

What happens in England if Guests in Self-Catering get Covid, get pinged, get told to self-isolate?

- Key points
- What to do if guests test positive for Covid whilst in self-catered accommodation
- If guests cannot come to stay because they are self-isolating, do they get a refund?

Key Points

When do you have to self-isolate under the current rules?

- You have any symptoms of Covid-19 (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- You have tested positive for Covid-19
- Someone in your household bubble has symptoms or tested positive
- Someone in your childcare or support bubble has symptoms and you've been in close contact with them since their symptoms started, or during the 48 hours before they started
- Someone in your childcare or support bubble tested positive and you've been in close contact with them since they had the test, or in the 48 hours before their test
- You've been told you've been in contact with someone who tested positive by NHS Test and Trace

If you have Covid symptoms you and other members of your household must self-isolate for a period of 10 days from the day you developed the symptoms.

If you have symptoms but then undertake a PCR test and the result is negative, you and other household members are no longer required to self-isolate.

If you have symptoms and your PCR test is positive, you and other household members need to continue to self-isolate for 10 days. The self-isolation period includes the day your symptoms started and the next 10 days.

If you do not have symptoms and your PCR test is positive, you and other household members need to self-isolate for 10 days. The self-isolation period includes the day that you took the test and the next 10 days.

If you have been texted, emailed or called by NHS Test and Trace and told to isolate due to coming into close contact with someone who has the virus, you must self-isolate for 10 days from that last day that you were in close contact with the person that tested positive. If you undertake a PCR test after being told to self-isolate by Test and Trace and the result is negative, you must still continue to self-isolate for the 10-day period.

If you have been “pinged” by the NHS Covid-19 app and it has told you to self-isolate, you are strongly advised to do so. The app will provide you with a countdown timer telling you when you can leave self-isolation based on the date that you were in close contact with the person that tested positive

As It Applies To Guests

If a guest tests positive for Covid then they must isolate by law, fine for not doing so starts at £1000.

If a guest is told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace via text, email or phone call, then they have to self-isolate by law. The fine for not doing so starts at £1000.

However, if a guest gets ‘pinged’ by the Test and Trace app, then they are strongly recommended to self-isolate, but it is not a legal requirement.

Self-isolating also means that the guest and all household members must remain at home if it occurs before their visit. There are very limited options for leaving the building, see further down for full details, in general terms, what to do if you are contacted by the NHS says:

Definitions.

‘Self-isolation if you have symptoms’ means you and all household members must remain at home. Do not go outside your home for any reason, that is to work, school or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis. The guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection page has more information on self-isolation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

‘Contact’ means a person who has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and who may or may not live with them.

It is a legal requirement to self-isolate if you test positive for COVID-19 or if you are identified as a contact and told to self-isolate by Test and Trace. Failure to self-isolate for the full time-period can result in a fine, starting from £1,000.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

What to do if guests test positive for Covid whilst in self-catered accommodation.

In short, if a guest tests positive for Covid whilst staying with you, they should return home at once if they reasonably can. If they cannot, and the accommodation is available then they should pay for the accommodation. If the accommodation is not available, then the guest needs to make other arrangements.

It is important to inform guests of this when they make their booking or on arrival so that there is no misunderstanding as to what happens if they contract covid during their stay.

This poster is a useful tool and is available on the PASC UK website at....

<https://www.pascuk.co.uk/covid-19>

What you need to do if you fall ill with COVID-19 symptoms whilst visiting

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms during your visit, do not ignore or try to hide your symptoms. It is important you act quickly to help yourself and protect those around you. It is your responsibility to stay safe and keep others safe.

COVID-19 symptoms are:

- A new, continuous cough
- High temperature
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

If you feel unwell and experience any COVID-19 symptoms you must:

- Stay indoors and self-isolate
- Arrange a test using your holiday address

Do not ignore your symptoms: self-isolating and getting tested quickly is the best way that you can stay safe and protect others.

You **MUST** notify your accommodation provider.

If you need medical advice while you wait for your test results please contact your regular (home) GP or call 111.

If you are staying or travelling with others, they must also self-isolate and take appropriate action based on your test result.

How do I book a test?

- Online: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus
- Call: 119

Please use the address of your holiday destination:
INSERT HERE

Test results are issued by text or email so you do not need to wait for your results if you are due to return home before your result may arrive. You must return home the most direct way and do not use public transport.

What should I do if my test is positive?

If you feel well enough to travel and do not need to use public transport, you should return home as quickly and directly as you can

If you feel so unwell that you cannot travel or cannot avoid public transport, you should continue to isolate and call 111 for further advice

It is important that you do not use public transport. You must also tell your accommodation provider that you have tested positive.

If you are unwell and cannot return home, you will be expected to pay all costs to your accommodation provider.

My test was negative, can I stay?

Stay and enjoy your visit as planned but if you need medical assistance please call your own regular GP or 111.

Who to contact if you're unwell?

- If you are ill and need medical advice, call 111 or your own GP
- In the event of a medical emergency, call 999

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The actual Guidance, copied from the Government Website and updated on 19 July reads as follows and can be found in full here, see the important green highlights:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/hotels-and-guest-accommodation#customers-5>

If a guest informs you they have tested positive for COVID-19 or they have symptoms of COVID-19:

- Advise the guest (and any relevant members of their family or party, such as those sharing a room) to:
 - immediately self-isolate where they are if possible (to minimise any further risk of transmission);
 - arrange an NHS test as soon as possible; Link here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> and
 - return home if they reasonably can.
- Discuss with the guest whether they are able to return home, or whether it is possible to extend their stay. **Make sure to inform them of any costs an extended stay would include (which the guest would usually be expected to cover).**
- If they choose to return home, they should use private transport but only drive themselves if they can do so safely.
- If a guest cannot reasonably return home (for example if they do not have the means to arrange private transport or they are not well enough to drive themselves home safely) **and cannot self-isolate in your accommodation facility, their circumstances should be discussed with an appropriate healthcare professional and, if necessary, the local authority.**

If they cannot reasonably return home, and the local authority cannot come up with another option, and the guest has to stay, (and pay) then here is the next set of Guidance.

It gets a bit messy as it covers all accommodation including bed and breakfasts, guest houses and hotels. We have highlighted key elements in red.

We have argued this with DCMS (The department that wrote this) repeatedly, self-catering businesses do not provide meals to guests, are not equipped or licensed to do so.

We would strongly advise against providing a food service even if the guest has no option but to stay and isolate with you. In most cases you would probably be in breach of Environmental Health rules on providing food and possibly even insurance.

Laundry provision can be done, with bagged up laundry provided to the outside of the building. Leave their bagged up used bedlinen/towels in the tied off bags for at least three days before putting into your laundry system. Only handle PPE'd up and with gloves on. Update your Covid risk assessment.

How do they get food? If you look below, they can go out to buy food, although a more sensible option would be to order a supermarket delivery, delivered in a socially distanced Covid secure manner.

Finally, again highlighted in red. It is not your responsibility to police what guests self-isolating do. However, if you have for example a complex of several cottages, having the Covid Wards guests wandering about would not be a good idea, so if guests don't follow the rules, report them to the Police.

Here's the actual written guidance from the Government website.

If the guest self-isolates in your accommodation facility:

- Inform the guest of any relevant safety measures you will take, and ensure they are familiar with the guidance on possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection which they should follow.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

- **Discuss practical measures with the guest, such as changes to meal** and laundry provision. They should stay in their accommodation and should not use shared areas (such as TV rooms or lounges) or shared dining facilities. If meals are delivered, contact with the guest should be minimised and social distancing maintained at all times. You should also consider whether symptomatic guests should clean their own rooms and strip their own beds, to avoid exposing cleaning or housekeeping staff to unnecessary risk.
- The guest must not leave the accommodation facility, except in a few specific circumstances, including for urgent medical assistance, urgent veterinary services, legal obligations, attending the funeral of a close family member, accessing critical public services, and to move to a different place of isolation if it is impractical for them to remain at your accommodation facility. **They are also permitted to leave where they need to in order to obtain basic necessities (such as food and medical supplies)**. However, you should discuss with the guest whether there are other ways these supplies could be provided so they do not have to expose others to potential transmission risk by leaving their place of self-isolation unnecessarily. **You should remember that it is not your responsibility to enforce self-isolation rules; enforcement of the law remains a matter for the police.**
- Once the guest has finished the required self-isolation period and is no longer symptomatic, they no longer need to isolate.

If your facility is unsuitable for self-isolation (for example, if it has shared washing facilities, or there are risks to staff that cannot be mitigated):

- Guests with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should return home to self-isolate if they can. Ensure that guests are aware in advance that they will not be able to self-isolate in your facility, and may have to arrange private transport home if they need to self-isolate.

If guests cannot come to stay because they are self-isolating, do they get a refund?

The million-dollar question. This depends upon the Terms and Conditions that the Guest agreed to at the point of booking. These cannot be changed without the guests agreement post booking.

If you have clearly and openly stated in your correspondence and in your Terms and Conditions that this is an insurable risk and that they should cover the cost of their holiday, just as they would for any other illness, (pre Covid, we did not refund guests because they all went down with flu, this is what travel insurance is for and catching Covid is a known and insurable risk) along these lines:

If your booking dates are affected by either THE BUSINESS NAME going into lockdown or your area going into lockdown then we would refund all monies paid, no admin fee. If there were restrictions on group sizes that prevent you coming, we would also refund in full. However, if you wanted to cancel because a Member of the party contracted Covid or has to self-isolate we would only allow cancellation on our normal terms and conditions as these are insurable risks.

Then the Guests would likely have no recourse if you did not provide a refund or a deferred booking. However, this may leave you open to all kinds of social media abuse treading carefully is advisable.

If you have a few days' notice then it would still be best to try and get a quick rebooking, so that you can still refund the guest and maintain goodwill. We have seen examples of bookings cancelled on Friday morning and rebooked within an hour using social media and late availability options.

If you have not covered this in your Terms and Conditions, it would be difficult to refuse and good practice to at least offer deferring the booking or offer a refund.

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