

SAIF's Coronavirus (Covid-19) update 29.11.21



England

New measures to tackle Omicron variant

Face coverings

Following the emergence of new Covid-19 variant Omicron, the UK Government has introduced a series of preventative measures, including the wearing of face coverings in shops and public transport, which come into force at 4am on Tuesday 30th November 2021. SAIF has received confirmation from the Cabinet Office that these rules, which are initially in place for three weeks, **do not** apply to funerals or funeral homes.

However, while it is a funeral business owner's responsibility to ensure health and safety, SAIF recommends that member firms adopt Covid secure measures, including hand sanitiser, social distancing, wearing face coverings upon entry to a building and in corridors, and ventilated rooms where clients visit.

PCR tests for travellers

All travellers to the UK from Tuesday 30th November will be required to take a PCR test on or before day two after their arrival and isolate until they receive a negative result. Funeral directors should factor in this when arranging funerals where overseas mourners are expected.

Self-isolation for Omicron contacts

Under the new rules, anyone who has had contact with an Omicron positive case will have to self-isolate for 10 days regardless of their vaccination status.

Details of the Government's announcement on Saturday 27th November can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Lateral flow tests before funerals

Updated *Guidance for funerals and commemorative events during the coronavirus pandemic* includes a requirement for mourners to take a lateral flow test before attending a service even if they don't have symptoms. Details can be found [here](#). SAIF has been advised by the Department of Health & Social Care that the onus is not on funeral directors to police this guidance, however, SAIF members are encouraged to make clients aware before the service takes place.

Using an NHS Covid-19 Pass to access care homes and other settings

SAIF has received reports that some members have been required to produce an NHS Covid Pass to access care homes to carry out removals. The pass is sometimes referred to as a travel pass and details of how to apply can be found [here](#). You can get an NHS COVID Pass digitally through the NHS App, online via NHS.UK, or as a letter sent to you in the post. SAIF recommends that funeral directors ensure staff who carry out removals in settings such as care homes apply for a travel pass, as more venues may require such documentation as rules may tighten further over the winter. SAIF has asked the Cabinet Office for clarity on what will happen after 24th December 2021, when self-certified Covid Passes will be replaced by a new system overseen by the Department of Health & Social Care.

Wales (awaiting an update to correct this section)

Rules align on Covid-19 measures

Following Prime Minister Boris Johnson's announcement on Saturday 27th November, the Welsh and UK Governments have aligned rules on face coverings and [travel](#), meaning:

- All international arrivals must take a day two PCR test and self-isolate until they receive a negative result
- All contacts of suspected Omicron cases must self-isolate, regardless of their vaccination status. They will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace

- Face coverings will be made compulsory in shops and on public transport from next week. All hospitality settings will be exempt.

Scotland

New travel rules applied

Along with other UK nations, the Scottish Government has applied new rules on travel in which people must take a PCR test on or before day two and self-isolate until they receive a negative result. People who are fully vaccinated must take the following three steps:

1. Be able to provide proof of vaccination
2. Book a Covid-19 day two test
3. Complete a passenger locator form on gov.uk

The Scottish Government has also reminded people to continue wearing face coverings in indoor settings, in line with existing rules.

Northern Ireland

Travel measures applied

Health Minister Robin Swann announced earlier today that Northern Ireland travel rules will now align with the remainder of the UK, meaning that people entering the province from overseas would need to take a PCR test on or by day two of their arrival and self-isolate for 10 days or until they receive a negative result. Face coverings remain a requirement in indoor settings. For full details of current restrictions click [here](#).

