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

**if asked to isolate – Updated 16th August 2021**

**Guidance:** COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care settings **-** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings> - Updated 16th August 2021

From 16th August, staff members notified that they are a contact of a COVID-19 case are not required to self-isolate if they are fully vaccinated. They should inform their line manager or employer immediately if they are required to work in the 10 days following their last contact with a COVID-19 case.

If the staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 during this period, follow the guidance in section 2.1.

The majority of fully vaccinated health and social care staff will be able to continue in their usual role.

The following apply to all staff returning to work following this exemption:

* The staff member should not have any [COVID-19 symptoms](https://hcpa.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7275e7980a25c4f5e4939ee06&id=82a7f4b37f&e=7881a1811d)
* The staff member should immediately arrange for a PCR test, either through their workplace arrangements or via the NHS Test and Trace service, and the result of this PCR test should be negative prior to returning to work.
* Following the negative PCR result, the staff member should undertake an LFD antigen test every day for the 10 days following their last contact with the case (even on days they are not at work).
* If a staff member has had a SARS-CoV-2 infection in the past 90 days, they should not have a PCR test and should only undertake daily LFD antigen tests.
* On days the staff member is working, the LFD antigen test should be taken before starting their shift, and the result should be negative.
* The staff member should comply with all relevant infection control precautions and PPE should be worn properly throughout the day.
* If the staff member works with patients or residents who are highly vulnerable to COVID-19 (as determined by the organisation), a risk assessment should be undertaken, and consideration given to redeployment during their 10 day self-isolation period.

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| **Hertfordshire Local Guidance** - This must be followed by Hertfordshire ProvidersHertfordshire County Council have confirmed that the current exemption process where HCC agrees the risk assessment before a staff member can come out of isolation will **only apply to:*** Care homes where under 90% of the staff are vaccinated and under 95% of the residents are vaccinated.

It is important to remember these key points:* The process only applies to staff who have received both vaccinations plus 14 days.
* If identified as a contact, they must arrange a PCR test straight away and it must be negative before they return to work.
* They must complete lateral flow tests every day for the 10 days following their last contact with the case.
* If tested positive for COVID-19, in the last 90 days, they should only undertake Lateral flow tests.
* Residents of care homes who have been identified as close contacts should still isolate for 14 days.
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**Process**

The request for an exemption from the organisation will be taken to the relevant Self Isolation Exemption Cell for a decision. 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 Self Isolation Exemption Cell.

The provider must complete the risk assessment checklist 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 individual must continue to isolate until a decision has been made and all testing has been completed.

The Self Isolation Exemption Cell will consider the risk assessment and supplementary information supplied by the organisation and any evidence from partners, including compliance with infection control measures.

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.

For a decision to be made, a quorum must be established as defined in the Front line social care Self Isolating Exemptions Cell terms of reference. The chair of the Self Isolation Exemption Cell has the responsibility to ensure that all views are accounted for when agreeing a decision.

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.

The decision made will be formally noted on the Self Isolation Exemption decision log and an email outlining the decision will be sent on behalf of the Chair of the Self Isolation Exemption Cell.

**Frontline Staff Contacts of Covid 19 - Individual Risk Assessment Checklist**

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| The decision to allow staff to attend work is made on a case by case basis. It is expected all infection prevention, and control (IPC) measures remain in place. This risk assessment should not be used to authorise blanket exemptions. Please complete the risk assessment checklist below and submit evidence of serious risk to staffing levels in an email to Hertfordshire county council via emailassistance@hcpa.co.uk**Guidance: Updated 16th August 2021** COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care settings **-** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>Only include initials of the individual staff member and date of application |

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|  | **Individual Risk Assessment**  |  |  |
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|  | **Name of Provider:**  | **Contact Telephone No:** |
|  | **Initials of staff member:** | **Date of assessment:**  |
|  | **Name of person completing the risk assessment:** | **Job position of person completing the risk assessment:** |
|  | **Questions** | **Yes/ No** | **Considerations or evidence of actions taken** |
| 1. | The staff member should not have any [COVID-19 symptoms](https://hcpa.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7275e7980a25c4f5e4939ee06&id=82a7f4b37f&e=7881a1811d)  |  | If Covid-19 symptoms exist, they do not qualify for this process  |
| 2. | Staff member **is fully vaccinated having had 2 doses and it has been** 14 days since the second dose |  | **1st dose date:** **2nd dose date:**If no, staff to remain in self-isolation |
| 3. | Care homes where under 90% of the staff are vaccinated and under 95% of the residents are vaccinated |  | This must be followed by Hertfordshire Providers |
| 4. | **Evidence is provided confirming every effort has been made** to bring in fully vaccinated agency staff to cover staff absence and current position |  | **Include details to each question** |
| How many staff are currently out of the service, and out of how many in total? |  |  |
| What are the risks if people don’t have care? |  |  |
| Have you asked staff that are on leave if they would cover? |  |  |
| What incentives have you offered them?  |  |  |
| Have you tried to get agency staff? |  |  |
| What are your plans in future to avoid this happening again?  |  |  |
| Have you looked at moving staff around from other rounds/ homes?  |  |  |
| 5. | If you have a contract with HCC or CCG that you have **discussed the contingencies with the commissioning team** prior to completing this form. |  | **Date of discussion ………….****name/email address of commissioner or LA contact** |
| 6. | Staff aware that they will continue to self-isolate until they receive a **negative PCR test result** before returning to work (Date PCR test taken is after notification received to self-isolate) |  | Date staff asked to isolate:Date staff able to come out of self-isolation:Date PCR test taken:If positive staff must remain in self- isolation |
| 7. | Staff aware following the negative PCR result, the staff member should undertake an LFD antigen test every day for the 10 days following their last contact with the case (even on days they are not at work)Test results reported to NHS Test and Trace via the web portal and to their duty manager |  | If positive LFT restart self-isolation period and obtain a confirmatory PCR test[Coronavirus (COVID-19): getting tested - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested) |
| 8. | Process in place for organisation to check LFD testing results each day |  | [Coronavirus (COVID-19): getting tested - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested) |
| 9. | Staff member is aware that if they develop any COVID symptoms, they will stay at home and immediately arrange another PCR test. |  | [Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/) |
| 10. | Process in place to ensure staff will comply with all relevant infection control precautions and PPE. Staff member should not take breaks or eat meals with other staff.  |  | Any breaches will be reported immediately to their line manager. [COVID-19 | HCPA](https://www.hcpa.info/covid-19/) |
| 11. | The staff member should not work with individuals who are * clinically extremely vulnerable (as per list of conditions)
* unvaccinated against Covid 19
 |  | [Guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#definition-of-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-groups) |
| 12. | Process in place for staff not to use public transport to and from work or travelling between locations  |  | Avoid public transport and car sharing  |
| 13. | Staff member aware that they should wear a face mask if within enclosed spaces with other individuals  |  | This should be a **TIIR** fluid resistant surgical facemask |
| 14. | Having reviewed the balance of risk between onward transmission of Covid-19 compared to the risk to delivery of critical services due to staff absence, as well as the mitigations available, exemption from isolation for this member of staff is a reasonable course of action. |  |   |
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|  | **Submission is considered by HCC** | **Date:**  |