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To: Social Care Sector  
Copied to:  
Chief Officers HSCPs, Executive Nurse Leads,  
Chief Social Work Officers,  
Chief Executives NHS Boards and Local Authorities  
Directors of Public Health

10 December 2021

Dear Colleagues

## WINTER RESPONSE – SELF- ISOLATION FOR SOCIAL CARE STAFF

Following the Workforce Senior Leadership Group today, colleagues sought urgent clarification on self-isolation arrangements for social care staff. Given the imminent application of new arrangements, I am writing to you this evening to make sure you have the information you need.

As you will be aware the Omicron variant of COVID-19 is increasing in prevalence and it is extremely likely there will be many more cases confirmed in the coming days. In light of this emerging threat the First Minister this afternoon outlined enhanced measures with regard to self-isolation for the general public which will come into effect tomorrow (11<sup>th</sup> December) which states

*“all household contacts of any confirmed coronavirus (COVID 19) cases must isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status - even if they initially get a negative PCR test”*

An evidence paper on omicron was published to explain the background to the changes announced. [omicron-scotland-evidence-paper.pdf](#)

### Self-isolation for Social Care Staff

Within social care a high number of staff isolating would put additional pressure on already fragile services, therefore, we would like to emphasise that **current guidance** for social care (and healthcare staff) should still be applied with one important addition [DL\(2021\)24 - Update on isolation exemptions for Health and Social Care staff \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

This existing isolation policy for staff who are household or passing contacts of covid-19 positive cases, exempts them from the requirement to self-isolate for 10 days when they:

- are double-vaccinated;
- are asymptomatic and remain asymptomatic,
- undertake PCR test (which returns a negative test result before returning to work), and;
- undertake daily LFD testing for the remainder of the 10 day period.

An important addition to this is that staff must be

- **double vaccinated and had their booster**



