

COVID-19

Communications support pack for community leaders, groups and charities

Version updated: 13/Aug/2021

COVID-19



We have moved to the final step of the Government's roadmap for managing COVID-19 and there are new changes we all need to be aware of. From 16 August, anyone identified as a close contact of a positive case will no longer have to self-isolate, providing they have been fully vaccinated and are not displaying any COVID-19 symptoms.

The pandemic is far from over and the number of cases is rising but we will need to live with the virus. We have growing evidence that our vaccines significantly reduce the chance of an infection leading to hospitalisation or death.

- As a community leader, group or organisation, you are ideally positioned to help share the advice contained in this information pack with members of your community, to help stop the spread of the virus.
- Please distribute this information pack to your local community members so they can follow the advice and information in this pack.
- You may be given some helpful resources to promote testing and vaccination directly from the local authority. There are also resources available via the [Public Health England COVID-19 resource centre \(phe.gov.uk\)](https://www.phe.gov.uk), including assets to promote regular testing and vaccination, which can be distributed via your community network and through your communications channels such as email, social media and websites.

How we can stop COVID-19 from spreading

- 1 in 3 people who have the virus show no symptoms.
- The more people who get tested and who self-isolate if positive, the more we can slow the virus from spreading.
- It's important that everyone helps by getting tested if they are asked to do so. Even if you are vaccinated there's a chance that you can still spread the virus.

How to protect your community against COVID-19

- As a community leader, group or charity, you can help to keep your communities safe by encouraging everyone to:
 - **Meet in well-ventilated areas where possible**, such as outdoors or indoors with windows open.
 - **Wear a face covering when you come into contact with people you don't normally** meet in enclosed and crowded spaces, including public transport.
 - **Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser** regularly throughout the day.
 - Cover your **nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze; stay at home if unwell**, to reduce the risk of passing other illnesses onto friends, family, colleagues, and others in your community.
 - **Take a PCR test** even if they have mild symptoms. If you don't have symptoms, using rapid tests twice a week helps to protect those around us.
 - **Consider individual risks, such as clinical vulnerabilities and vaccination status.**
- If you follow this advice you can help to keep yourself and your community safe by using the anonymous NHS COVID-19 app. It's the fastest way of knowing if you have been exposed to the virus.

Vaccines

Get vaccinated



As a community leader, group or organisation, you are ideally positioned to encourage members of your community to get vaccinated and help stop the spread of the virus.

Everyone aged 16 or over can now get vaccinated against COVID-19. You do not need to wait to be contacted by the NHS.

The vaccine works against all known variants in the UK and protects people from becoming seriously ill. To have maximum protection you need two doses.

You can access [vaccine information in community languages](#) and make this available via your community networks and communications channels.

Who can get a COVID-19 vaccine

Everyone aged 16 or over can now get vaccinated against COVID-19. You do not need to wait to be contacted by the NHS and you can book your appointments anytime.

To get your vaccine you can:

- Book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments online for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy.
- If you cannot book appointments online, you can call 119 free of charge. You can speak to a translator if you need to.
- Wait to be contacted by your GP surgery and book your appointments with them.
- If you have difficulties communicating or hearing, or are a British Sign Language (BSL) user, you can use textphone 18001 119 or the NHS 119 BSL interpreter service.

How safe is the vaccine?

All COVID-19 vaccines offered in the UK have been through rigorous clinical trials, are safe and provide enhanced protection against being ill, going to hospital and dying.

- The vaccine is given as 2 doses.
- The 2nd dose is given 8 -12 weeks after the 1st dose.
- The 2nd dose will generally be the same as the 1st dose.

To learn more about the vaccination go to: [vaccine facts](#)

The most important things to remember about getting the vaccine



- Vaccines are safe. They reduce illness and death.
- Expect to have side effects after receiving a first or second jab.
- If you don't feel well don't worry. It is the vaccine working on your immune system – not COVID-19.
- Encourage everyone you know to have the vaccine even if they have had COVID-19.
- Even though you may have been vaccinated, there's a chance you could still give COVID-19 to someone else so:
- Continue to stay safe – wash your hands and wear a mask in enclosed spaces, including public transport.

Testing, Tracing and Self-Isolation

Testing and self-isolation



Restrictions have lifted, but COVID-19 is far from over and we will have to learn to live with the virus. Please encourage members of your community to get tested and, where required, to self-isolate, to help stop the spread of the virus.

As of 16 August, you will no longer be required to self-isolate after confirmed close contact with a positive case of COVID-19 if you are fully vaccinated or under 18. Close contacts who are fully vaccinated will be advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible, so that they can have certainty about their condition.

You should take regular twice-weekly [free rapid lateral flow tests](#). If your local area is offering surge testing and you do not have symptoms, you should have a [free PCR test](#) to help stop the virus from spreading.

You should [self-isolate](#) immediately if you have [symptoms](#) or a [positive test result for COVID-19](#). There is [financial support if you're off work because of coronavirus](#).

Contact tracers will get in touch to identify people you have been in close contact with recently who may also be infected with the virus. Please be honest and open with them and help as much as possible. It can save lives.

Who still needs to self-isolate?

Some groups will still be required to self-isolate, even if they have been identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 PCR test result. These groups include:

- Those who have not received their COVID-19 vaccination yet.
- Those who have not received both doses of their COVID-19 vaccination.
- Those who have received their second dose within the last 14 days.
- Those who have tested positive following a PCR test.
- Those who have been fully vaccinated and are displaying COVID-19 symptoms (ahead of getting a PCR test).

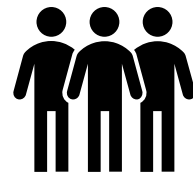
If you're considering travel, you should also check [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for updated travel advice and guidance.

The importance of testing, tracing and self-isolation

Testing, tracing and self-isolation remains an effective way of stopping COVID-19 from spreading and preventing new variants of the virus from emerging.

However, it only works if we do all three:

1. **Test regularly** for infection.
2. **Trace** people who have been in close contact with someone who is infected.
3. **Self-isolate** for 10 days if you test positive (even if you have been double-jabbed).



1 in 3 people have no symptoms so they can pass the virus on to other people without knowing it.

- Taking part in regular testing, and assisting in contacting others who may be infected, will help us to manage the virus.

Get tested



If you have symptoms of COVID-19

PCR testing

You are eligible for a free PCR test, as soon as possible, if you have any of these symptoms:

- A high temperature.
- A new, continuous cough.
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.
- You and anyone you live with should stay at home until you get your test result. Only leave your home to have a test.

You can order a free PCR test online:

[Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

PCR tests are generally more accurate than lateral flow tests as the sample is sent to a laboratory for testing.

If you do not have symptoms

Regular testing

- You are eligible for free regular rapid lateral flow tests without having symptoms.
- About 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others, so it is important to test regularly.
- Please have a rapid lateral flow test twice a week (every 3 to 4 days) to check if you have the virus.
- If you test positive and self-isolate, you will help stop the virus spreading and will help save lives.

You can pick up free rapid lateral flow tests at pharmacies or order them online: [Regular rapid lateral flow coronavirus \(COVID-19\) tests - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

PCR testing in surge areas

- You may be eligible for free PCR testing if you are in a surge area, regardless of whether you have symptoms or not. Please take a PCR test if this is available in your surge area.

How to access regular twice-weekly lateral flow testing

To make it as easy as possible for everyone in the community to access testing, and take-up the offer of twice-weekly rapid testing, the following routes are available, depending on local circumstances.

- **LFD Direct** – You can order a box of tests online or via 119, which will be delivered to your home.

- **Pharmacy Collect** – Thousands of pharmacies across England have signed up to offer Pharmacy Collect. You can go into a participating pharmacy and pick up a free box of tests to use at home. NHS England's site finder allows users to search for [nearby pharmacies](#) who offer this service.

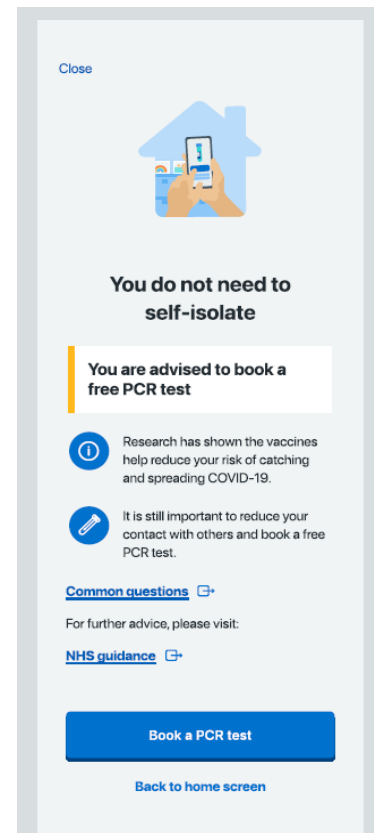
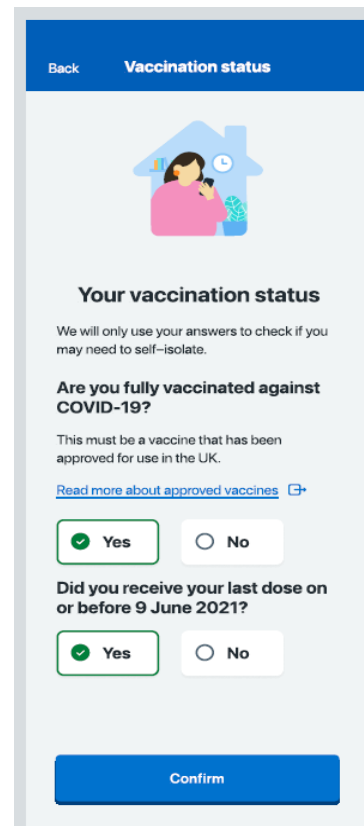
NHS COVID-19 app: latest update

In line with the change to self-isolation policy, from 16 August the app will now ask close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case to **confirm their age and vaccination status** in order to update the advice provided by the app.

- The majority of people will not be advised to self-isolate.
- If you are advised to self-isolate, the self-isolation countdown timer can help you keep track of your isolation days. It is important you follow this advice.

Although two doses of the vaccine will greatly reduce your own risk of becoming unwell with COVID-19, it is still possible to contract the virus and pass it to others.

We strongly encourage everyone, even those fully vaccinated, to continue using the app to understand what is happening around them and help control the spread of the virus.



*Example of new screens that will feature in the app

NHS COVID-19 app: key statistics



- New data shows over 50,000 cases were averted in the first 3 weeks of July – with up to 2,000 cases prevented a day assuming 60% compliance with instructions to self-isolate. This is estimated to have prevented 1,600 hospitalisations.



- It also shows the app reduces the spread of COVID-19 by around 4.3% each week, and for every 200 to 250 tests entered and shared in the app one person is prevented from being hospitalised from the virus.



- Usage remains high, with around 40% of the eligible population regularly using the app and around 50% of all reported tests being inputted.

NHS COVID-19 app: key messages

- You are strongly encouraged, even if you are fully vaccinated, to continue using the app. It is a lifesaving tool that helps us to stay safe and to protect those closest to us as we return to a more familiar way of life.
- New data shows over 50,000 cases were averted in the first 3 weeks of July – with up to 2,000 cases prevented a day.
- The app is the simplest, easiest, and fastest way to find out whether you have been exposed to the virus, and it has saved thousands of lives over the course of this pandemic.
- The more people who use the app, the more protected everybody is. Please continue to use, and encourage others to use the NHS COVID-19 app.
- The NHS COVID-19 app is available for download from the App Store and Google Play Store. For help with downloading please visit: [Get help downloading the app – NHS COVID-19 app support - NHS.UK](#)
- For more details including the latest FAQs, visit [the NHS COVID-19 app website - NHS.UK](#)



Content translations

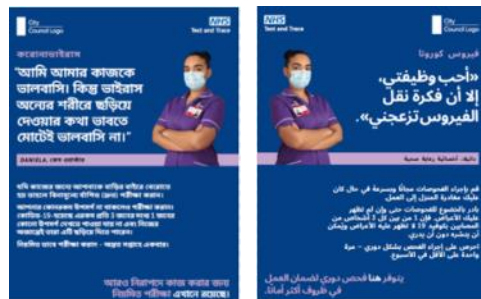
Find COVID-19 Content <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>

Shareable content can be found at the [Campaign Resource Centre](#) with many items translated into multiple languages. Here are just a few examples of the content you can edit for your own materials:

Guide to rapid flow tests



Workplace testing



Vaccine disinformation

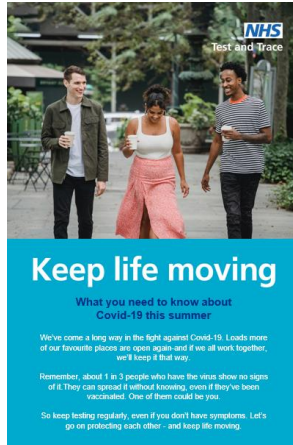
- 1  **Vaccines | Disinformation - English**
Department of Health and Social Care (4:48)
- 2  **Vaccines | Disinformation - Albanian**
Department of Health and Social Care (5:41)
- 3  **Vaccines | Disinformation - Arabic**
Department of Health and Social Care (5:45)
- 4  **Vaccines | Disinformation - Bengali**
Department of Health and Social Care (5:37)
- 5  **Vaccines | Disinformation - Chinese**
Department of Health and Social Care (4:59)

Regular testing



Digital resource for young adults

New digital resource for young adults



- Test and Trace has developed a new digital resource aimed at young adults aged 18-30, ready for circulation.
- The HTML email includes key links to information on vaccinations, testing, COVID-19 advice and more.
- If you would like to use this resource please email regionalcomms@dhsc.gov.uk

Get in touch

For any questions or if you would like to discuss in more detail please get in touch with us at:

regionalcomms@dhsc.gov.uk