



**BUSINESS
HEALTHY**



News and updates from Business Healthy

Photo credit - James Burns

This newsletter is designed to provide a roundup of news, updates and information that may be useful in helping you to keep your workforce healthy and well. It is written in a way to make it easy for you to cut and paste content to share across your internal communications channels. If there is a way we can make this easier, please let us know [here](#).

A copy of this newsletter is also available on the [Business Healthy website](#).

Business Healthy is funded and delivered by the City of London Corporation's Public Health team, supporting the City Corporation's statutory obligations to ensure the health and wellbeing of the more than half a million people who work in the Square Mile each day.

Follow Business Healthy on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to stay up-to-date on news and developments in the world of employee health and wellbeing in the Square Mile.

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Sharing is caring

Share your thoughts or feedback on our newsletter, general musings, or ideas for upcoming events with us - businesshealthy@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Did you find this newsletter useful? If you know of someone who would like to receive it, too, they can subscribe [here](#).

We are not precious about our content, so please feel free to share it far and wide.

Previous editions of our newsletter can be found [here](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Updates for businesses

Employers want to keep their staff informed about the COVID-19 pandemic. There is lots of information and misinformation out there, so please ensure that any advice or guidance you are sharing only comes from a reputable source, such as the GOV.UK website.

This information was accurate at the time of sending the newsletter, but the situation is changing and the most up to date information and guidance can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#).

Employers must continue to follow [health and safety workplace guidance for their sector](#), and to refuse entry to their workplace/ premises for workers, visitors or customers who are displaying symptoms of COVID-19.

Recent changes to Government COVID-19 guidance

In light of the recent emergence of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, additional measures aimed at reducing the spread of the virus have been introduced. These include:

- [Reintroduction of mandatory face-coverings](#) for staff and customers in certain premises, including shops and close-contact services, such as hairdressers and beauty salons. Face coverings remain mandatory on public transport, including private hire vehicles. In venues where face coverings are mandatory, businesses must display signage or take other measures to ensure customers are aware of these requirements. A poster can be downloaded [here](#).
- [Mandatory self-isolation](#) for close contacts of someone who has confirmed/ suspected COVID-19 (Omicron variant), even if they have been fully vaccinated.
- [Reintroduction of self-isolation and PCR testing](#) for people travelling to England from overseas.

Local COVID-19 guidance for a range of settings, including retail and close-contact service businesses, gyms and fitness studios, and offices, is being updated in light of these changes, and will be republished [here](#).

While face coverings are not 100% effective in stopping the spread of virus particles from someone who is infected to someone who isn't, [evidence](#) has shown that they can have a significant impact in reducing this risk. No protective measure is 100% effective, which is why a combination of measures, including face coverings, vaccination, ventilation, and good hand hygiene, is best.

"COVID-19: getting ready for the party season" information and guidance for local hospitality, retail, and close-contact service businesses

The slidedeck from the webinar hosted by the City of London and Hackney Public Health and Environmental Health teams on party-planning can be accessed [here](#).

It covers a range of topics, including the benefits of ventilation to reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and some tips on how to achieve good ventilation, as well as other measures for party-planners to consider.

Is it COVID-19? Or a cold or flu?

While the three key symptoms of COVID-19 are a new, continuous cough; high temperature; or loss or change in normal sense of smell or taste, there are additional symptoms of COVID-19 that are similar to the common cold, or flu. These are:

- shortness of breath or wheezing
- fatigue
- loss of appetite
- muscle ache or pain
- sore throat and/or hoarseness
- persistent headache
- runny or blocked nose
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea

We advise self-isolating and [ordering a PCR test](#) if someone is experiencing any of these symptoms.

Anyone feeling unwell - COVID or otherwise - should be encouraged to remain at home and to not travel into the workplace, to avoid spreading bugs to others.

Regular rapid COVID-19 testing helps to prevent outbreaks

Lateral flow (rapid) tests are only appropriate for people **without** symptoms of COVID-19. Government guidance on how frequently they should be used has recently changed. Rapid testing is advised when you are likely to be visiting busy indoor spaces, and/or mixing with people who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. This may mean testing more frequently than twice a week.

One in three people with COVID-19 do not display any symptoms, and so frequent rapid testing can help people to realise when they are infected and self-isolate quickly without further spreading the virus to others. The latest research from University College London shows that in 80 to 90% of cases where someone is infectious, tests are able to detect the virus.

Ideally, staff and visitors will be testing at or near to home before travelling to the workplace. Results show in 15 to 30 minutes.

Regular rapid testing has helped to stop potentially large workplace outbreaks within local businesses and is a recommended control measure.

There is a rapid testing centre in the City at Aldermanbury (EC2V 7HH), where you can take a rapid test and also collect boxes. There are many other ways of accessing rapid tests - for more details, visit the [NHS website](#).

Visuals explaining the difference between lateral flow and PCR tests, including when each type should be used, are available on the [PHE Campaign Resource Centre website](#).

Christmas opening hours for the COVID-19 rapid testing site

Over the Christmas period, the COVID-19 rapid testing site at Aldermanbury (EC2V 7HH) will close from Friday 24 December, and will reopen on Tuesday 4 January. Alternative rapid testing sites can be found on the [NHS website](#), where home testing kits can also be ordered. Home testing kits can also be collected from pharmacies, and other locations.

Staff should be encouraged to undertake a rapid test prior to returning to the workplace after the festive break.

Rapid testing outreach to small hospitality, close-contact services, and retail businesses

Small and independent hospitality, retail, and close-contact service businesses in the City are receiving visits from the local rapid testing outreach team, who are providing information about the benefits of frequent rapid testing of staff, as well as boxes of testing kits. The team are able to answer questions about rapid testing, and can also signpost to additional information and guidance on COVID-19 for workplaces.

What to do if you identify positive COVID-19 cases associated with your business

COVID-19 and the virus that causes it – SARS-COV-2 – is a notifiable disease.

If you become aware of positive cases of COVID-19 among your workforce, or associated with your business (for example, customers who may have attended while they were infectious), please take speedy action to help reduce the risk of onward transmission of the virus, avoid an outbreak, and minimise disruption to your business:

1. Read the [COVID-19 guidance for City and Hackney businesses](#), which covers a range of different workplaces, and includes information on when and how to report positive cases to the local Public Health team and Health Protection team. Identify a Single Point of Contact (SPoC) to lead on notifying the local authority/ LCRC of positive cases within the workplace.
2. If you have multiple cases of COVID-19 associated with your business (see the thresholds in the guidance linked above), please report to both the local authority (City of London Corporation and Hackney Council) - testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk - and LCRC - LCRC@phe.gov.uk / 0300 303 0450.
3. Immediately identify any [close workplace contacts](#) and ask them to self-isolate. **Do not wait for NHS Test and Trace.** This prompt action will help reduce the risk of a workplace outbreak.

Close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, who have not been fully vaccinated, are required by law to self-isolate and it is illegal to ask them to come into work. If a staff member (or someone in their household), or a visitor to your premises has symptoms of COVID-19, you must turn them away.

While fully-vaccinated close contacts of a positive case are no longer legally required to self-isolate (aged 18+) (unless they are a close contact of someone with confirmed/ suspected Omicron variant), they may still be able to transmit COVID-19 to others, and so precautions such as asking them to work from home could be considered. See the local guidance for more details.

Anyone on a low income, who has been instructed to self-isolate, but who cannot work from home, and may lose income as a result can apply for financial assistance (see links below). Employers can also support staff to apply for this financial support by contacting the [Self-Isolation Support Hub](#).

COVID-19 vaccination

There is a community pharmacy vaccination site at Boots, 120 Fleet Street, offering the Moderna vaccine. All those aged over 18 years old or within three months of their 18th birthday, can book an appointment via the national booking service. Visit www.NHS.uk/covidvaccine for more information.

All COVID vaccines are available free of charge from the NHS. Everyone who is 12 years old or older can be vaccinated regardless of whether they are registered with a GP or their immigration status

The vaccines have been through rigorous clinical trials, tested on hundreds of thousands of people here in the UK and worldwide, and have been approved by the British Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Getting your vaccine as soon as possible is vitally important to protect you, your family, and those you care for.

For those aged 18 years or older, the interval between the first and second dose is now eight weeks so don't delay.

Thought of the Month

"The COVID pandemic has been trying and stressful for all of us. But while many of the big City institutions have looked after their employees well, it is easy to forget that the City also has a legion of frontline workers, often not employed directly by the firms whose offices they clean, or to whom

they provide security or courier services. For them, COVID has probably been tougher than for the typical banker, fund manager, accountant or lawyer.

...I hope we can come up with some solid proposals to extend the great work we already do to look after our direct employees into our supply chains. That includes also for those people who provide us with contracted-out services. At the simplest level, for example, can they use our Employee Assistance Programmes? Can we use our purchasing power to give them discounted gym memberships or other benefits? What else could we be doing?"

- Nigel Wilson, Chief Executive Officer at Legal & General Group's opening address to the event focusing on "Closing the health and wellbeing "gap" for frontline and essential workers", which took place on 22 November.

Following a successful launch event last week, which was supported by Legal & General, PwC, Bank of England, City Mental Health Alliance, Lord Mayor's Appeal, and where a keynote speech was delivered by Professor Sir Michael Marmot, we are inviting large businesses in the City to consider whether they might be able to take some specific steps to support their frontline workers.

A list of suggested actions can be found [here](#).

More information on this initiative can be accessed [here](#), and please do [get in touch](#) if your business is already undertaking work in this area and would like to showcase to the business community. We are looking for examples of best practice to share and inspire others.

Coming up

Survey for City workers – tell us what you think of local pharmacy services

The City Corporation is seeking insights from local workers and others to help inform and shape what pharmacy services will be available to them over the coming years, as part of the local Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. Please spare a few minutes to tell us your thoughts by completing [this survey](#). The deadline to complete is Friday 17 December.

Last chance to register to vote in the City elections

The City of London is unique; businesses and other organisations can vote in local elections. Organisations eligible to nominate voters have already been contacted, with communications going to a named individual who is responsible for nominating the voter(s) for their organisation.

To be able to vote in the City of London local elections, businesses need to have registered their voters ahead of 16 December.

To find out more, visit the [City Corporation website](#).

New Year, healthy habits

January is a time for setting goals and making personal pledges, often aiming for healthier habits such as more physical activity and a balanced diet.

City businesses and their workers can benefit from expert sessions on Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) prevention, delivered by Consultant Cardiologists at St Bart's Heart Centre in the City.

These webinars cover a range of topics, such as "How to prevent a heart attack". Book in early for the New Year. To find out more, please [email us](#).

You can read a case study from a City law firm that benefited from these sessions [here](#).

Free resources

Simple ventilation tool for workplaces

The British Occupational Hygiene Society and HSE have created a simple tool help businesses understand what measures they may need to take to provide adequate ventilation, depending on the specific requirements of their premises.

Considering the [airborne risks](#) of SARS-CoV-2 transmission and taking steps to reduce them can help to keep your workforce and customers/ visitors safe. Good ventilation can have a powerful impact, especially when combined with other measures, such as wearing face coverings and vaccinations. Access the tool [here](#).