

Public reminded to stay safe as COVID-19 England restrictions lift

With the publication of the [Living with COVID plan](#), the government has ended legal restrictions in England and is instead asking the public to practice specific safe and responsible behaviours as the primary means of stopping the spread of the virus.

From today, the government will remove the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test and also end routine contact tracing. Close contacts who are fully vaccinated will no longer have to test daily for 7 days, while unvaccinated close contacts will not be required to self-isolate.

However, staying at home and avoiding contact with others is still the most effective way to avoid passing on COVID-19 if you are infected. The government has set out full, updated [advice on what to do if you test positive for COVID-19](#).

With the virus still circulating in our communities, continuing to follow good public health behaviours is still vitally important. [UKHSA's Safe Behaviours Blog](#) and [updated government guidance](#) provides essential advice on how to reduce your risk of catching and spreading the virus.

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive at the UK Health Security Agency, said:

While everyone will welcome the progress we have made with the vaccination programme, it's important to remember that COVID-19 is still with us and presents a danger to many.

Vaccines will remain our first line of defence against COVID-19 and it is vital that everyone eligible takes up the offer of their latest jab. Maintaining good hand hygiene, ventilating rooms well, and wearing a mask in enclosed spaces are simple steps that will also help minimise risk.

Free testing will remain on offer until the end of March and you should still book a PCR test if you have symptoms or take a rapid at-home test if you plan to visit someone vulnerable until then. If you test positive you should still stay at home and continue to keep away from others, just like you would if you had another infectious illness like norovirus or flu.

While the focus on prevention moves to individuals and communities, UKHSA will continue to monitor COVID-19 and its impact and advise policymakers and the public.

It will continue to be a global leader in genomic sequencing, enabling

potential new variants to be detected. It will also maintain a key national surveillance programme through the ONS COVID-19 Infection Survey (CIS) and assess COVID-19 in healthcare and care home settings through the SARS-CoV-2 Immunity & Reinfection Evaluation (SIREN) and Vivaldi studies, respectively.

The Living with COVID plan sets out how England will move into a new phase of managing the virus. The devolved administrations will each set out how they will manage this transition in due course.