

25 June 2021

Dear business owner,

COVID-19 - Helping businesses work safely

The coming weeks will bring details of the next steps in the Government's roadmap and we are all looking forward to a time when life can get back to nearer normal.

However, the rise in local infections is a stark reminder that Covid is still with us and we know that the new Delta variant in circulation is easier to pass onto others than previous strains.

It is important therefore that we all continue our efforts to stop the virus spreading further and help ensure we can move forward.

I know that many of you are balancing a wide range of challenges brought about by the pandemic and I would like to thank you for everything you continue to do.

I have outlined below a reminder of the guidance and actions you can take to help protect your staff, customers and business and also information about the support we can offer you as a public health team during these challenging times.

The guidance and actions apply to everyone, even those who have been vaccinated, as they could still carry and pass on the virus.

Working from home / Covid-19 secure guidelines

National guidance continues to be that everyone must work from home unless they are unable to do so.

Where people cannot work from home, employers should take steps to reduce the risk of transmission by following the [COVID-19 secure guidelines](#).

We've got a range of [explainer videos](#) on our website covering everything from how to write a risk assessment to NHS Test and Trace – all designed to help business work safely.

Regular Testing

Up to 1 in 3 people have Covid without symptoms. Encourage employees to take part in regular home testing to help stop the spread. Anyone who has a positive test from a home test must self isolate immediately along with their entire household and book a PCR test within two days.

Self-isolation

Employees who are self-isolating must stay at home because they have or may have Covid-19. Supporting employees to isolate when they need to will help stop the virus spreading further amongst staff and customers and could prevent further absences.

Employees, even those who have been fully vaccinated, will need to self-isolate if;

- They have any symptoms of Covid, no matter how mild. They must self-isolate immediately along with everyone they live with and book a PCR test.
- They have tested positive,
- They are a close contact of someone who has tested positive
- Someone in their household has symptoms of Covid or has tested positive.

It is really important that you know what to do if you have a confirmed or suspected case of Covid in the workplace and have robust contact tracing mechanisms in place. We have created a short video on [early outbreak management](#) to help.

Self-isolation help and support

We understand that isolating isn't always easy and we've got information on our website about the support which is available, including details of financial payments for those who are eligible. See www.sunderland.gov.uk/testing and www.sunderland.gov.uk/selfisolation for more information.

Covid-19 Vaccine

Vaccines are our best protection against the virus and two doses provide the greatest protection.

All adults are now eligible for the vaccine. You can use the [national resources](#) for workplaces to encourage employees to get vaccinated.

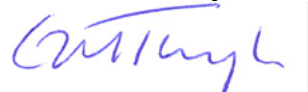
We know some people have questions about the vaccine and we're encouraging those who have questions to get their answers from a reliable source. We've got answers to some of the most frequently asked questions on the beatcovid.ne website.

Workplace webinar

We're hosting a workplace webinar on Thursday 1 July at 5.30. Members of the Public Health team will cover some of the information above as well as answering any questions you may have to help you continue to work safely. Sign up [here](#).

If you have any queries or need further support, the latest national information and guidance can be found at www.gov.uk/coronavirus or visit www.sunderland.gov.uk/coronavirus

Yours sincerely,



Gerry Taylor
Executive Director of Public Health for Sunderland