**Statement from the AOAC committee in relation to reduction of COVID risk during residential trips – 23 November 2021**

As you will all be aware, the risk of COVID-19 infection is ongoing in the UK. The committee is aware of concerns regarding residential trips and the increased risk that being inside with others brings. There have now been a few residential trips which have gone ahead without any infections being reported.

However on a recent residential Club trip, a member had a positive lateral flow test on the Sunday morning of the trip (they have tested negative on the Friday and Saturday), and subsequently this member and others have had positive PCR tests. This was bound to happen at some point given the world we are living in, and in no way is any fault of the member who tested positive.

It shows the importance of taking regular lateral flow tests on residential trips in order to highlight a possible infection asap, however this system is not fool-proof and a negative result is no guarantee that you do not have the virus in your system.

**It has also highlighted the fact that - as per committee statement circulated in September 2021, no AOAC event – especially residential - will ever be risk-free in relation to COVID, and members need to make their own personal judgement as to whether they wish to attend or not based on their individual circumstances.**

There have been a number of views expressed in relation to this and the committee have considered all of them. Our discussion is documented in November committee minutes (available on website once approved) if you are interested.

**We have not changed the residential COVID-19 SOP or RA however members need to be aware that there may be members attending the trip that have not been vaccinated.**

**Bristol Public Health have been contacted and have asked the following to be highlighted to members:**

Close contacts guidance: [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person)

Safer travel guidance: [Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers). Whilst car sharing wearing masks, having a window open and sitting diagonally if possible will also reduce the risk of transmission.

They have also asked the committee to highlight that vaccinations and boosters are encouraged by the government in order to offer the best protection from COVID-19.

If people are car sharing, it would make sense that those people cohort together/share tents/accommodation if they’re already sharing.

**The guidance – sent in September 2020 – is copied below as a reminder.**

*In order to reduce the risk of infection on residential trips, there are a few requirements that need to be followed. These will be reviewed by the committee on a monthly basis.*

*NB These apply whether or not you have been vaccinated, as you can still get infected/pass on infection even if double-vaccinated.*

***Before the event****: do a lateral flow test the day the event starts (these are available for free).*

Please DO NOT attend the event if your lateral flow test is positive, and book PCR test as per government guidelines.

Also DO NOT attend if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, are waiting for the results of a PCR test, or are self isolating under current government guidelines.

If you cannot attend please give the organiser as much notice as possible as they may have a waiting list.

**During the event:**do a further lateral flow test each day. Feel free to wear a mask if you wish to.

If you test positive and/or develop symptoms during the trip, please let the organiser know straight away. In this case you will need to leave the event with anyone you shared a car with.

Refunds will be given to members who cannot attend a trip due to having pre-trip COVID symptoms and/or pre-trip lateral flow test being positive, or being requested under current legislation to self isolate.

***Each member will need to take personal responsibility to follow this guidance. If you do not feel able to do so for any reason then please do not book on a residential trip.***

Have fun out there :-)

Katie Wiltshier

AOAC Chair on behalf of the AOAC Committee