

Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council Public Health COVID-19 Plan B Guidance for Event Organisers

DECEMBER 2021 – PLAN B GUIDANCE

On Wednesday 8 December 2021 the Government announced new COVID rules for England in response to concern over the Omicron variant.

All Event Organisers are expected to be cognisant of the following and build this into event planning for events taking place from Friday 10 December 2021.

Face coverings

From Friday 10 December 2021 face coverings will become a legal requirement in all indoor public settings including attractions and recreation. Hospitality venues are exempt as well as specific activities where it is not possible to wear a face covering such as singing classes and gyms.

Public Health encourage event organisers to recommend visitors to wear face coverings in enclosed and crowded spaces.

Mandatory COVID-status Certification

From Wednesday 15 December 2021 mandatory COVID certification is required to enter certain settings. To enter these settings in England visitors must have proof that they:

- Are **vaccinated** with two doses of an approved vaccine (or one single dose Janssen vaccine); or
- Have completed a **negative PCR or rapid Lateral Flow Test (LFT)** within the last 48 hours*; or
- Are **exempt from vaccination** or vaccination and testing on the basis of a medical exemption or clinical trial participation.

** LFTs can be recorded on the [Gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk), this will generate a text/ email which can be used to show a negative result. Visitors should take tests as late as possible before attending the event, ideally within 12 hours as this will strengthen the protection testing provides.*

Venues/ events are required to check the COVID-19 status of visitors, if they do not meet the requirements then the responsible person is legally required to deny entry. The following settings must implement mandatory COVID status certification for entry:

- Nightclubs, dance halls and discotheques.
- **indoor** events with **500 or more attendees**, where those attendees are **likely to stand or move around** for all or part of the event (such as music venues with standing audiences, or large receptions).
- **outdoor** events with **4,000 or more** attendees, where those attendees are **likely to stand or move around** for all or part of the event (such as outdoor festivals).
- **any events with 10,000 or more** attendees, whether indoor or outdoor (such as large sports and music events).

Please see guidance [here](#) to assess whether your event is indoors or outdoors.

Event organisers, venues and businesses should consider where a **queue may interact with the public and engage with the local authority, owner or operator of the public space** in order to manage queuing arrangements safely and effectively.

In these circumstances, **if it is not practical to check the NHS COVID Pass of all attendees, you must carry out an assessment of risk** and determine the percentage of checks that can safely be carried out. The responsible person **must submit this assessment of risk to apply to the relevant local District or Borough authority** at least 10 working days in advance of the event.

The local authority will either approve the measure, ask for alterations or reject the proposal thereby requiring the venue to conduct 100% checks. If the local authority replies less than 5 working days before your event then the spot check application will be treated as approved.

For events held between the 15 December and 31 December, event operators that meet the criteria and want to apply spot checks must submit an assessment of risk to their local authority. If the criteria are met and the submission made reasonable requests, spot checks can be used without local authority assessment.

Workforce requirements

If your staff are adults working or providing services, particularly if they're coming into contact with customers, in venues or events which require evidence of COVID-19 status for visitors, they should be either:

- Fully vaccinated with 2 doses of an approved vaccine (or one of the single-dose Janssen vaccine) – we will keep this under review as boosters are rolled out; or
- Exempt from vaccination (for medical reasons or because you participated in a COVID-19 vaccine trial); or
- Undertaking regular, lateral flow testing; or
- An exempt person (conducting their official duties).

For events, the responsible person is the event organiser, they are strongly advised to take reasonable measures to ensure all adults working in roles that come into contact with members of the public meet the COVID-19 status requirements. If you work at a venue or event that requires evidence of your COVID-19 status for visitors but you're working in a role that does not come into contact with customers, you do not need to show evidence of vaccination or testing. For more details on who is responsible please click [here](#).

Exempt Activities

There are some events where you will **not** need to prove your COVID-19 status in order to attend. The full list is available [here](#) but those related to events include:

- Outdoor events in public spaces where these are un-ticketed and not charged for (such as markets, street parties, protests and carnivals).
- Sporting activities, regardless of the number of participants or whether the activity is indoors or outdoors.
- Events in private dwellings (including private gardens) where people do not have to pay or hold a ticket to enter.

Venues and events that do not have to request proof of vaccination can still **opt to use the NHS COVID Pass**, or other proofs, as a condition of entry voluntarily to reduce the risk of transmission at venues or events.

Public Health encourage event organisers to consider using the NHS COVID Pass if you operate a venue or event where individuals are likely to stand or move around or where individuals are in close contact, even if you are not legally obliged to.

Additional information for event organisers

For those events that are not mandated by law to implement COVID-19 mitigation measures, Public Health recommend that you consider the below:

- As an employer, complete a risk assessment to include Covid-19 as a workplace hazard, this should identify all relevant risks (including those identified via the Events Research Programme). The risk assessment should also include protocols for managing suspected or confirmed cases amongst attendees and whether your workers need personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Take steps to reduce the risk of transmission at the event, including putting in place [cleaning](#) and [hygiene](#) protocols, and ensuring your venue has adequate [ventilation](#).
- Recommend that customers and visitors wear face coverings, for example through signage, if your facility or event is likely to include enclosed and crowded spaces. Support your staff if they wish to continue to wear a facemask in the workplace.
- Display an NHS QR code so that visitors can check in using the NHS COVID-19 app.
- Consider the use of the NHS COVID Pass in high risk settings to reduce the risk of infection. This includes event attendees providing a negative PCR or LFT within 48 hours of entry to the venue, proof of being fully vaccinated or medical exemption. If you use the NHS COVID Pass you should ensure that you comply with all relevant legal obligations and guidance, including on equalities. You can find more information in the [NHS COVID Pass guidance](#).
- Ask employees to get tested regularly, local testing information is available for [Hampshire](#) and [Isle of Wight](#).
- Use of crowd management including and use of stewards, zoning and wristbands to maintain infection control.
- Implement a communications plan to ensure relevant information on COVID-19 measures is communicated to attendees before and during the event.

It is important to recognise that we continue to operate within a global pandemic and, as the event organiser, you are responsible for the safety of staff and visitors at your event under the Health & Safety at Work Act.

Public Health strongly recommend that organisers encourage pre-event testing for staff, volunteers and attendees. Local experience with large events has demonstrated the positive impact the above measures can have on infection control. Information on asymptomatic home testing and supervised testing can be found on the Council's websites: [Hampshire](#) and [Isle of Wight](#). Rapid LFTs can be ordered online via the [Gov.uk website](#).

Local authorities **can still prohibit or restrict venues or events** using the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(England\) \(No. 3\) Regulations 2020](#), and will continue to apply until [the end of 24th March 2022](#). Local authority decisions on events will be made on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to the [guidance issued by the government](#) and local circumstances in order to understand whether there is a significant threat to public health.

Recommendations for event organisers in relation to Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs)

- To support the review of events, documentation should be submitted to the Safety Advisory Group as early as possible to allow sufficient time to review these and provide comment.
- When reviewing these documents, SAG Chairs will take Public Health advice in considering the type of event, the COVID-19 mitigations outlined in the submitted event documentation and what is happening in the local area at the time (for example the number of COVID cases locally (community prevalence), variants of concern and hospital capacity).
- Events that have already submitted an application and supporting documents are advised to review these to make sure that they adhere to the new guidance.
- New event applications that do not detail how they align with the relevant government guidance will be returned for further information.
- The risk remains that additional restrictions may be implemented in the future and that any events planned are subject to postponement / cancellation even after permission has been granted.

Links to key guidance:

- [Using your NHS COVID Pass for venues and settings in England](#)
- [Carrying out mandatory COVID-19 status checks at your venue or event](#)
- [Prove your coronavirus \(COVID-19\) status to work at venues or events operating COVID-19 status checks](#)
- [COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021](#)
- ['Working Safely during Covid-19' guidance](#)
- [Events Research Programme](#)

Any queries on the guidance should be directed to the Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council Public Health Team in the first instance via covid.enquiries@hants.gov.uk.