

Coronavirus

(COVID-19)

Standard Operating Procedure for workplaces

Public Health Hackney and
City of London Corporation

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Introduction

This guidance is for City and Hackney workplaces and provides information on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for prevention, mitigation and control of coronavirus. We aim to explain how the test and trace system works locally in relation to the symptomatic individual(s) and to the setting. We also describe how support is activated by Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell (PHE LCRC) and City and Hackney Public Health with multi-agency partners.

The guidance is intended to keep your setting safe and enables you to know what to do in the event of symptomatic cases of coronavirus in your setting. Our information aligns with national guidance, where possible, and includes frequently asked questions (FAQs). Individual/ collective responsibilities and external support are described in easy to follow flowcharts and your queries will be directed to a centralised email service testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk, from where your queries will be answered within 24 hours by City and Hackney Public Health and other relevant teams during office hours. If your query is out of office hours please contact Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell via email LCRC@phe.gov.uk or telephone **0300 303 0450**.

Symptoms of COVID-19

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are all or any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature or fever (37.8 or above)
- a loss or change in normal sense of smell or taste

Prevention responsibilities: Infection Prevention and Control

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and other associated legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, employers and those in positions of authority have a legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of those they are responsible for, as well as anyone else affected by their activities.

NHS Test and Trace

The NHS Test and Trace service aims to ensure that people who develop coronavirus are tested and that the spread of the disease is reduced. People who have had close contact with someone who has a positive coronavirus test result will be identified and asked to self-isolate to protect others within the community.

There are 3 levels to NHS Test & Trace:

Level 3 are nationally recruited call handlers with no clinical background

Level 2 are nationally recruited call handlers with some clinical/health background

Level 1 are Public Health England Health Protection Teams (in London this is the Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell PHE LCRC).

Single cases of coronavirus are often handled by level 3 or 2. When there are 2 or more cases at the setting linked by time and place, NHS Test and Trace will notify PHE LCRC through their escalation processes to deal with complex cases or outbreaks. PHE LCRC will work with the City and Hackney Public Health Team when there are local outbreaks, or other high risk situations.

What to do in the event of a suspected outbreak

An outbreak is defined as 2 or more confirmed or suspected cases of coronavirus in your setting or linked to your setting within 14 days.

If you become aware of 2 or more cases linked to your setting, **you must inform:**

- PHE LCRC (lcrc@phe.gov.uk or 0300 303 0450) and
- City and Hackney Public Health Team (testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk)

This is not necessary if there are less than 2 cases linked to your setting but you can contact PHE LCRC and the City and Hackney Public Health Team for support or advice.

You should conduct a risk assessment. A Single Point of Contact (SPoC), usually a senior manager, is responsible for conducting risk assessments and, in the event of an outbreak linked with the setting, will be the central point of contact for external local support. Please ensure you have a SPoC for your setting.

An outbreak is declared 'over' when 28 days have passed since the onset of the last confirmed case in the setting and the results of any possible cases in the 28 day period have been negative.

Incident Management Team (IMT)

PHE LCRC and City and Hackney Public Health may convene an IMT for outbreaks if:

- there has been a death amongst a suspected cluster or outbreak
- the outbreak is extensive i.e. large proportion of people are symptomatic/confirmed
- the outbreak is ongoing despite usual control measures
- Infection control measures are difficult to implement at the setting and/or there is non-compliance
- there were many vulnerable people involved
- there are other factors that require multi-agency coordination and decision making

What is an IMT?

An IMT is a team involving PHE LCRC, the Local Authority (may include Public Health, Environmental Health), a HSE and/ or Food Standards Agency representative (where appropriate), among other stakeholders, which will report regularly to the City and Hackney COVID-19 Health Protection Board.

What is the role of the IMT?

The IMT's purpose is to agree and coordinate the activities of the key stakeholders involved, to manage the investigation and control of an individual outbreak situation. Its objectives include, but are not limited to:

- assessing the risk to the public's health and to identify, coordinate, and ensure the implementation of control measures as soon as possible.
- reducing the likelihood of severe illness in vulnerable groups.
- the terms of reference for the IMT will be agreed at the first meeting and reviewed at regular intervals, until the outbreak is resolved.

Definitions for a 'case' and 'contact'

'Case' definitions:

- Single suspected/ possible case: a person with coronavirus symptoms
- Single confirmed case: a person who has tested positive for coronavirus
- Single complex case: a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus where there are complicated factors for the person/ setting (may include non-compliance with self-isolation advice, or specific activities that the symptomatic person was involved in during their infectious period). The infectious period is 48 hours prior to symptom onset to 10 days after (or 48 hours prior to test if asymptomatic)

'Contact' definitions:

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). For example, a contact can be:

- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- sexual partners
- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
 - » being coughed on
 - » having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - » having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - » contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

Infectious Period: 48 hours prior to symptom onset to 10 days after, or 48 hours prior to test if asymptomatic.

COVID-19 testing and contact tracing in workplaces

Includes large offices or co-working spaces, multi-tenanted/floor environments, Barristers' Chambers/ Inns of Court, mobile workforces and building/ construction sites

1. Introduction

This guidance provides an overview of testing and contact tracing in workplaces and the support available to you locally. The aim is to protect employers and workers in workplace settings and to prevent a wider outbreak of COVID-19.

2. Infection prevention and control

Under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), the [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) and other associated legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, employers have a legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of their workforce, as well as anyone else affected by their activities.

Please follow the [5 Steps to working safely guidance](#) and [Infection Control measures](#).

Where there is a suspected/confirmed COVID-19 case, ventilate the rooms, by opening the windows and avoid cleaning rooms for 72 hours where the symptomatic worker had been.

There is new guidance on wearing a [face covering](#) on public transport. Employers are advised to encourage their workers who cannot work from home and who cannot commute to/ from the workplace other than by using public transport, to wear a face covering, practice social distancing and follow good hand hygiene during and after use of public transport.

Downloadable PHE posters with this information can be accessed here:

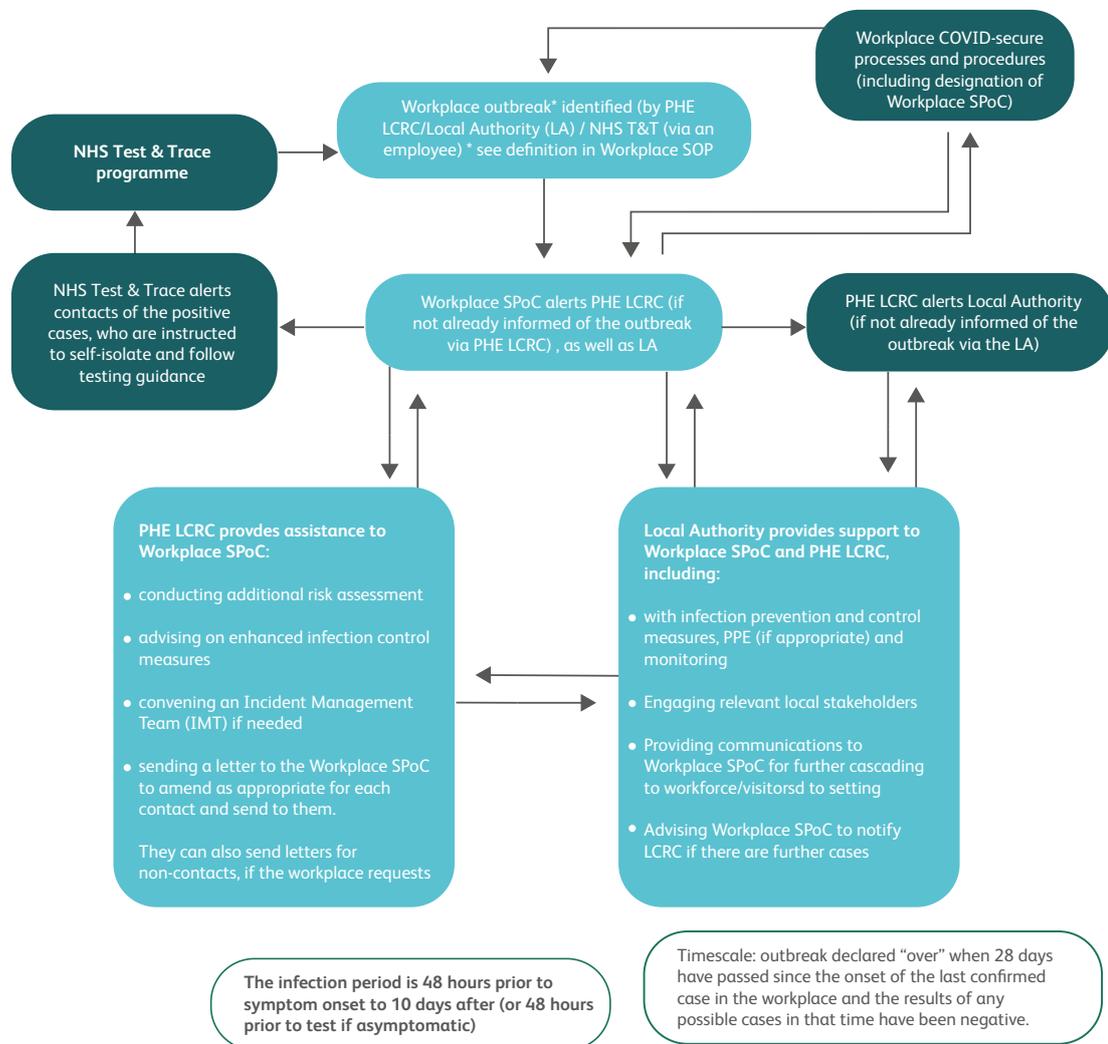
- [Handwashing](#)
- [Face coverings](#)
- [Social distancing](#)

A Single Point of Contact (SPoC), usually a senior manager, is responsible for conducting risk assessments and, in the event of an outbreak linked with the setting, will be the central point of contact for external local support. This SPoC has responsibility for cascading Local Authority information to its workers.

3. The SPoC should inform its Local Authority and PHE LCRC in the case of:

- A suspected/ confirmed case of COVID-19, where there are complicated factors as described in section 10.
- An outbreak as described in section 6.

4. Flowchart



5. Symptomatic workers

If someone has COVID-19 symptoms:

- The individual should inform their line manager and return home immediately, avoiding public transport if possible. They and everyone in their household/ support bubble should self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms – or longer, if symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell/ taste persists.
- Household/ support bubble members without symptoms will need to self-isolate for 14 days from the day when the first person in the household/ support bubble developed symptoms. See this [government table](#) on Stay at Home guidance for households for full details on how this works.
- The individual can apply for a test here (www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test) or by dialling **119** (between 8am and 11pm) if they need help booking a test and **18001 119** if they have hearing or speech difficulties. A test should be arranged immediately and must be conducted within three and five days of developing symptoms.
- Essential workers, or people living with essential workers, can access priority testing through the Government website www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers.
- When someone first develops symptoms and orders a test, they will be encouraged to alert the people that they have had close contact within the 48 hours before symptom onset. If any of those contacts are co-workers, we would encourage the person who has developed symptoms to ask their employer to alert those co-workers. See the 'Contact tracing: contact with co-workers' section of the [NHS test and trace: workplace guidance](#).
- If they need to self-isolate, workers will be issued with evidence from an official source asking them to do so, which they can (if they wish) share with their employer.
- The setting should conduct an immediate risk assessment to assess exposure of the workforce to the symptomatic worker.
- If symptomatic workers/ individuals linked to the workplace are identified, the workplace SPoC is advised to contact Public Health England [London Coronavirus Response Cell](#) (PHE LCRC) tel **0300 303 0450** or email LCRC@phe.gov.uk, or PHE.lcrc@nhs.net if sending from an NHS.net email account, to assist in the risk assessment. They will provide advice.
- They are also advised to contact the City and Hackney Public Health Team at testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk to inform of any cases/ symptomatic workers or individuals linked to the workplace and to ask for support (see below for more information of the role of Local Authority).

Positive Test results for COVID-19

- If there are 2 or more cases, or a complex single case, identified that are linked to the setting, the workplace must contact the PHE LCRC. This is not necessary if there are less than two cases linked to the setting, however settings should bear in mind the definition of an outbreak, as below.
- If there are 2 or more cases, or a complex single case linked to a workplace setting, PHE LCRC will conduct a risk assessment with the workplace SPoC. This is in addition to any risk assessments the workplace may have already conducted as part of the 5 steps to working safely and will advise on enhanced infection control measures. They will also inform the Local Authority and convene an incident management team (IMT) if needed.
- For each individual case NHS Test & Trace will identify contacts and if any workplace contacts are identified they will be informed to self-isolate for 14 days from last contact with the case.

6. Outbreak(s)

If 2 or more cases are identified in the same workplace an outbreak will be declared. PHE LCRC will support you and advise on next steps. In this situation contacts of the case will be identified by LCRC and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.

Negative Test results for COVID-19

The individual can return to work if they are well and have been medically fit (no fever) for 48 hours, unless a member of their household and/or support bubble has tested positive or has symptoms.

The individual does not need to self-isolate and can return to work if they have a negative result as long as:

- everyone they live with who has symptoms tests negative
- everyone in their support bubble who has symptoms tests negative
- they were not told to self-isolate for 14 days by NHS Test and Trace
- they feel well – if they feel unwell, they should stay at home until they feel better. If they have diarrhoea or are being sick, they should stay at home until 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped

7. City and Hackney Public Health Team

Where there is an outbreak or a single complex confirmed case linked to a workplace, the Local Authority, led by City and Hackney Public Health Team, will support PHE LCRC and the workplace in the following ways:

- Provide ongoing support with infection prevention and control measures and monitoring of the setting (including advising the workplace to notify PHE LCRC if there are further cases).
- Provide support with self-isolation of staff who live within the area, particularly for vulnerable groups/individuals.
- Liaise with the CCG, GPs and other healthcare providers and partners, where appropriate.
- Provide support to the workplace SPoC on communications to share with workers taking into account specific requirements where needed (e.g. translation, easy read for staff with low levels of English).
- Ensure good communications between PHE LCRC, multi-agency partners and the Local Authority.

8. SPoC examples for different workplace settings

If an outbreak occurs within:

- an organisation located within a **single large office building** (i.e. multi-floor) OR a **co-working space**: a SPoC for the setting may be a HR/ Office or Facilities Management lead, or a Community Manager (in the case of a co-working space).
- a **multi-tenanted, multi-floor office environment or location**: a SPoC (as above) will need to be identified for each tenanted unit/ organisation, plus a main SPoC for the building as a whole (i.e. the Building Manager for the management organisation). The main SPoC will be responsible for liaising with PHE LCRC, the Local Authority and the relevant SPoCs within the building (tenant SPoCs), to ensure consistent communications are cascaded through all businesses on the premises, whether they are directly affected or not. This model also applies to co-working spaces, where appropriate.
- **Barristers' Chambers/ Inns of Court**: a SPoC within each Chambers should be identified, who will liaise with PHE LCRC and the Local Authority and who will have responsibility for notifying the SPoC for the Inns of Court, who will in turn notify other Chambers' SPoCs, tenants and staff.

- **a mobile workforce:** for example among those who work in or from vehicles, where it is likely the individual has been in close contact with co-workers (e.g. when using office or rest/toilet facilities), a SPoC within the host organisation will need to be identified to cascade information to workers who are likely to have been in contact with the individual.
- **a building/ construction site:** the organisational SPoC could be a Site Manager and must include all contractors working on-site when sending communications.

This is not an exhaustive list and designation of the most appropriate SPoC will vary between organisations and settings, for example where workers are visiting both their workplace and client sites.

9. National Guidance

- [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID 19\)](#)
- [NHS Test and Trace: How it works](#)
- [NHS Test and Trace: Workplace guidance](#)
- [ACAS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for employers and employees](#)
- [COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)
- [HSE risk assessment tool](#)
- [Contacts: PHE health protection teams](#)
- [Public Health England's 'Customer Logging Toolkit'](#)
- [Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace](#)

10. FAQ's

What if a suspected case receives an 'unclear' / 'void' / 'borderline' / 'inconclusive' test result for COVID-19?

This means it's not possible to say whether the individual had COVID-19 when the test was done. NHS guidance is to get another COVID-19 test as soon as possible if this happens. The individual will need to [keep self-isolating for the full 10 days if they have symptoms and try to get a repeat test within 5 days of their symptoms starting.](#)

Can I get evidence that my employee has been asked to self-isolate?

Employees can use this link <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/> to request an isolation note to show their employers. Employers may need this if they are going to claim a Statutory Sick Pay rebate.

Can someone who is self-isolating (as a result of being instructed to by NHS Test and Trace, because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19) be tested and if they are negative return to work?

No you must complete the full period of self-isolation.

Can I request information to see who has potentially infected my employees - e.g. other employees/ customers?

The NHS Test and Trace system will not share any data with employers for privacy reasons. However your risk assessment can be based on the symptomatic worker's movements to time and place in your setting.

Who would make the decision on whether a workplace needs to be closed down?

- The Government's [COVID-19 Contain Framework](#) clarifies the responsibilities and powers available to local decision-makers to manage local outbreaks in a dynamic way.
- This means that local authorities have the power to close individual premises, contaminated premises and food businesses, as well as other local settings, in order to respond to a serious and imminent threat to public health and to control the transmission of COVID-19 in the local area.

For workers:

What happens if I am unable to go into work either due to symptoms or contact with a positive case?

- Employers should support workers who need to self-isolate and must not ask them to attend the workplace.
- Workers must isolate themselves if they:
 - » have COVID-19 symptoms and are awaiting a test result.
 - » have tested positive for COVID-19 .
 - » are a member of the same household as someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19.
 - » have been in recent, close contact with someone who has tested positive and received a notification to self-isolate from NHS Test and Trace.
- Employers should continue to communicate with workers in self-isolation and provide support. This includes allowing people to work from home if they remain well and if it is practicable to do so. This might include finding alternative work that can be completed at home during the period of self-isolation.
- If people can't work from home, employers must ensure any self-isolating employee is receiving sick pay and give them the option to use their paid leave days if they prefer. Further guidance is available on what employees should do if they cannot work.
- Employees in self-isolation are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay for every day they are in isolation, as long as they meet the eligibility conditions.
- [Government guidance for employers on reclaiming Statutory Sick Pay.](#)