

Principles for preventing the spread of COVID-19 infection after 24 February 2022



Public Health, Southampton City Council

The Government has published their Living with Covid plan. From the 24th of February, people are no longer legally required to self-isolate if they have a positive COVID-19 test but are still advised to stay at home for at least 5 days and only leave after they have two negative lateral flow tests separated by 24 hrs. Contacts of a confirmed case will no longer be contacted, required to self-isolate or do additional testing, although there is [guidance for household contacts of confirmed cases](#). From the 1st of April the government will no longer provide free symptomatic or asymptomatic testing for the general population but will set out further details on which at-risk groups will be eligible.

Whilst legal restrictions to control the spread of infection have been lifted, we all need to use our personal judgement to help protect ourselves, our families, friends and communities whilst the prevalence of COVID-19 in Southampton remains high.

Individuals can still reduce the risk of catching and passing on COVID-19 by:

- a) Getting vaccinated
- b) Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meeting outside
- c) Wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, when rates of transmission are high
- d) Trying to stay at home when feeling unwell and taking a test if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- e) If positive, keeping their distance from other people they live with and spend as little time as possible in shared areas
- f) If living in a household with someone who is positive, work from home if able, limit contact with others, especially those who are vulnerable and wear a face covering when leaving home
- g) Washing hands and following advice to 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'

Alongside asking people to take personal responsibility and adopt a cautious approach, government has emphasised that employers will receive a different set of principles for working safely. In the meantime, Southampton City Council public health team continues to support the following principles for settings:

- 1) To operate settings, businesses and services in a way that instils confidence in visitors and customers that they are as safe as possible
- 2) Create an environment and culture which is respectful of people's choices and is permissive for people to wear face coverings if they so wish, recognising individuals are best placed to understand their own circumstances and perceptions of risk
- 3) A proportionate approach to protective measures:
 - Thinking about ways to limit mixing between people by minimising the number, proximity and duration of contacts whilst infection rates remain high
 - Maximising ventilation wherever possible
 - Making hand and respiratory hygiene as easy and accessible as possible
 - Maintaining frequent and effective cleaning
- 4) Individual settings, businesses and services may make different choices depending on their risk assessments, which will take account of vulnerable groups, risk of exposure and necessary controls. Whilst COVID-19 will no longer require specific risk assessment in businesses after the 1st April, existing Health & Safety legislation means employers are required by law to protect their employees and customers from harm
- 5) Encouragement of all eligible groups to get vaccinated

These principles will be reviewed on a regular basis in light of prevailing infection rates and changes to government guidance. The public health team at SCC is here to support you, and we can offer specific infection prevention and control advice – please contact publichealth@southampton.gov.uk