

Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs

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Section 1: Self-isolation and testing guidance

1.1 Should I continue testing?

Most people no longer need to test for Covid-19.

You should follow guidance on staying at home if unwell with symptoms (Q1.3).

While routine testing had continued to be advised for some employees in health and social care settings, this has been paused from 30 August 2023. Your line manager will keep you informed of any changes to testing required.

1.2 If I test positive, do I need to self-isolate?

NHS inform advice remains that if you have a positive coronavirus test result, you should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **5 days** after the day you took your test, or from the day your symptoms started (whichever was earlier).

Although many people will no longer be infectious to others after 5 days, some people may be infectious to other people for up to 10 days from the start of their infection. You should avoid meeting with anyone who is at higher risk, especially individuals with a weakened immune system, for 10 days after the day you took your test.

Since 1 July 2022, absences due to Covid-19 haven been recorded as sickness absence as per normal sickness absence procedures.

Employees in the Health & Social Care Partnership:

If you work in the HSCP you should confirm with your line manager before returning to work in a health care setting.

1.3 What do I do if I have Covid symptoms, but cannot test?

According to NHS Inform you should stay at home and avoid contact with other people if you:

- have [symptoms](#) of a respiratory infection such as coronavirus
- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities

Do this until you no longer have a high temperature (if you had one) or until you feel better. Work from home if you can. If you cannot work from home, then speak to your line manager about any work you could do from home. Where you cannot work from home absences from work will be recorded as sickness absence as per normal sickness absence procedures

Section 2: Absence and return to work

2.1 Who do I tell if I need to be off because I have symptoms?

Absences due to Covid-19 will be recorded as sickness absence in line with normal sickness absence procedures. Managers should report the sickness absence using their normal reporting absence procedure as outlined on the Wellbeing at work pages on [Connects](#).

2.2 Will I be paid if I am at home with symptoms?

Any absences due to Covid-19 symptoms will be recorded as sickness absence and will be paid in line with your sickness pay entitlement.

2.3 Will I be required to get a Fit Note?

Absences over 7 calendar days will require a GP Fit note in line with normal certification requirements.

Section 3: Care of dependants

3.1 I have dependants at home with symptoms. Will I get Special Leave?

Employees who require time off to care for dependants may be able to utilise the provisions of the [Special Leave Scheme](#).

3.2 My elderly parent who does not reside in the same house is unwell with Covid-19 symptoms. Can I get time off work?

If you are the only person who can reasonably provide care, then up to 5 days' paid special leave can be paid. Thereafter up to 12 weeks' leave (unpaid) can be provided through the [Carers' Leave Scheme](#).

Section 4: Returning to office buildings

4.1 When can I return to the office?

The Council's offices reopened on Tuesday 3rd May 2022.

The [Chief Executive's video](#) (27/09/22) sets out the Council's approach to Agile working from the 31st October 2022. Employees with an agile workstyle are expected to be in the office at least 2 days per week, with teams having representation across the week.

Further guidance on Agile Working can be found in our [Agile working FAQs](#).

4.2 Should I attend meetings?

You should attend meetings as requested whether this is in the office, on MS Teams or Hybrid.

If attending Committee meetings or ELT, it is expected that officers attend in person. Ideally Team meetings and 121's should also be in person from 31 October 2022 to increase connections, collaboration, and innovation.

A number of meeting rooms have been installed with hybrid technology. Further details on [hybrid meeting rooms](#) are available.

4.3 What is the Council's Covid Guidance on returning to work e.g., face masks, risk assessments?

There is no longer a requirement to wear a face covering within offices or other Council buildings. There will very few exceptions to this such as social care settings, and the HSCP have issued their own guidance on this. The Council will support employees who wish to continue wearing face coverings.

Health and Safety have prepared Toolbox Talks on [Fire Evacuation](#) and [First Aid](#). Line Managers should discuss these with their teams to make sure that everyone is aware of the procedures for both.

4.4 What is Distance Aware?

Distance Aware badges and lanyards show others you need space. They are for anyone who prefers others to take extra care around them, for any reason.

You can pick up a free Distance Aware badge or lanyard from all libraries across Scotland. Free badges are also available in most Asda stores. You can also [order a badge or lanyard online](#) from a number of charities.



4.5 I am concerned about returning to the workplace with the reduced restrictions, what should I do?

You should speak to your line manager in the first instance to discuss any supports that can be put in place to support your return to the workplace.

Employees who are pregnant should have an Expectant Mothers at Work risk assessment completed.

4.6 What is the dress code when I am in the office?

The Council have agreed that smart casual wear can be worn each day.

Employees should discuss with their line manager if there are any particular arrangements for their team e.g., uniform requirements, or business dress for any meetings.

Employees are reminded that no football colours are allowed at any time.

4.7 What is the best way to let someone know that I am working in a Flexible/Agile way?

The health and wellbeing of our employees is vital to continue providing an effective and efficient service. Managers should actively encourage their team members to work their contracted hours within the usual 'business hours' of 9am – 5pm, during the working week.

However, as a flexible employer, we know that some employees enjoy working on an agile basis and may often start or end work later than this. We also know that some employees have different working days or patterns as part of an agreed work life balance request.

With technology now being available at home and on mobile devices, we are asking employees to consider adding a statement to their email signature, for example:

- “I’m working in an agile way therefore the best way to contact me is by email.”
- “I work flexibly and therefore might send an email when you are not working, don’t feel the need to respond until you are working.”