



FORS Bronze on-site audits were initially suspended on 23 March 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). On 22 February 2021, the government published the COVID-19 Response for Spring 2021, setting out how COVID-19 restrictions will be eased over four steps. The UK government’s [Roadmap out of lockdown](#) (roadmap) sets out indicative, ‘no earlier than’ dates for the four steps which are five weeks apart.

This revised document sets out the requirements for conducting FORS Bronze on-site audits in line with Step 4 of the roadmap, effective from 19 July 2021. It also provides the means by which audits can be carried out in accordance with the most current government guidance. The main government guidance documents are:

- [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance from Step 4](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer transport guidance for operators](#)
- [NHS COVID-19](#)
- [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

This guidance is based on the information issued by the UK government. However, it is applicable to England only.

In the event that localised restrictions are introduced, audits will be conducted in accordance with the rules issued for the declared area.

It is recognised that some FORS members’ businesses are home-based. In addition to the rules set out in this document, further requirements for carrying out FORS audits at residential locations are set out in the following document:

- [FORS Home Auditing Rules and Requirements](#)

To minimise the risks of transmittal of COVID-19 and until further notice FORS is placing obligations on audit providers, auditors and the organisation requesting the audit.

1. Auditor requirements

- 1.1 Auditors and anyone in their household shall have a COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test (test that is sent to a lab) if they have had any of the COVID-19 symptoms listed on the [NHS website](#) or if anyone at the auditee’s location has had any of the COVID-19 symptoms listed on the [NHS website](#) in the 10 days prior to a FORS on-site audit.

The COVID-19 symptoms are currently all or any one of the following:

- High temperature
- New, continuous cough
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

- 1.2. Auditors and their household shall self-isolate as soon as symptoms begin.
- 1.3. If the auditor and anyone they live with have a positive COVID-19 test result, the auditor shall not conduct a FORS on-site audit and shall share details with the [NHS test and trace service](#) of people with whom they have had close, recent contact and places they have visited. The auditor shall self-isolate the day the first symptoms appear and the next 10 full days.



- 1.4. If the COVID-19 test is negative, the auditor shall be able to proceed with a FORS on-site audit.
- 1.5. In addition, auditors shall not conduct a FORS on-site audit if:
 - They are notified by NHS Test and Trace of a positive test result, in which case they must isolate for the advised duration
 - They or anyone in their household have carried out a Lateral Flow Device antigen (LFD) test, also known as Rapid Lateral Flow test, and the test is positive, in which case they must isolate for the required duration. They shall also take a follow-up PCR test as soon as possible and within two days of the positive LFD test at the latest
 - They have symptoms of COVID-19 or received a positive test result, even if they have received one or more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine
- 1.6. Audit providers shall report immediately to AECOM and the auditee if an auditor develops COVID-19 symptoms within 48 hours of carrying out an audit.
- 1.7. Audit providers shall advise AECOM and the auditee of the COVID-19 test result as soon as available.
- 1.8. LFD tests can be completed prior to auditing if no symptoms are being experienced. A free kit of seven tests can be ordered online from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
- 1.9. Auditors shall be registered with and use the [NHS COVID-19 contact tracing and testing app](#).
- 1.10. Auditors shall use any PPE required and provided by the organisation being audited.
- 1.11. Auditors should wear face coverings and shall where face coverings if requested by the auditee.
- 1.12. Auditors shall use hand sanitiser on entering the audit site and on leaving the audit site.
- 1.13. Auditors shall follow the auditee's site guidance on the most recent COVID-19 guidance and restrictions.
- 1.14. Auditors shall adhere, as far as reasonably practicable, with the following measures:
 - Only the FORS auditor and, where practicable, one representative from the auditee's organisation shall attend the meeting, unless agreed otherwise in advance of the audit.
 - Avoid transmission during meetings, for example avoiding sharing pens, food, drinks, mugs, cups, and other objects.



2. Auditee requirements

- 2.1 The organisation shall have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment including the risks associated with site visitors such as FORS auditors and implemented the guidance set out in [Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance from Step 4](#).
- 2.2 The organisation shall advise the audit provider of any special requirements and procedures that are applicable to the site visit.
- 2.3 For the purposes of the FORS audit the organisation shall:
 - a. Provide the auditor(s) with any PPE identified in the risk assessment
 - b. Hold the audit in a well-ventilated room
 - c. Arrange for all evidence to be provided in the room where the audit is taking place
 - d. Establish host responsibilities relating to COVID-19 and provide any necessary training for the person who acts as host for the audit visit
 - e. Review entry and exit routes for visitors and contractors to minimise contact with other people
- 2.4 The auditee shall declare at the time of audit request that the organisation meets all requirements listed at 2.3 (a-e).
- 2.5 The auditee shall declare at the time of audit request that the organisation has carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment that includes the risks associated with site visitors such as FORS auditors.
- 2.6 The auditee may nominate a location for the audit other than the normal operating centre if it is not currently accessible. All supporting documents and evidence for the audit must be made available at the alternative location.
- 2.7 The auditee shall contact the audit provider if there is a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case within 10 calendar days of the booked FORS audit at the workplace.



3. Pre-audit checks

- 3.1 In addition to the usual checks carried out by the auditor between five to two days before the audit, the auditor will confirm with the auditee the arrival process and any special requirements and PPE.
- 3.2 The auditor will make it clear:
 - Whether the auditor will be alone or accompanied by a second auditor (for the purpose of training or quality assurance), and where there is more than one auditor, check if it is acceptable to the auditee
 - That all evidence is to be provided in the room where the audit is to take place
- 3.3 The auditor may request to view the organisation's COVID -19 risk assessment, either in advance of the audit or on the day of the audit.
- 3.4 The auditor will ascertain who will be involved with the audit from the auditee's side and whether an alternative location for the audit has been nominated.
- 3.5 The auditor has the right to cancel the audit if there is a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case at the workplace at the time of the pre-audit check.

4. Conducting the audit

- 4.1 On arrival at the site, the auditor will complete a dynamic risk assessment to ensure their own and the auditee's safety. If the auditor deems that one or all of the requirements (2.3 a-e) declared at the time of requesting the audit have not been met or adhered to, they reserve the right to cancel the audit (in which case the full audit fee will still apply).
- 4.2 The auditor will reiterate that:
 - All evidence is to be provided in the room where the audit is to take place
 - He/she may wish to view the organisation's COVID-19 risk assessment
- 4.3 On completion of the audit, the auditee has the responsibility to safely and correctly dispose of any PPE that may have been used during the audit process.