

IPC update

Please contact the 7 day IPC team for support

We are available 7 days a week (9am to 4pm) including weekends and
Bank Holidays

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Hampshire and Isle of Wight



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Norovirus



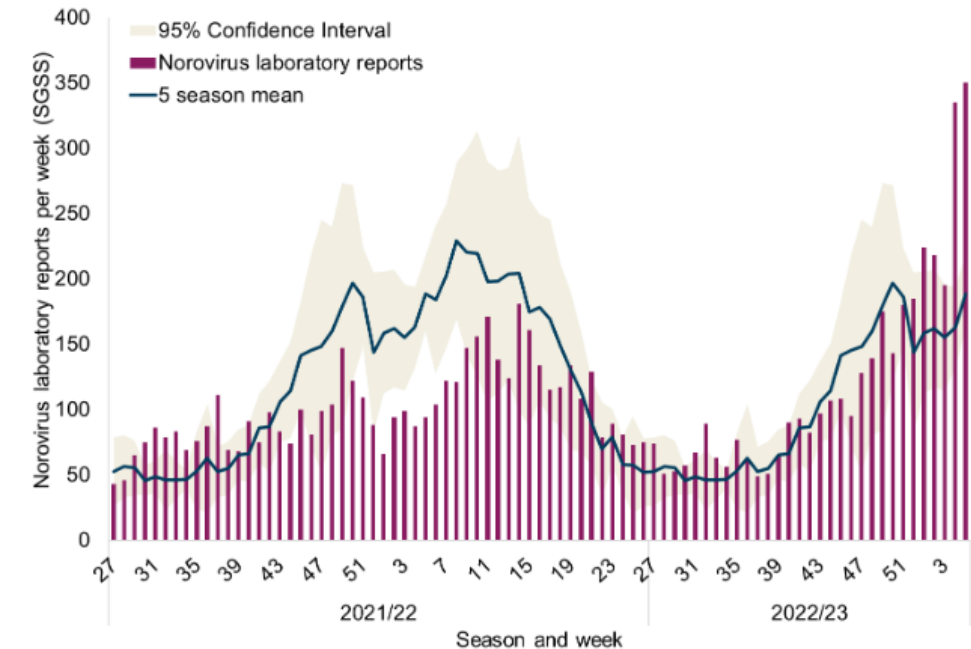
Norovirus levels are significantly above the 5 year average for the same time of year. The increase in cases is mostly being reported in the 65 years + age group including ASC residents.

[Norovirus cases increase significantly in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Remind your staff:

- Hand hygiene with soap and water if in contact with a resident with diarrhoea and/or vomiting
- Importance of rapid identification and communication of a potential case
- Change PPE after each task/resident
- Do not over wear gloves and aprons as this increases spread
- Consider thumb loop gowns where there is a risk of contamination to areas of uniform that are not covered by an apron – they must be changed in the same way as an apron is changed
- Fluid resistant surgical masks can be protective if the resident is vomiting
- Clean equipment after each use
- Cleaning with a product active against Norovirus
- Stay off work until they are 48hrs symptom free and have managed to eat and drink

Figure 1. Norovirus laboratory reports in England by week during 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 seasons, compared with 5-season average





Mask Wearing

National guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infection-prevention-and-control-in-adult-social-care-covid-19-supplement/covid-19-supplement-to-the-infection-prevention-and-control-resource-for-adult-social-care>

Face masks

- Care workers and visitors to care homes do not routinely need to wear a face mask at all times in care settings or when providing care in people's own homes.
- **However there remain a number of circumstances where it is recommended that care workers and visitors to care settings wear masks to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These are:**
- if the person being cared for is known or suspected to have COVID-19 (recommended Type IIR fluid-repellent surgical mask) *Transmission based precautions*
- if the member of staff or visitor is aware that they are a household or overnight contact of someone who has had a positive test result for COVID-19
- if the care setting is in an outbreak – see section on outbreak management for further information

Other reasons for mask wearing mentioned in the guidance:

- If a care recipient is particularly vulnerable to severe outcomes from COVID-19 (for example, [potentially eligible for COVID-19 therapeutics](#)) mask wearing may be considered on an individual basis in accordance with their preferences.
- Mask wearing may also be considered when an event or gathering is assessed as having a particularly high risk of transmission.
- If the care recipient would prefer care workers or visitors to wear a mask while providing them with care then this should be supported.
- Providers should also support the personal preferences of care workers and visitors to wear a mask in scenarios over and above those recommended in this guidance.
- As per the recommendations for standard precautions, type IIR masks should always be worn if there is a risk of splashing of blood or body fluids
- *The ICB would also recommend staff with respiratory symptoms who are well enough to work (either have not tested for covid or are covid negative as per testing guidance) also wear a mask while at work*

A note in the national guidance around mask wearing causing distress/communication problems:

If masks are being worn due to an outbreak or risk assessment, consideration should be given as to how best to put this into practice while taking account of the needs of individuals and minimising any negative impacts. If a person receiving care finds the use of PPE distressing, or their use is impairing communication, a local risk assessment regarding this can be made.

ICB advice on completing mask risk assessments

As a minimum masks must be worn:

- if the person being cared for is known or suspected to have COVID-19 (recommended Type IIR fluid-repellent surgical mask) *Transmission based precautions*
- if the member of staff or visitor is aware that they are a household or overnight contact of someone who has had a positive test result for COVID-19
- if the care setting is in an outbreak
- If a care recipient is particularly vulnerable to severe outcomes from COVID-19 (for example, [potentially eligible for COVID-19 therapeutics](#)) mask wearing may be considered on an individual basis in accordance with their preferences.
- If the care recipient would prefer care workers or visitors to wear a mask while providing them with care then this should be supported.
- Providers should also support the personal preferences of care workers and visitors to wear a mask in scenarios over and above those recommended in this guidance.
- As per the recommendations for standard precautions, type IIR masks should always be worn if there is a risk of splashing of blood or body fluids.

Consider mask wearing:

- Mask wearing may also be considered when an event or gathering is assessed as having a particularly high risk of transmission.
- *The ICB would also recommend staff with respiratory symptoms who are well enough to work (either have not tested for covid as they do not meet the requirements or are covid negative as per testing guidance) also wear a mask while at work*
- *Consider local rates of respiratory infections and returning to universal mask wearing during high rates of respiratory infections*

Where masks are worn (either due to the above or due to a local decision to keep universal mask wearing) ensure that the following is risk assessed:

- Needs of individuals and minimising any negative impacts
 - If a person receiving care finds the use of PPE distressing
 - their use is impairing communication
 - *Also consider staff members communication or comfort when wearing masks (local recommendation)*



Useful links

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infection-prevention-and-control-in-adult-social-care-covid-19-supplement/covid-19-supplement-to-the-infection-prevention-and-control-resource-for-adult-socialcare>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-adult-social-care-settings/care-home-outbreak-testing-for-covid-19-flowchart-staff-and-residents-text-alternative>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection/managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-or-a-positive-covid-19-test-result>