



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](#).

Case study: Supporting construction workers in the City to get vaccinated against COVID-19

Large construction firm Sir Robert McAlpine has a significant presence in the City of London, with between 700 and 1,000 individuals working on one of its sites.

Providing opportunities for its construction operatives to take up the COVID-19 vaccine was an important priority for the company, in terms of keeping them and others safe from the disease, and reducing business disruption due to outbreaks and self-isolation.

The firm teamed up with the City of London and Hackney Public Health team, local NHS partners, and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to provide COVID-19 vaccinations on-site, as well as translated information, and NHS Health Checks. By providing this offer on-site, it was hoped that it would make it easier for workers who might otherwise struggle to access these services outside of working hours.

A short case study outlining this event can be found on the Business Healthy website [here](#).

The COVID-19 vaccination offer is evergreen

It's never too late for someone to get their COVID-19 vaccination, whether they haven't had the full course, or no doses at all; the offer from the NHS is evergreen and open to everyone aged 5+, regardless of whether they are registered with a GP or their immigration status. All COVID-19 vaccines are available free of charge from the NHS.

Visit www.NHS.uk/covidvaccine for information on the COVID-19 vaccine, eligibility and dosage, as well as to locate your nearest vaccination clinic.

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.

Information about the COVID-19 vaccine in a range of languages can be accessed on the [GLA website](#).

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](#).

Latest on Government COVID-19 guidance

There are few legal measures remaining in place to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, however caution is still urged as transmission of the disease has started to increase. According to the ONS, in the week ending 11 June it was estimated that 1 in 50 people in England had COVID-19. This is likely to be an underestimate with a reduction in testing since April.

Government and local guidance remains supporting the benefits of maintaining infection prevention control measures, particularly on a risk-assessment basis (for example depending on the nature of your work activities), and continuing to encourage vaccination. Specific actions may be required for [individuals who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19](#).

COVID-19 health and safety guidance for City employers

Since the introduction of the "Living with COVID" plan, many public health measures to combat COVID are no longer legally enforced, however the Government continues to advise their use to keep people safe and healthy, particularly while COVID prevalence remains so high. These measures include:

- If you are unwell, displaying any main or wider symptoms of COVID and/ or have tested positive for COVID, stay at home. Advice is also for close contacts of those with confirmed or suspected COVID to isolate wherever possible, and take extra precautions for ten days from their contact with a case.

- Ventilate indoor spaces where people from different households are coming into contact with each other. This means bringing fresh air in (don't assume air conditioning units automatically do this – some recirculate air).
- Wear a face covering, especially in busy spaces.
- Get vaccinated against COVID – two doses and a booster gives you the best coverage possible (and additional dose for those at additional risk – if they are aged 75+ and/ or aged 12+ with underlying clinical conditions). See below for more details.
- Practise good hand and respiratory hygiene – regular handwashing and catching sneezes and coughs in a tissue and binning the tissue.

In addition, legal duties on businesses remain in place, in terms of the health and safety of their workforce and those affected by their business operations, as well as responsibilities regarding employment and equalities.

Local guidance for a range of businesses located in the City and Hackney, including offices, construction sites, retail and close-contact services, and gyms and fitness studios, has been refreshed, and is available on the [City Corporation website](#).

Updates on other infectious diseases

Monkeypox virus (MPV)

There has been an increase in MPV cases in the UK; as of 20 June there were 766 laboratory-confirmed cases in England, with a high proportion (80%) among London residents.

The virus is not currently defined as a sexually transmitted infection, but it can be passed on by close and intimate contact that occurs during sex. Anyone can contract MPV, particularly if they have had close contact with an individual with symptoms. Most cases are mild, but severe illness can occur in some people.

If infected, it usually takes between five and 21 days for the first symptoms of MPV to appear. Initial symptoms include:

- high temperature
- headache
- muscle aches
- backache
- swollen glands
- shivering/ chills
- exhaustion

These initial symptoms are usually then followed by the development of a rash (between one and five days after the first symptoms), which starts as raised spots, which turn into small blisters filled with fluid. The blisters eventually form scabs that later fall off.

Anyone with symptoms of MPV is advised to [contact a sexual health clinic](#) or NHS 111, especially if:

- They have been in close contact (including sexual contact) with someone who has or might have MPV (even if they haven't yet been tested) in the past three weeks
- They have travelled to West or Central Africa in the past three weeks
- Had new or multiple sexual partners recently

People with symptoms are also advised to stay at home and avoid close contact with others until they have been seen by a clinician. They must call the sexual health clinic ahead of attending.

Data is showing that this MPV outbreak in the UK is disproportionately affecting gay and bisexual men, but not exclusively.

The NHS will be offering vaccination to people most likely to be exposed to MPV, including some healthcare workers, people who have been in close contact with someone who has MPV, and some men who are gay, bisexual, or who have sex with men. Further information will be shared shortly, and people are advised not to come forward for the vaccine until contacted. Vaccines can be provided either as a prophylactic or post-exposure.

Everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation - is encouraged to be vigilant about new spots, ulcers, and blisters.

Precautionary measures for workplaces:

- Inform people you are in regular contact with: Make sure you, your colleagues and any visitors are aware of the symptoms of MPV, how it spreads, and where to go to access support, if needed.
- Promote public health messages: Sharing key messages with staff and members of the public can help to raise awareness of infection risks and how to stay safe. Information is available via the links below, as well as [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).
- Review current procedures: if your workplace includes direct person-to-person contact activities, you may want to revisit existing cleaning procedures, and consider reviewing the protocol and increasing the frequency. The risk of spread by transient contact with surfaces such as handrails is very low, especially if these are regularly cleaned. Cleaning advice for MPV can be found [here](#).
- Maintaining good cleaning procedures: MPV can spread from touching bedding, towels, or linens that have been previously used by someone who is infectious. Ensuring good cleaning procedures, particularly with shared or re-used bedding or towels, can help to reduce the spread of infection.

What to do if there is a case of suspected MPV in your workplace:

- Any suspected case of MPV should avoid close contact with others and contact NHS 111 or contact a sexual health clinic immediately.
- If you are concerned that you or others have been exposed to MPV in the workplace, contact UKHSA's London Coordination and Response Cell (LCRC) for advice at LCRC@phe.gov.uk. *(Include details regarding the nature of the workplace, level of contact with a case, and if you are aware of other cases in the workplace).*

- Suspected close contacts of MPV cases will be informed by UKHSA Health Protection Teams and hospital infection prevention and control teams. If you are identified as a close contact, you will be provided with advice based on the level of contact you had. You may be asked to self-isolate to reduce the spread of infection.

Sources:

- [Press release from UK Health Security Agency](#) (21 June)
- UK Health Security Agency "[Monkeypox outbreaks: Epidemiological overview](#)" (21 June)
- [Monkeypox](#) (NHS website)
- UK Health Security Agency "[Monkeypox cases confirmed in England - latest updates](#)" (21 June)

Lyme disease: being tick aware

The summer weather means we are more likely to be spending time outdoors in nature. Because of this, it also means our risk of being exposed to ticks is increased. Ticks can carry bacteria that cause Lyme disease, and people can be infected if bitten.

This isn't a reason to not enjoy green spaces, however. In the UK, Lyme disease is not a common infection - there are around 3,000 cases diagnosed in England each year, and the vast majority are successfully treated with antibiotics.

There is a small number of cases where more severe symptoms that affect the nervous system or heart can develop later down the line, for example if the treatment is not fully completed or is delayed.

Some simple measures can be taken to reduce your risk of getting bitten by a tick, and of developing Lyme disease. These include:

- Wearing clothing that covers your skin, for example trousers instead of shorts. Light coloured clothing makes it easier to spot ticks and brush them off
- Using insect repellent
- Checking yourself, your clothing, your pets, and others for ticks after spending time outdoors. Ticks should be removed promptly using a tick-removal tool or fine-tipped tweezers

If you think you have been bitten by a tick and have symptoms (such as a spreading circular red rash or bulls-eye rash, non-specific flu-like symptoms, muscle or nerve pains, or a drooping facial appearance), contact your GP or NHS 111 as soon as possible.

For more information, visit the UKHSA website [here](#).

Please spread the word: research into the health and wellbeing needs of security guards, cleaners, and construction workers

The City Corporation's Public Health team and partners are asking for employers' assistance in recruiting people in frontline and essential roles - cleaning, security, and construction - to provide

their views on their health and wellbeing needs in the workplace through interviews or focus groups. This includes individuals in these roles working across Central London - not just in the City.

This qualitative research is being undertaken by Tavistock Relationships and UCL's Institute for Health Equity, on behalf of the City Corporation, Legal & General, PwC, and other partners.

The aim is to understand more about what measures can be taken to reduce and raise awareness of the avoidable and unfair health inequalities faced by this group of the workforce, to support an ongoing programme of work (more information [here](#)).

Participation can be tailored to the convenience of individuals, and participants will be provided with £20 shopping vouchers to thank them for their time.

We are asking for support to share information about participation opportunities with your own workers in these roles, as well as those who are contracted in.

If you would like to find out more about this research project, and how to share information with your workforce to get involved, please contact Caroline Millar (Associate - Tavistock Relationships) at carolinemillarwork@gmail.com or 07967 961997. Interviews and focus groups will be taking place during July.

Taking time to screen

Taking time away from work to go for an important screening appointment can be harder than it should be. For women working in casual employment, for people belonging to ethnic minority groups, and for LGBTQ+ groups, this can be even harder.

The North East London Cancer Alliance (NELCA) is determined to change this, and has created a resource pack for employers and employees, to provide support to overcome barriers to accessing screening during working hours.

There are three national screening programmes in the UK:

- **Bowel:** Everyone aged 60+, every 2 years (work is underway to expand the age eligibility to 50+ from 2025). The test is completed at home.
- **Breast:** Women aged 50-71, every 3 years. Appointments take place at screening centres.
- **Cervical:** All women and people with a cervix aged 25-64. 25-49 year olds are invited every 3 years, 50-64 year olds are invited every 5 years. Screening takes place at a GP practice.

NELCA is inviting employers to consider making a pledge to support their staff with time off to attend screening appointments.

There are a number of benefits for employers who support staff to attend health care appointments during working hours, including:

- Staff feeling valued
- A workforce that is more proactive about their health and wellbeing and that is encouraged to make their health a priority, e.g. proactively looking for signs and symptoms of cancers and other illnesses

- Less time out of work overall - a late diagnosis for cancer will mean staff are away from work for longer for treatment and recovery
- Contribution to the health of the wider community, as staff attending screenings will benefit their family and friends, too

More information about this campaign, the pledge, and how employers can get involved, can be found in the resource pack [here](#).

Have your say and help to shape local pharmacy offerings in the City

Pharmacies play an important role in the provision of health care and health advice. In the City of London they are a key way in which the worker population can access support for their health and wellbeing during working hours.

The City of London and Hackney Public Health team is currently undertaking a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA). The PNA looks at the current needs for pharmaceutical services, and is used to find any gaps in current services, or improvements that could be made in the future.

The PNA covers:

- dispensing of medicines and appliances on prescription
- sale of medicines to the public
- providing advice to the public on medicines, coping with ill health, or general health and wellbeing
- receiving waste medicines for destruction

Workers represent a significant population in the Square Mile, and are being asked to share their thoughts through the consultation on the PNA, which is open until Friday 8 July 2022.

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

Thought of the Month: ONS data looks at whether hybrid working is here to stay

"Improved staff wellbeing was the most common reason (60%) for businesses using, or planning to use, homeworking permanently.

More than three-quarters (78%) of those who worked from home in some capacity said that being able to work from home gave them an improved work-life balance.

The most common disadvantage experienced by homeworkers (48%) was difficulty in working with others.

The most common safety measure workers said they wanted when they went into their place of work was ventilation (69%), such as open windows, followed by enhanced cleaning procedures (66%)."

Data from the ONS' Opinions and Lifestyle Survey looked at the future plans of workers in terms of hybrid working, its advantages and drawbacks, and considerations for employers. Access the report [here](#).

Supporting financial wellbeing in the workplace

With the cost of living continuing to increase, worries about money are affecting more and more people. According to the Money & Pensions Service employee money worries have a significant cost to the economy, as a result of lost hours of work and impacts on staff performance (through lost sleep, for example).

The Money & Pensions Service has developed an evidence review looking at why employers should support their employees' financial wellbeing, and effective measures to do so. The review also includes case studies.

The resource can be accessed [here](#).

Coming up



Lunchtime walks: the return of Sculpture in the City 2022

The 11th edition of Sculpture in the City has returned, bringing an art gallery to the Square Mile's public outdoor spaces. Sculpture in the City hosts works by emerging and renowned artists in the City's famous building and public spaces, all completely free of charge.

The exhibition is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week until spring 2023. A map and information about the artworks can be found [here](#).

Responsible business: free upcoming events

[Heart of the City](#) is hosting a series of free 30-minute webinars for SMEs, covering hot responsible business topics, over the summer and autumn.

The series includes events on:

- Breaking down the barriers of mental health in recruitment
- Social justice and the Social Charter
- Introversion in the workplace: unleashing your quiet power

...and more. For details and to register, visit [Heart of the City's website](#).

Free resources

First Hand: A support guide for people who have witnessed a suicide of someone they didn't know

"First Hand" is a guide designed to support anyone affected by witnessing a suicide of someone they did not know. It has been developed by the Support After Suicide Partnership, Thrive LDN, Grassroots, and Sussex Health and Care Partnership.

The guide covers topics such as understanding what has happened, help with moving on, dwelling and rumination, experiencing suicide at work, and more. It can be accessed [here](#).

Business Healthy is hosting another free Samaritans volunteer-led Suicide Prevention Awareness webinar on 16 September, 9-11am, for the City's business community. Find out more and register [here](#).

James' Place: free support for men who are experiencing thoughts, feelings, or attempts of suicide

James' Place is a charity that exists to save the lives of men in suicidal crisis. It helps men aged 18+ by providing quick and free access to non-residential therapy and support. It offers an individualised person-centred intervention that is free and open to those in crisis, who are not currently undertaking care for a primary diagnosis, such as psychosis or addiction.

Referrals can be made directly, or through a concerned third party or professional. More information is available on the [James' Place website](#).