



## Interpretation of COVID-19 advice for emergency services workers

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| <p><b>What is the current general advice for the public on self-isolation?</b></p>                              | <p>The “Stay at Home Guidance to Households” applies to <b>everyone, including healthcare and emergency services workers.</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#ending-isolation">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#ending-isolation</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>People who live alone</b> should stay at home for seven days if they develop a high temperature or a new and continuous cough</li> <li>• <b>If a symptomatic individual lives with others</b>, all other household members should stay at home for 14 days</li> <li>• <b>Everyone</b> should avoid non-essential contact with others and unnecessary travel</li> <li>• <b>Everyone</b> is being asked to work from home where they possibly can.</li> <li>• <b>People over 70, and vulnerable groups of any age</b> are advised to self-isolate for 12 weeks.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Should workers, who regularly work closely together for long shifts, be considered a ‘household’?</b></p> | <p>Co-workers who regularly work closely together for long shifts (possibly sharing small spaces such as service vehicle cabins) may be considered as ‘close contacts’ but not as a ‘household’ (i.e. living with others).</p> <p>Risks should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, but typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If a worker develops symptoms of a new and continuous cough or fever, they should not be in work. They should self-isolate for seven days from onset of symptoms if living alone. If living with others, other members of the household should stay at home for 14 days.</b></li> <li>• If a worker develop symptoms of continuous cough or fever <b>following</b> a long shift including sharing a vehicle cabin with co-workers, <b>the symptomatic worker should self-isolate for seven days from onset of symptoms if living alone. If living with others, other members of the household should stay at home for 14 days.</b> Asymptomatic co-workers should remain vigilant but can continue to work; they are not required to self-isolate. They <b>should monitor for symptoms and follow the “Stay at Home Guidance” if they develop symptoms.</b></li> <li>• If a worker develops symptoms of continuous cough or fever <b>during</b> a long shift including sharing a vehicle cabin with co-workers, <b>the symptomatic worker should self-isolate for seven days from onset of symptoms if living alone. If living with others, other members of the household should stay at home for 14 days.</b> Asymptomatic co-workers should remain vigilant but can continue to work; they are not required to self-isolate. They <b>should monitor for symptoms and follow the “Stay at Home Guidance” if they develop symptoms.</b></li> </ul> <p>Occupational health service should assist with risk assessments and guidance interpretation.</p> |
| <p><b>What about exposure to COVID-19 at work?</b></p>  | <p>Workers who have an exposure to COVID-19 in work <b>do not need to self-isolate unless symptomatic, but should monitor for symptoms and follow the Stay at Home Guidance if they develop symptoms.</b></p>  |

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| <p><b>When can a worker leave self-isolation?</b></p>          | <p>Ending isolation has been clarified as follows.</p> <p>If living with others, then all household members who remain well may end household-isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for coronavirus; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.</p> <p><b>After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine.</b> If any other family members become unwell during the 14-day household-isolation period, they should follow the same advice - that is, after 7 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they can also return to their normal routine.</p> <p>Should a household member develop coronavirus symptoms late in the 14-day household-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) <b>the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days.</b> The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on, and it is not necessary to restart 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.</p> <p>At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation.</p> <p>If any ill person in the household has not had any signs of improvement and have not already sought medical advice, they should contact <a href="#">NHS 111 online</a>. If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Stay_at_home_guidance_diagram.pdf</p> </div> |
| <p><b>What is the general advice on social distancing?</b></p> | <p><b>The <a href="#">guidance on social distancing</a> is for everyone.</b></p> <p>Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms COVID-19. These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough</li> <li>• Avoid non-essential use of public transport</li> <li>• Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to <a href="#">employer guidance</a> for more information</li> <li>• Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues are currently shut as infection spreads easily in closed spaces where people gather together</li> <li>• Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media</li> <li>• Use telephone/online services to contact your GP or other essential services.</li> </ul>  |

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| <p><b>What about workers who are over 70, or under 70 with an underlying health condition, or pregnant?</b></p> | <p>We are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.</p> <p>Workers who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)</li> <li>• under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as <a href="#">asthma</a>, <a href="#">chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)</a>, emphysema or <a href="#">bronchitis</a></li> <li>○ chronic heart disease, such as <a href="#">heart failure</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">chronic kidney disease</a></li> <li>○ chronic liver disease, such as <a href="#">hepatitis</a></li> <li>○ chronic neurological conditions, such as <a href="#">Parkinson’s disease</a>, <a href="#">motor neurone disease</a>, <a href="#">multiple sclerosis (MS)</a>, a learning disability or cerebral palsy</li> <li>○ <a href="#">diabetes</a></li> <li>○ problems with your spleen – for example, <a href="#">sickle cell</a> disease or if you have had your spleen removed</li> <li>○ a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as <a href="#">HIV and AIDS</a>, or medicines such as <a href="#">steroid tablets</a> or <a href="#">chemotherapy</a></li> <li>○ being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• are pregnant</li> </ul> <p>are strongly advised to follow the social distancing measures as much as possible and to significantly limit face-to-face interaction with friends and family.</p>                          |
| <p><b>What is the general advice around ‘shielding’ for extremely vulnerable people?</b></p>                    | <p>Some people will be at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and will be contacted directly by the NHS and issued with further advice around shielding. <b>Guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable</b> is here (along with an easy-read guide):</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19?utm_source=3873f3e5-929b-476c-902e-1d9e40d98101&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19?utm_source=3873f3e5-929b-476c-902e-1d9e40d98101&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate</a></p> <p>People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Solid organ transplant recipients.</li> <li>2. People receiving treatment for specific cancers.</li> <li>3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.</li> <li>4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).</li> <li>5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.</li> <li>6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.</li> </ol> <p>Very vulnerable people are strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact for a period of at least 12 weeks from the day they receive their letter.</p> |

**What if I live with someone who is very vulnerable?**

If you are asymptomatic, you should continue to work.

While the rest of your household is not required to adopt protective shielding measures for themselves, we would expect them to do what they can to support someone who is very vulnerable in shielding and to stringently follow [guidance on social distancing](#).

- Minimise as much as possible the time other family members spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.
- Aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from people you live with and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If you can, you should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Make sure you use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.
- If you do share a toilet and bathroom with others, it is important that they are cleaned after use every time (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Another tip is to consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with the vulnerable person using the facilities first.
- If you share a kitchen with others, avoid using it while they are present. If possible the vulnerable person should take meals back to their room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly.
- We understand that it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face, and clean frequently touched surfaces.

If the rest of the household stringently follows advice on social distancing and minimises the risk of spreading the virus within the home by following the advice above, there is no need for them to also shield alongside any very vulnerable household members.