

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR - COVID-19, NO 55,

13 DECEMBER 2021

I hope that this latest briefing finds you and your family well, and looking forward to the festive period

When I wrote to you last week, I had hoped that I wouldn't have a need to send you another briefing prior to the Christmas break, especially when I'm having to share less than positive news. However, in light of the quickly developing situation with regards to the COVID-19 Omicron variant and the First Minister's briefing about this on Friday 10 December 2021, I feel I must again write to everyone to provide important information.

This briefing details an important change to the current COVID-19 self-isolation rules, the Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland advice on work Christmas parties and a reminder of how we can keep ourselves and others safe including by working from home, for those of us who can do this.

Change to COVID-19 Self-Isolation Rules

The First Minister announced in her briefing on 10 December that early action was necessary given that cases of the Omicron variant were now rising exponentially within Scotland. As part of this, she announced that with effect from 11 December, the rules around self-isolation were changing for **household contacts**.

Household contacts of any confirmed COVID-19 case **should now isolate for 10 days regardless of their vaccination status** and even if they initially get a negative PCR test result.

Non-household contacts should continue to isolate pending a PCR test result. If that test result is negative the non-household contact can leave isolation at that point as long as they are double vaccinated and the individual does not have, or develops, symptoms.

The NHS self-help guide can be found [here](#).

There has **been no change to current guidance for those with symptoms or for those who test positive**.

Please continue to follow the NHS guidance which can be found [here](#)

I would remind you that any employee who is require to self-isolate as a result of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact is entitled to receive their normal contractual pay for this period.

Work Christmas Parties

The second element covered by the First Minister in her briefing was advice around work Christmas parties. Undoubtedly, most of us will have been looking forward to some form of Christmas celebrations with colleagues given the challenging last 22 months we have all had at work. However,

I believe I have a duty to share and reiterate the advice of the First Minister and Public Health Scotland to employees on this and ask employees to think about **deferring work Christmas parties** given that Omicron is known to be much more transmittable and the increased risk that this presents. Please note this is not something that we can require people to do. All we ask is for you to consider the First Minister's advice.

In addition, the First Minister also encouraged us all to think a bit more carefully about unnecessary contacts, especially in crowded places just now – and to ensure that we are doing Lateral Flow Tests if we do need to go anywhere. Again, I would re-iterate this advice and encourage you to follow it, to reduce the risks to you, your family and your colleagues.

Keeping Yourself and Others Safe

COSLA has developed and shared a helpful 'COVID Reminder' leaflet which I have enclosed along with this briefing to remind us all of what we can do to keep ourselves and others safe. Please take some time to read this leaflet which our 3 recognised Trade Unions have endorsed.

Homeworking

Further to the above, for those employees who can work from home, once again I would ask that you do so as advised by the Scottish Government – since by doing this you are not only helping to keep yourself safe but others too.

Thank You

Finally, once again thank you so much for all you are doing to protect yourself, your families and your colleagues during these difficult times.

Should you have any questions about any of the topics covered in this briefing please speak to your line manager.

Please continue to refer to Tayside Contracts' website www.tayside-contracts.co.uk on a regular basis.

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Keith McNamara, Managing Director, 13 December 2021