

CORONAVIRUS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES



Frequently asked questions

Q: Can I trust the Track & Trace – it's had bad press in the news?

The NHS Test and Trace system (also known as Track & Trace) is a national scheme that is required to collect information and data quickly. Although there were challenges in the beginning, processes are improving and localised support is now available through Knowsley Council's Single Point of Contact, Knowsley Chamber, The Growth Hub and the Town Centre's Management Team (See key contacts).

It is **vital that employers play their part** by making their workplaces as safe as possible, by encouraging workers to heed any notifications to self-isolate, and by supporting them when they are in isolation. Although this may seem disruptive, it is **less disruptive than an outbreak of COVID-19 in the workplace, and far less disruptive than periods of lockdown.**

Q: My employee received a letter saying they are vulnerable, is there anything I need to do as an employer?

You need to establish whether your employee is shielding and 'clinically extremely vulnerable' or vulnerable. The **vulnerable category is for older people, anyone who is pregnant, as well as anyone with underlying health conditions including diabetics and other co-morbidities.**

The definition of **clinically vulnerable, and who should therefore be shielded** includes:

- Solid organ transplant recipients
- People with specific cancers and people who are undergoing active chemotherapy
- People with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- People with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell)
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired
- Other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgment and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decisions

For more information about who has been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, please visit the [NHS Digital website](#).

Please note that from 1 August, the Government will pause shielding (unless the transmission of COVID-19 in the community starts to rise significantly). This means that on 1 August 2020 shielding employees can return to work.

It is important for both vulnerable and clinically vulnerable employees that your workplace must be COVID-Secure, or they should be allowed to work from home where it is possible.

There is advice and guidance on how to consider vulnerable employees in the risk assessment section. For additional up-to-date government advice please visit the following links:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-COVID-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-COVID-19>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing#clinically-vulnerable-people>

Q: Do I have to give the option of working from home?

Allowing your workforce to work from home is a way to ensure social distancing can be implemented, and minimise the risks of cases and outbreaks in your workplace setting.

Staff who have not been advised to shield but are clinically vulnerable, have a higher risk of severe illness. This includes staff who are pregnant or have pre-existing conditions as set out in the [Staying at home and away from others \(social distancing\) guidance](#).

If it is not possible for such individuals to work from home they should be offered the safest available on-site roles, staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible. If they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, settings must carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

Q: What do I do if a member of staff tests positive with COVID-19?

Please follow the Test, Trace and Isolate advice as set out in Knowsley Council's guidance.

If a member of staff receives a positive test result for COVID-19, the NHS Test and Trace service or Knowsley Council's Single Point of Contact will ask them to share information about their **close recent contacts (48 hours previous to symptoms and any time after the onset of symptoms up to 10 days)**, and they must complete the 10 days self-isolation from the date symptoms started. If the person was asymptomatic the 10 days isolation commences from the date of the positive test.

You can stop self-isolating after 10 days if either:

- you do not have any symptoms
- you just have a cough or changes to your sense of smell or taste – these can last for weeks after the infection has gone

The NHS Test and Trace, and Knowsley Council's Single Point of Contact can then work with you to identify who would be considered a close contact.

At this point you would advise these employees, and the rest of their household to self-isolate for 14 days to minimise the risk of further spread within the workplace and wider community.

Q: If I suspect a member of staff has COVID-19, can I send them for a test?

Yes. If a member of staff develops symptoms they should self-isolate for 10 days and arrange a test.

Anybody who has COVID-19 symptoms can [ask for a test through the NHS website](#) or by telephoning 119, lines are open 7am to 11pm.

There are two ways of booking either through [testing for essential workers](#). Please find the list of essential workers, or alternatively anyone with symptoms can [ask for a test through the NHS website](#), whatever their age.

For more information please [visit](#).

Q: How and where are people tested?

The test involves taking a swab of the inside of your nose and the back of your throat, using a long cotton bud.

You can do the swab yourself (if you are aged 12 or over) or someone can do it for you. Parents or guardians have to swab test children aged 11 or under.

You can choose to take the test:

- at a local test site; or
- with a home test kit

Local test sites currently offer drive through testing only, closest ones to Knowsley are Haydock Racecourse, and Liverpool John Lennon Airport. There are also a range of sites where mobile test units operate on a rota, this currently includes Huyton Leisure and Culture Park, Kirkby Leisure Centre and Litherland Sports Park.

The available test centres will be listed on the booking page on the national portal for you to select the one that is most convenient for you.

Results of tests on average take 24 hours to be returned.

Q: What guidance is there to make sure my business is COVID-Secure?

As a basic principle to become COVID-secure you must:

- Identify what activities or situations might cause transmission of the virus
- Consider who could be at risk?
- Decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
- Act to remove the activity or situation, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

Please find the guidance and template for your use as part of this pack.

Q: What happens if my business isn't COVID-Secure and someone has COVID-19 – can the business get a fine?

You need to ensure that your business is COVID-Secure; this is completed through your risk assessment. The HSE, or Local Authority, can take action to improve the control of workplace risks under health and legislation if they felt that the employer was not doing enough to minimise risks. This could, for example, include an employer not taking action to ensure social distancing.

Enforcing authorities can provide specific advice to help ensure compliance right through to formal action such as enforcement notices. The most serious breaches and a failure to comply with an enforcement notice can constitute a criminal offence which can attract significant fines and imprisonment for up to 2 years.

Someone does not have to have caught COVID-19 for enforcement action to follow; a lack of suitable control measures can lead to enforcement action.

If you receive any advice or notices, you should respond to them within the set timescales.

Inspectors may carry out compliance checks of businesses to ensure they are doing what they can to reduce risks.

Q: In what situation would I have to close my business?

It is very unlikely that you would be required to close your business. This is particularly true if you have completed a full risk assessment and self-declared as COVID-Secure.

If you have a case the Single Point of Contact will work with you to identify close workplace contacts and ensure that you can stop the spread. If you have 2 or more linked confirmed cases in your setting within a 14 day period, this would constitute an outbreak. It still remains unlikely that you will be required to close the business or setting, but additional measures may include self-isolating workplace bubbles, additional cleaning or closing a designated area. If you follow the guidance, support employees to self-isolate and highlight any cases to the Single Point of Contact at the earliest stage any escalation will not be necessary.

Q: Should I implement new policies, or are risk assessments enough?

Your risk assessment will inform what actions you need to take. Your assessment of your risks may lead you to consider any further policy or safe system of work changes.

You should ensure your Health and Safety arrangements are fit for purpose and if you have more than 5 employees, these should be written down.

Q: If an employee is contacted by track and trace and asked to self-isolate does that mean my staff who've been on shift with that individual also have to self-isolate?

If an employee has been contacted by the Test and Trace service as having a close contact with a confirmed case they will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days. At this stage, without symptoms their close contacts will not be required to self-isolate.

If the employee begins to show symptoms and they have had close contact with co-workers the person may wish to (but is not obliged to) ask their employer to alert those co-workers. At this stage, those close contacts should not self-isolate, but they:

- Must avoid individuals who are at high-risk of contracting COVID-19, for example, because they have pre-existing medical conditions, such as respiratory issues
- Must take extra care in practising social distancing and good hygiene and in watching out for symptoms
- Should prepare for the possibility of having to self-isolate for 14 days if the person who has symptoms has a positive test result and if they (the contact) receive a notification from the NHS Test and Trace service

If the person who has symptoms receives a positive test result for COVID-19, the NHS Test and Trace service will ask them to share information about their **close recent contacts**, and **they must complete the 10 days self-isolation from the date of the onset of the symptoms**.

The NHS Test and Trace, and Knowsley Council's Single Point of Contact can then work with you to identify who would be considered a close contact. They will work with you to identify anyone the employee has had close contact with in the workplace in the 2 days before onset of symptoms and any time after this up to 10 days. Any identified employees would be asked to **self-isolate for 14 days to minimise the risk of further spread within the workplace and wider community**.

Q: How do I calculate how many people I can have in my store at any one time?

This should be identified as part of your risk assessment. You will need to think about the flow of people in your store and whether any furniture in place helps to maintain distances or hinders the flow. You could consider introducing one way systems and or marking 2 metre squares or lines to show customers the distance needed.

Q: What is the guidance on social distancing indoors?

Clarification on 1 metre plus rule number of households etc. This is key for us as people are genuinely confused by the 1 metre plus/2 metre rule

This will differ for different industries and workplaces. Please see our sector specific guidance which provides links to different industries and workplaces.

Where possible and when indoors you should aim to keep maintaining 2 metre social-distancing. Where this is not possible and through your risk assessment suitable mitigations should be implemented, with suggestions included in the guidance.

Q: What is the guidance on social distancing outdoors?

The same basic principles of 2 metre should be adhered to where possible. Please refer to outdoor working guidance [here](#) for scenarios where this may not be possible.

Q: What information do I need to obtain from customers for track and trace?

The following information should be collected by the venue, where possible for customers and visitors:

- The name of the customer or visitor. If there is more than one person, then you can record the name of the 'lead member' of the group and the number of people in the group
- A contact phone number for each customer or visitor, or for the lead member of a group of people
- Date of visit, arrival time and, where possible, departure time
- If a customer/visitor interacts with only one member of staff e.g. a hairdresser, the name of the assigned staff member should be recorded alongside the name of the customer

No additional data should be collected for this purpose. The guidance pack also provides a suitable template and privacy notice template.

Q: What sectors need to collect track and trace information?

There is a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 in premises where customers and visitors spend a longer time in one place and potentially come into close contact with other people outside of their household. To manage this risk, establishments in the following sectors, whether indoor or outdoor venues or mobile settings, should collect details and maintain records of staff, customers and visitors:

- hospitality, including pubs, bars, restaurants and cafés
- tourism and leisure, including hotels, museums, cinemas, zoos and theme parks
- close contact services, including hairdressers, barbershops and tailors
- facilities provided by local authorities, including town halls and civic centres for events, community centres, libraries and children's centres
- places of worship, including use for events and other community activities

This guidance applies to any establishment that provides an on-site service and to any events that take place on its premises. It does not apply where services are taken off site immediately, for example, a food or drink outlet which only provides takeaways. If a business offers a mixture of a sit-in and takeaway service, contact information only needs to be collected for customers who are dining in.

This guidance does not apply to drop-off deliveries made by suppliers or contractors

Q: How long do I keep track and trace information for?

To support NHS Test and Trace, you should hold records for 21 days. This reflects the incubation period for COVID-19 (which can be up to 14 days) and an additional 10 days to allow time for testing and tracing. After 21 days, this information should be securely disposed of or deleted.

Records which are made and kept for other business purposes do not need to be disposed of after 21 days. The requirement to dispose of the data relates to a record that is created solely for the purpose of NHS Test and Trace. All collected data, however, must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation and should not be kept for longer than is necessary.

Q: How do I dispose of test and trace information?

When deleting or disposing of data, you must do so in a way that does not risk unintended access e.g. shredding paper documents and ensuring permanent deletion of electronic files.

Q: Do I need a privacy notice to obtain test and trace data?

You must be clear, open and honest with people about why you are collecting their data, who you will be sharing it with and how long you will keep it. You must not collect and process personal data in a way that is misleading, detrimental or outside of what people would reasonably expect. In this case, the collection of customer data is for a contact tracing scheme for example NHS Test and Trace in England, so you need to make this clear to people.

Collecting customer contact details may already be standard practice for your organisation, but the purpose of collecting this particular information is wider than managing bookings or similar tasks, and there are greater implications should an outbreak occur. You need to explain this to people.

You must consider appropriate methods of communicating this message, including children and young people. For example, you could provide information over the phone, you could put signs up on site, and direct people to further information online, or simply tell them when they arrive.

The privacy covering data shared with NHS test and trace is available [here](#).

Q: Do my staff have to wear face masks and/or gloves at work?

Workers should continue to wear any normal PPE that is required to carry out their specific role as part of the businesses standard risk assessment and safe practices of work. For non-health and social care settings the guidance states there is no need to provide different PPE than you would normally have provided before the outbreak started.

For more information please visit [here](#).

If your workplace is a health and social care setting there is a range of guidance for PPE.

The use of single use PPE such as disposable gloves and aprons, single use facemasks and eye protection, is only required and should only be used when health or care staff are in close contact (within 2 metres) and or providing physical care / interventions to someone with COVID-19 symptoms (high temperature and / or consistent cough). Aprons, gloves and fluid repellent surgical masks should be used in these situations. If there is a risk of splashing, then eye protection will minimise risk.

All PPE should be:

- Compliant with the relevant BS/EN standards (European technical standards as adopted in the UK), this will have been checked before issue
- Located close to the point of use; for example, put on PPE once you get to the location of your visit
- Stored to prevent contamination in a clean/dry area until required for use (expiry dates must be adhered to)
- Gloves and aprons are subject to single use with disposal after each resident contact
- Fluid repellent surgical mask and eye protection can be used for a session or work rather than a single resident contact
- Where PPE has been worn due to contact with an individual with COVID-19 symptoms then it must be disposed of in a supplied plastic bag and tied, placed into second bag and tied, stored in a secure place for 72 hours, then put in normal household waste collection service
- If the household bin collection is 72 hours or more from collection, then the bin is a safe place to store the bagged, disposed PPE

For more information please visit [here](#).

Q: Are customers required to wear face coverings in my shop?

In England, you must wear a face covering by law in the following settings:

- Public transport
- Indoor transport hubs (airports, rail and tram stations and terminals, maritime ports and terminals, bus and coach stations and terminals)
- Shops and supermarkets (places which are open to the public and that wholly or mainly offer goods or services for retail sale or hire)
- Indoor shopping centres
- Banks, building societies, and post offices (including credit unions, short-term loan providers, savings clubs and money service businesses)

Customers are expected to wear a face covering immediately before entering any of these settings and must keep it on until they leave.

This law does not apply in hospitality settings, including restaurants with table service, bars, and pubs. They are also not required in entertainment venues (such as cinemas or casinos), visitor attractions (such as heritage sites or museums), and exercise/sports venues (such as gyms).

Where a shop is within another premises which does not require a face covering (such as a museum or other visitor attraction) they are required in the shop only. **Signage should be shown to highlight this.**

There are instances where individuals may not be required to wear a mask, for example health, age or equality reasons. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

Individuals do not need to wear a face covering if (but is not limited to):

- young children under the age of 11 (Public Health England do not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
- not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
- to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
- to eat or drink if reasonably necessary
- in order to take medication
- if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering

There are also scenarios when you are permitted to remove a face covering when asked:

- if asked to do so in a bank, building society, or post office for identification
- if asked to do so by shop staff or relevant employees for identification, the purpose of assessing health recommendations, such as a pharmacist, or for age identification purposes including when buying age restricted products such as alcohol
- if speaking with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound. Some may ask you, either verbally or in writing, to remove a covering to help with communication

For more information including enforcement measures please [visit](#).

Q: Do I have to display the COVID-19 secure poster?

It is not a requirement to display the COVID-19 secure poster, however we would advise that if you have completed a risk assessment you may want to highlight you are COVID-secure to give confidence to your customers and employees.

Q: How is COVID-19 data recorded and shared?

Information is shared on the [Government's website](#) daily regarding the total number of confirmed cases, broken down at local authority level. This gives the total number of confirmed cases on a rolling basis since the pandemic began in March.

Public Health England (PHE) issue data to local authorities on a daily basis which relates to local testing and confirmed cases and it is this data that is often reported in the media. It is important to note that the data fluctuates from day to day and whilst Knowsley may be highlighted as a hotspot area one day, 24 hours later it could move to being one of the least affected areas.

It's also important to note that we have done a big push on sharing the message to get tested if you are displaying symptoms. The uptake for testing in Knowsley is high, so the more people that are tested, the greater the likelihood that our numbers of confirmed cases could increase. Areas that have low numbers could be due to a low number of people being tested potentially resulting in people socialising and spreading the virus unknowingly. The Council is encouraging people to get tested and if confirmed positive, their close contacts (being within 2 metres with someone for more than 15 minutes) are contacted and instructed to self-isolate for 14 days to prevent them from spreading the virus.

Q: What do I need to do if my employee has a holiday outside of the U.K planned, should they be returning to work?

If an employee chooses to go on holiday, depending on the destination, they may be required to self-isolate for a period of time on their return to the U.K (subject to Government guidance). [This link](#) will provide you with the countries in real time that are exempt from 'all but essential travel' advice, and won't require a period of self-isolation.

All other destinations will require your member of staff to have a period of self-isolation between 10 and 14 days. This is in line with current Government advice at the time of writing – the link above should always be used to review the specifics of each case.

On return into the UK, employees and workers who need to self-isolate should not leave their home to go to their workplace. If the employee/worker can work from home the self-isolation period will not affect their work.

If an employee cannot do their job from home, an employer may need to discuss alternative options such as additional leave, special leave, unpaid leave or [furlough \('temporary leave'\)](#) for the time they are self-isolating. If employees and workers are self-isolating and not entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and employer may choose to pay SSP - or a higher rate of sick pay - if they want to.

It would be advisable to share your chosen HR approach regarding travel advice with your employers, workers, and management team so that they have all the information in order to make their choice.

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