

United Kingdom Homecare Association

The professional association for homecare providers



The COVID-19 alert level [has been raised](#) from 3 to 4, meaning transmission is '[high or rising exponentially](#)'. Today and yesterday the Government has announced a series of new nation-wide restrictions in England in order to control case numbers.

Yesterday, the [Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced](#):

- the introduction of a £500 Isolation Support Payment for people on low incomes who can't work because they have tested positive or been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. We understand this amount is one-off rather than per week. This will be available to people who are in receipt of benefits. The system for claims will be established by Local Authorities and these are expected to be in place by 12 October, claims can be backdated to 28 September ([further information here](#)).
- the introduction of a legal duty to self-isolate if you have tested positive or been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, backed up by fines ranging from £1,000-£10,000.
- regular checks on those who are self-isolating.
- a crack down on businesses who are encouraging staff not to follow self-isolation advice, or not offering COVID-secure workplaces. Businesses who do not follow guidance could be fined.

The government has also issued a document on the [prioritisation of testing available here](#). It is disappointing that this document makes no reference to the prioritisation of testing for homecare workers. We believe that this is largely based on government's assumption that the prevalence rate of coronavirus transmission amongst our workforce is around the same level as the general population. UKHCA continues to urge government to reconsider its testing strategy.

At lunchtime today, the Prime Minister announced the following additional measures [in a speech to parliament](#).

As part of this speech, the Prime Minister confirmed that people who had previously been shielding do not need to start shielding again, unless doing so as part of a local lockdown.

The following measures are anticipated to remain in place for six months:

- Staff should work from home where they can do so. (Of course, this will be more relevant to your office staff than your care workers).

- From Thursday 24 September, pubs, bars and restaurants will be table service only, except for take-aways. All hospitality venues are to close by 10pm.
- Users of taxis, staff in retail, and staff and customers in indoor hospitality (except when seated to eat or drink) must wear face coverings.
- Covid-secure guidelines will become legal obligations for businesses.
- From Monday 28 September there will be a maximum of 15 attendees at weddings, though still up to 30 for funerals.
- All adult indoor team sports must abide by the 'rule of 6'.
- The plans to reopen conferences, exhibitions and large sporting events will be delayed further.
- Fines for initial offences in relation to not wearing face coverings or in relation to meeting in groups of more than six ([where this is not permitted](#)) will increase to £200.

There have also been a number of changes which are specific to local regions. We would encourage members to keep a close eye on developments in relation to local lockdowns. [You can find information on local lockdowns in England via this link.](#) It is also important to keep an eye on developments from your local authority.