

## Information on Contact Tracing

### What is contact tracing?

This is the process of working out who has been exposed to an infected person with COVID-19. Anyone who has been exposed is at risk of developing and spreading COVID-19.

### Why is contact tracing carried out?

By identifying workplace and community contacts and asking them to isolate for 14 days, this can stop the virus being spread to others. If the contacts follow this advice, transmission can be interrupted.

### How are contacts identified?

Any employee who has tested positive and/or has either a high temperature, a new continuous cough or loss of taste or smell will be advised to **self-isolate for ten days**. The employee who has a positive COVID-19 test will be contacted by Occupational Health and asked if they have been in work in the two days before onset of symptoms or date of test (if asymptomatic). All close contacts from 48 hours before onset of symptoms/test until self-isolation commences should be identified.

Close contacts of a COVID-19 positive case are those who have had a breach in their PPE, or who have not been wearing appropriate PPE, when:

- being face to face with someone such as talking to another staff member;
- providing personal care;
- being less than 1m away for one minute or more;
- being less than 2m away for more than 15 minutes;
- carrying out aerosol-generating procedures on a positive patient/client;

Community contact tracing will be carried out by the PHA test and trace service.

### How will contacts be informed?

A member of the Occupational Health Service Contact Tracing team will take a detailed history from the individual including when they last worked and whom they were in contact with.

The person's consent will be sought to contact their line manager. Occupational Health will confirm they have been advised to self-isolate and seek further information regarding **close work contacts** and the need for any other member of staff to **self-isolate for 14 days**.

## What is a COVID-19 outbreak?

### Healthcare-associated COVID-19 (for example an inpatient setting)

Two or more test-confirmed or clinically suspected cases of COVID-19 among individuals (for example patients, health care workers, other hospital staff and regular visitors, for example volunteers and chaplains) associated with a specific setting (for example bay, ward or shared space), where at least one case (if a patient) has been identified as having illness onset after 8 days of admission to hospital.

### Non-residential settings (for example a workplace, a school, a restaurant)

Two or more test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with a specific non-residential setting with illness onset dates within 14 days, and one of:

- identified direct exposure between at least 2 of the test-confirmed cases in that setting (for example under one meter face to face, or spending more than 15 minutes within 2 meters) during the infectious period of one of the cases;
- when there is no sustained local community transmission - absence of an alternative source of infection outside the setting for the initially identified cases;

## End of outbreak

No test-confirmed cases with illness onset dates in the last 28 days in that setting.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/epidemiological-definitions-of-outbreaks-and-clusters-in-particular-settings>)

## When is it appropriate to call an Outbreak meeting?

- **Where staff are involved (but no patients involved)**  
When two or more test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 amongst staff are identified in a work setting, it is important to consider potential links (e.g. have they worked with each other in the previous 14 days?, do they use common shared spaces? etc.) This should be discussed with Occupational Health in the first instance who will advise whether a meeting is required to discuss further. If advised that a meeting is necessary, attendees should include an Occupational Health professional, Infection Prevention Control and relevant managers. It is important staff receive information about the outbreak at the earliest opportunity and reassurance is provided about the appropriate measures to be taken.
- **Where patients are involved**  
When two or more test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 are identified (either all patients, or a mix of patients and staff), the Infection Prevention & Control team should be informed. If a meeting is required, this should be organised by the Service Group. Attendees should include Department managers, Infection Prevention and Control and Occupational Health (if staff involved).

- **How do I organise for staff to be tested?**

If a decision is made for staff to be tested, a list should be compiled and include names, contact details and health & care numbers of staff. This list should then be emailed to the COVID-19 Test team who will organise testing: **MOTtestingCentreTeam@belfasttrust.hscni.net**