**Exemption process for organisations to follow to allow front line social care to work if asked to isolate**

In exceptional circumstances fully vaccinated front-line social care staff, if identified as a close contact positive case (NB: if staff have a positive Covid 19 household member they will not qualify for this process) may be allowed to leave self-solation in order to attend (including travelling to and from) work.

Exceptional circumstances have been described as those where there is a risk to health or safety, or the safety of providing continuing clinical or care services resulting from staff absence. For example,

* The provider is unable to provide sufficient staffing levels to deliver a safe service

The guidance states that “The aim is to support organisations to reduce the pressure we know is being experienced. However, this flexibility should not be a means to bring back all staff that are absent. These guidelines give employers the ‘right to allow’ not to ‘compel’ staff to return to work”

The decision to allow staff to attend work will be made on a case by case basis, and only after a risk assessment by the organisation’s management which is then authorised by the Director of Public Health or their delegated nominees. In Hertfordshire, this is managed by the Covid 19 Outbreak cell.

The provider must complete the risk assessment checklist below and submit evidence of serious risk to staffing levels in an email to Hertfordshire County Council using the email assistance@hcpa.co.uk. Please use the subject line – Self isolation exemption

Please ensure that you have informed your commissioners and the operational teams in Hertfordshire County Council before the application is submitted so you can continue to work together to ensure continuity of care and support.

Please note that if the individual works across multiple care homes or supported living sites, the application only applies to one site or organisation. Therefore, if they work in multiple sites, separate applications will need to be submitted.

The county council will respond to the organisation with a clear decision within a maximum of 1 day during the working week this will be via an email.

Any decision made as part of the process can be reviewed and amended based on new evidence of the requesting organisation’s situation, and prevalence of Covid19 in the local area.

The individual must continue to isolate until a decision has been made and all testing has been completed.

**Process**

The request for an exemption from the organisation will be taken to the relevant outbreak cell for a decision.

The outbreak cell will consider the risk assessment and supplementary information supplied by the organisation and any evidence from partners, including compliance with infection control measures

For a decision to be made, a quorum must be established as defined in the Covid19 outbreak cell terms of reference. The chair of the outbreak cell has the responsibility to ensure that all views are accounted for when agreeing a decision.

The decision made will be formally noted on the outbreak cell decision log and an email outlining the decision will be sent on behalf of the Chair of the outbreak cell.