPDATED - Are there any restrictions in place around friends and relatives visiting my sheltered housing scheme?**

From 19 July, friends, family and other visitors are welcome to visit, unless local guidance or additional measures are in place at your location.

- **UPDATED - Do visitors need to wear a face-covering?**

For the safety and comfort of everyone at our locations, we are asking colleagues, residents and visitors to consider wearing a face-covering when in shared or busy areas within the location.

- **UPDATED - What can I do to minimise the risk of infection?**

Please refer to the most current NHS advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/>

In addition to above, the government has updated its guidance for those people who are extremely vulnerable, saying they should continue to consider the risks of close contact with others, particularly if you are clinically extremely vulnerable or not yet fully vaccinated. More information is available on their website here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/19-july-guidance-on-protecting-people-who-are-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-from-covid-19>

- **UPDATED - How can I get help and support during this time?**

The health and safety of our residents remains paramount. You can visit your local manager when they are on site or contact them during working hours by email or ringing their office number, (which will then be diverted to their mobile phone) or mobile number if provided.

Our Customer Centre is also open to support you 8.00am – 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and 8.00am – 4.00pm on Saturday. Please note, that due to these unprecedented circumstances we may take longer than usual to answer, so please bear with us. In an absolute emergency please pull your cord, and our On-Call team will assist you. Please do not pull your cord for routine matters.

- **UPDATED - Can I use the communal/shared areas, such as the lounge, gardens, salon and any on-site catering facilities?**

Our shared facilities are once again open and available to use as they were prior to the pandemic – unless local guidance or additional measures are in place at your location.

If you have any COVID-19 symptoms, please do not use any shared areas.

- **I have developed COVID-19 symptoms, what should I do?**

If you or another member of your household develops any of the symptoms, (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste) please tell your local manager.

If your symptoms are mild you must not to leave your home. This is called self-isolation. This will be for a period of 10 days

Anyone you live with (or anyone in your support bubble) who does not have symptoms must self-isolate for 10 days from when the first person started

having symptoms.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), you can ask for a test to check if you have the virus. Find out more on the NHS website - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

- **Is there any support available to help me with shopping, supplies, collecting medication, dog walking etc. as I do not have any local friends or family to support?**

Your manager will be able to signpost you to local solutions such as voluntary groups, community hubs etc. Our managers can offer support where no other options are available.

- **If there is a confirmed case of coronavirus at my location, what will happen?**

To reduce the risk of transmission, we will arrange for all shared areas to be deep cleaned in addition to the normal cleaning schedule if the diagnosed resident has been in the location within the last 72 hours.

- **If my local manager has to self-isolate or goes off sick, who will support us?**

We have buddy arrangements in place to ensure our residents are supported, however our service to you may differ from the norm over the next few weeks. We will keep you informed as far as is reasonably possible about any changes.

Test and Trace

- **What is the NHS Test and Trace system?**

Details of the NHS England Test and Trace service can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

This means that anyone who tests positive for coronavirus/COVID-19 will be contacted by NHS England Test and Trace and will need to share information about who they have had contact with. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within two metres for more than 15 minutes.

Those who have been in close contact with someone who tests positive will be notified and must isolate for 10 days, even if they have no symptoms.

- **Will I be asked to self-isolate repeatedly? Does the system recognise you've already isolated before?**

If you have been in close recent contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus/COVID-19, you will need to self-isolate, whether or not you have isolated before. By following social distancing rules, you will significantly reduce the risk of needing to self-isolate.

- **What is a 'contact'?**

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for coronavirus/COVID-19 anytime from two days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms. For example, a contact can be:

- Sexual partners or people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for coronavirus/COVID-19
- A person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre) with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus/COVID-19, including: Being coughed on, having a face-to-face conversation, or having skin-to-skin physical contact, or any contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact;
- A person who has been between one and two metres from someone who has tested positive for coronavirus/COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes, or
- A person who has travelled in a small vehicle or on a plane near someone who has tested positive for coronavirus/COVID-19

- **How will they get my details/phone number to tell me I have been in contact with someone?**

NHS Test and Trace uses contact details supplied by people who order a test, and also asks people who have tested positive to identify their close recent contacts and provide their phone number or email where possible. All information is held in complete confidence, so for instance NHS Test and Trace will not pass on the name of someone with coronavirus/COVID-19 to the people they have been in close contact with - simply advising that due to close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus/COVID-19, they may be at risk.

- **Who needs to use the Test and Trace QR Code on entry to our scheme/estate?**

The NHS launched a new COVID-19 app and anyone with a smartphone is being encouraged to download the app. You can find out more on the BBC news website:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54270334> which includes a simple 'how to guide'

Anyone who has the app can choose to scan the QR code when they arrive at your scheme/estate as it helps to trace and stop the spread of the disease.

- **I have been told I need to self-isolate. What does this mean?**

You cannot go out to work or visit public areas, including communal areas. You should not go shopping or go out to pick up medication but instead should seek support from family or friends or order a delivery. You must only exercise in your own home or private garden (if you have one) and cannot leave to walk your dog (if you have one).