



All remaining Covid restrictions in England to be lifted in coming weeks

This week the UK government announced that the majority of remaining Covid restrictions will be lifted in England over the coming weeks.

This affects self-isolation, sick pay, access to free testing, workplace health and safety, and more. These are big changes that move England back to the pre-covid status quo (for the most part) so employers should take heed and update policies accordingly, in particular policies dealing with workplace attendance and self-isolation.

What are the headline points for employers?

24 February 2022: Self-isolation ends.

- All mandatory self-isolation rules in England have been lifted, regardless of vaccination status. This has been replaced by non-binding advice to stay at home for up to 10 days if you have symptoms of Covid or have tested positive.
- Employees are no longer required to tell their employer if they need to self-isolate.

17 March 2022: The Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme will end, with claims required by 24 March 2022.

24 March 2022: All Covid-related sick pay rules will end.

- Entitlement to statutory sick pay ("SSP") from day 1 of illness will end. The SSP rules will revert to the pre-Covid rules with employees entitled to SSP only from day 4 of incapacity.
- Those self-isolating will no longer be deemed incapable of work and therefore automatically eligible for SSP. SSP eligibility will be subject to normal rules that apply to non-Covid illness.

1 April 2022: End of free testing and changes to employer guidance.

- Access to free testing (PCR and lateral flow) will end for most.
- The use of COVID passports will no longer be recommended other than for international travel (note, COVID passports are not currently mandatory).
- Advice on self-isolation will be reviewed.
- Employers will no longer have a health and safety obligation to deal specifically with COVID-related risks in their workplace risk assessments, but will remain bound by their general health and safety duties to employees (which in most circumstances will require COVID risks to be considered)
- New public health guidance for employers will be introduced, replacing the current 'Working Safely' [guidance](#).

Rules on international travel remain unchanged from the new rules announced last month, with no restrictions for the unvaccinated. See government travel guidance [here](#) for more.

These changes apply only to England and different rules apply in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For instance, in Scotland most Covid restrictions on businesses will end on 21 March 2022. Employers should consult government guidance in each country.

If you would like to discuss how these changes affect your business, please reach out to your usual GQ|Littler contact or email [\[email protected\]](#).