

Important COVID-19 news (August 2021)

PCVS Direct Payment Support Service staff are continuing to offer e-mail and telephone support as the primary function for engaging with those accessing our support services. Now restrictions have lifted, we will provide home or community visits for those who have difficulties accessing services via those methods. Please speak to the team if you require a face to face visit. Our staff will be following the government guidance listed below.

In both England and Wales, most restrictions have been lifted. This is known as Step 4 of the Government Roadmap in England and Level 0 in Wales. In both England and Wales, it is advised that the lifting of these restrictions does not mark the end of the need for caution and restraint. Everyone needs to continue to act carefully and remain cautious. The NHS have put together a list of recommendations for how you can help stop the spread of COVID-19. These include:

- Get vaccinated – everyone over the age of 18 can get now get vaccinated and can book an appointment [here](#). From 4th August, 16-17 years can also get vaccinated. They will be contacted by the NHS but cannot book online.
- Meet people outside if possible
- Open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside
- Limit the number of people you meet and avoid crowded places
- Wear a face covering when it is hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors or in crowded places
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day

For those using care agencies, the agency should still be providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the care workers coming to support you. If you are an employer of personal assistants, you are still entitled to free PPE for your personal assistant(s). You can access free PPE through your local resilience office or via the local authority (your council) or NHS. If in doubt of who to contact, please get in touch with your local PeoplePlus team.

If you are a personal assistant, the government considers you a key worker, both now and in the future. This currently means:

- In the likely event you come within 2 metres of the person you are supporting, you can have access to regular testing. Information on how to get your free lateral flow testing kits is available [here](#)
- If you have coronavirus symptoms, you can get a free PCR test delivered to your home address. This is also available for unpaid carers. Find out how by clicking [here](#)
- You are eligible for a free flu jab this winter. Most GPs and pharmacies are starting these jabs from September 2021. There is specific information about how personal assistants can get a free flu jab [here](#) – and a letter of entitlement is available for download [here](#)

Many other people are eligible for a free flu jab this year, including those over 50 by 31 March 2022, care workers, if you receive carers allowance because you care for someone and those at higher risk. More information about who is eligible can be found [here](#). If you are not eligible, most GPs, pharmacies and even supermarkets with pharmacies are offering them for a small charge (usually around £10).