

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR - COVID-19, NO 61, 17 MARCH 2022

I hope that this latest briefing finds you and your family well.

This briefing contains important information following the publication of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 Strategic Framework and the First Minister's announcement on 15 March 2022 regarding the easing of certain COVID restrictions from 21 March 2022.

Although the recently announced easing of restrictions will entail the lifting of many of the legally imposed COVID-19 restrictions and replacing these with practical measures based on personal responsibility, good practice and informed judgement, as a responsible employer, Tayside Contracts will continue to adopt measures to mitigate risk and protect employees from the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace.

This communication outlines what this means for Tayside Contracts' employees.

Good Hand Hygiene, Ventilation and Surface Cleaning – No Change

First and foremost, it is evident that good personal hand hygiene, surface cleaning, appropriate ventilation and reducing social contacts remain key in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Employees are therefore encouraged to continue to ensure regular hand washing/sanitisation remains part of your routine when entering and exiting workplaces and during the course of your duties. You are also encouraged to maximise ventilation in workplaces by opening windows and doors where this is possible and appropriate. The existing increased cleaning schedule within all Tayside Contracts' office/depot locations will continue.

Employees are also asked to carry these precautions and good practice behaviours into your activities away from work and to make informed judgements in order to protect both yourselves and others.

Risk Assessments and Control Measures - Revised

All Tayside Contracts' COVID-19 risk assessments are published on our website [here](#).

It is important to re-iterate that although the Scottish Government is easing certain restrictions with effect from 21 March 2022, our COVID-19 risk assessments and control measures remain in place to ensure the health and safety of our employees which is paramount. We have however reviewed these risk assessments to take account of current Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland guidance and revised these where appropriate. The main changes to our control measures are outlined in this briefing.

Please take some time to review the risk assessments relevant to your role and ensure that you continue to follow the appropriate control measures to mitigate the risk of the virus.

Physical Distancing – Reduced from 2m to 1m

Whilst the Scottish Government has decided to remove the legal requirement for physical distancing and instead is encouraging distancing between individuals where possible, Tayside Contracts has decided against removing this altogether and will instead ask employees to continue to maintain physical distancing in all of our buildings and work activities. The distance however has been reduced from 2 metres to 1 metre.

If you feel that you may benefit from the Distance Aware Scheme recently launched by the Scottish Government, where you can opt to wear a badge or lanyard to show others you would like them to give you extra space and take extra care around you, further information can be found below.

One-way Systems in Tayside Contracts' Office/Depot Locations – Removed

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tayside Contracts introduced one-way systems in all of our office/depot locations to mitigate the risk of transmission of the virus. In keeping with the emphasis now on personal responsibility and informed judgement, we will be removing all one-way systems and instead are asking employees to adjust their behaviours whilst traversing through buildings by checking their route is clear, staying alert to others, by stepping aside to allow others to pass through narrow corridors where appropriate and by ensuring 1 metre distancing at all times.

Use of Face Coverings – No Change

There is no change to the current guidance on the use of face coverings. Tayside Contracts continues to require employees, other than those who are exempt, to wear a face covering within the workplace, in shared vehicles or where 1m physical distancing cannot be maintained. A reminder of the guidance on appropriate face coverings can be found on our website [here](#).

Regular Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing – No Change

The Scottish Government continues to encourage everyone in Scotland to take an LFD test twice a week and in particular, before visiting a crowded place or mixing with someone who is clinically vulnerable.

You can access LFD testing kits by collecting these from a COVID-19 testing site, from your nearest participating pharmacy or by ordering them online to be delivered to your home address. Please follow [this link](#) to find further information on how to access LFD tests.

School/ELC based employees are also encouraged to take twice-weekly LFD tests and can collect tests from their base school/ELC setting.

All individuals should report the results of their LFD tests online [here](#).

Self-Isolation Rules – No Change

There is no change to the existing self-isolation rules. The initial advice when someone tests positive is still to self-isolate for ten days but you can end isolation after seven days as long as you, firstly, have no fever and, secondly, you record two negative LFD tests, one no earlier than day six after testing positive and another at least 24 hours after that.

In relation to close contacts of positive cases – and this includes household contacts - who are either under the age of 18 years, four months, or who are older than that and fully vaccinated*, there is no requirement to self-isolate. Instead you are required to take a LFD test every day for seven days. If one of these tests is positive, self-isolation will then be required.

*By fully vaccinated, it is meant that you have received the first, second and booster (or third) doses.

Anyone identified as a close contact who is over 18 years and four months and not fully vaccinated must self-isolate for ten days and take a PCR test.

Hybrid/Home Working – No Change

The Scottish Government advises that working from home remains an important mitigation in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and continues to strongly encourage employers to consider and adopt hybrid working models. Tayside Contracts is currently exploring hybrid working further and, in the meantime, continues to encourage employees to work from home when they can and where this is appropriate. This in turn allows for physical distancing and ventilation requirements to be adhered to for those office-based employees who cannot work from home.

Distance Aware Scheme – No Change

The purpose of the Scottish Government’s Distance Aware Scheme is to prompt people to take extra care around those who would appreciate it, including keeping their distance. You may believe that as restrictions are ease further, that this is something that might help you feel more confident and comfortable in public spaces or at work. You can wear a badge or lanyard with the Distance Aware logo to show others you would like them to give you extra space and take extra care around you.

The Distance Aware symbol looks like this:



You can get a Distance Aware badge or lanyard in 3 ways:

- ✓ collect a free badge or lanyard from all community and mobile libraries across Scotland
- ✓ collect a free badge from most Asda stores
- ✓ order a badge or lanyard from some charities free or for a small charge via www.gov.scot/distanceaware

Distance Aware badges are not specifically for any group such as those on the Highest Risk List or those with a disability – anyone can opt to wear one. The scheme is completely voluntary – it is up to you whether you would like to wear the Distance Aware symbol. The Distance Aware scheme complements the published Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance.

Summary of Tayside Contracts' Position Effective from 21 March 2022:

- All employees to maintain 1 metre physical distancing in in all of our buildings/work activities.
- One-way systems in Tayside Contracts office/depot Locations will no longer be required.
- All employees, other than those who are exempt, to wear a face covering within the workplace, in shared vehicles or where 1 metre physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- All employees are encouraged to undertake an LFD test twice weekly and to report the results.
- All employees are encouraged to continue to follow self-isolation and testing rules following a positive test result/close contact with a positive case
- Office based employees are encouraged to continue to work from home where appropriate.
- Employees who feel that they would benefit from the Distance Aware Scheme to be encouraged to participate in this.

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.

If you have not already done so and wish to provide your email address to us in order to benefit from electronic access to communications such as these, please forward your email address to Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk. We will not forward your email address onto any third parties or use it for any other purpose other than to communicate with you.

Thank you so much for all you are doing to protect and support yourself, your families, and your communities during these difficult times.

Keith McNamara, Managing Director, 17 March 2022