

## Message from the Chief Executive Althea Loderick



I want to extend my ongoing thanks to you all. The past months have been incredibly difficult for people in terms of their physical and emotional wellbeing. We want to ensure we continue to support you regardless of where you are working. I know all staff are working above and beyond the call of duty to help us continue servicing our local community.

This update has been created specifically for staff who don't have access to council IT systems so that we can keep you up-to-date on general news about Coronavirus and any issues specific to your service. Please check the staff pages on the website: [www.Newham.gov.uk/staffinfo](http://www.Newham.gov.uk/staffinfo) regularly for updates.

Thank you!

# Coronavirus (Covid-19)

## Keeping you in touch

- This is a slide-based briefing which should be cascaded to all staff through line management chains and shared / discussed with all those who are not on email at weekly or daily briefings. It is issued to Managers at least once a week on Thursday, or more frequently as required.
- It can be also be accessed on the new staff information page: [www.Newham.gov.uk/staffinfo](http://www.Newham.gov.uk/staffinfo)
- More detailed information and guidance is on the **new Covid-19 pages** on the intranet and managers should ensure all staff (who have email) are able to access it.

### **This briefing covers:**

- Latest national / regional / local figures re cases
- Latest advice and guidance
- Key messages for staff in Newham

# Covid-19 safety and procedures

[You can find more detail and information on Covid-19 safety and procedures on the Intranet.](#)

**You can find more information on the following topics:**

## **Working from home**

All staff are reminded to work from home wherever possible. You should only attend the workplace if your role cannot be undertaken at home. If you are unsure whether you should attend the workplace, please speak with your line manager.

## **Individual risk assessments**

All managers are required to review the individual risk assessment for employees who continue to attend the workplace.

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**You can find more information on the following topics:**

## **Workplace safety**

If you are required to attend the workplace to undertake your job role you must:

- have completed an individual risk assessment with your line manager
- observe strict social distancing at all times
- regularly wash or sanitise your hands
- All staff are reminded to wear a face-covering at all times in all Newham premises. This includes when you are moving about the workplace, using lifts, using facilities in communal spaces, and when you are on a break. This requirement applies to all staff at all council premises. You may remove your face covering while sat at a social-distanced desk, but this is the only time when a face-covering does not need to be worn.

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**You can find more information on the following topics:**

## **Employees who are clinically extremely vulnerable**

Employees who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not be asked to attend the workplace at the current time.

## **School closures**

While schools are now closed to the majority of pupils, they continue to be open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers (previously known as key workers).

## **Staff absence due to Covid-19**

If you need to self-isolate or you are unable to work due to Covid-19 symptoms or a positive test, you must inform your line manager immediately.

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**You can find more information on the following topics:**

## **Your wellbeing**

Now more than ever, it is important that we all take time to consider our own wellbeing. Every one of us could benefit from considering the [wellbeing resources](#) available on the intranet. If you want to find out more or ask for support, please contact [wellbeing@newham.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeing@newham.gov.uk) or our free and independent [employee assistance programme](#)

# Get tested if you are attending the workplace

**Asymptomatic testing for staff who are in attendance at the workplace.**

**Lateral Flow - rapid tests.**

**Who is being tested and why?**

Testing is important because staff without symptoms could be carrying the virus and may spread it to others. Testing staff, who are in attendance at the workplace, will support our services to operate as safely as possible. The rapid tests are not available to staff who are working from home. These new, simple and quick tests, known as Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests, enable us to rapidly test staff without the need for a laboratory.

**Where can I get tested?**

Vicarage Lane Community Centre E15 4HW

Katherine Road Community Centre E7 8PN

Jeyes Community Centre E13 9BB

Jack Cornwell Community Centre E12 5NN

Ascot Community Centre E16 4PL

# Get tested if you are attending the workplace - continued

## How do I book a test?

Book a test go to: [www.newham.gov.uk/rapidtesting](http://www.newham.gov.uk/rapidtesting)

## What happens if I test positive?

- Inform your line manager and immediately return home in a safe manner;
- book a normal swab test immediately to confirm the results. Book online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> - or call 119;
- isolate for 10 full days and only return to work when you are well enough and have not had a high temperature or diarrhoea for 48 hours;
- the people you live with must isolate for 10 days. This means staying at home;
- tell the people you've been close to and don't go to work.

**Regular staff testing and maintaining our safer working practices will keep our residents and colleagues safe. The test results are available in approximately 30 minutes, once you've registered the test takes 5 minutes to complete after which time you can return to your workplace. The results are sent directly to you by text or email – whichever method you have specified.**

**Staff are encouraged to have a Lateral Flow test twice a week – at least three days apart.**

# Support to stop smoking

Smoking remains the biggest cause of death and illness in Newham. A brand new Stop Smoking Service is offering smokers living in the borough a free and flexible 8-week treatment program with a stop smoking adviser (with language support if needed). This includes FREE Nicotine Replacement Therapy, prescription medication or electronic cigarettes.

Get support to quit for yourself or a customer (with their consent). Call 020 7882 8230 / 0800 169 1943 or email [clinicbookings@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:clinicbookings@qmul.ac.uk)

# Workplace Wellbeing – support for you

**Are you struggling with your mental health and would like someone to talk to?**

## **Mental Health First Aiders**

For a friendly listening ear to talk through any difficulties you may be having, why not book an appointment with a mental health first aider? Mental Health First Aiders are colleagues who have been trained to take these confidential appointments and to signpost you to useful support services. To book an appointment, email [wellbeing@newham.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeing@newham.gov.uk)

# Workplace Wellbeing – support for you

## Employee Assistance Helpline

The Council's Employee Assistance Helpline is a free and independent service for all employees and their family (who live at the same address). Operated by WSM the service provides confidential, freephone access 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year for employees to access counsellors and advisors who can provide both practical and emotional support on a variety of issue. Call on 0800 328 1437 to get support.

## Financial Support

Are you worried about your finances? Newham partner with Neyber, to offer support to help staff feel secure and resilient when it comes to their financial future. [Visit the Neybar website](#) for personalised financial guidance and Fairer Finance loans to offer you the option to borrow fairly and securely through your salary. You can also phone the Employee Assistance Helpline for confidential financial information.

For more information or wellbeing support, visit [our intranet site](#) or email [wellbeing@newham.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeing@newham.gov.uk)

# Carry-over of annual leave due to Covid-19

We want to remind you all about how vital it is that you use all your annual leave. It is important that you have adequate rest as this will help in maintaining both you and your family's health and wellbeing.

Although staff should use their annual leave in the current leave year, it is recognised that there may be employees who have been directly engaged in supporting crucial services and/or for other reasons where it may not be possible to take all of their leave in the current leave year i.e. 2020/21.

For this reason, the Council has agreed that employees are able to carry forward up to 20 days –or pro-rata equivalent to the 2021/22 annual leave year. In these circumstances where a large amount of annual leave is carried forward, the manager must meet with the employee to agree their annual leave plans. The expectation is that the 20 days carry-forward leave should be used within 18 months i.e. by 30/9/22.

[You can find the full Covid HR guidance around annual leave here.](#)

# National and local status



The number of infections recorded as of **11am on 13 January 2021**:

- **3,164,051 cases** of coronavirus have been confirmed.
- There have been **83,203 deaths\*** in the UK. Of those **409\*** were in Newham.
- Newham has had **26,265 positive cases since the start of pandemic.**
- Public Health Newham have also created a **weekly dashboard of Covid-19 information**: <https://www.newham.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-dashboard/1>

*\* Where death has occurred within 28 days of positive Covid test*

# Hands. Face. Space.

- Remember the basics - **Hands. Face. Space.**
- **Staying home is key:** If you have symptoms **isolate for 10 days**. Do this until you have a negative test. If you live with someone or have had close contact with someone who has symptoms you need to **isolate for 14 days**, having your own test, unfortunately, doesn't make a difference as you may still be incubating the virus. Only if the person who had symptoms is negative can you stop isolating.
- **Stay 2m away from people you don't live with; wash your hands regularly; wear a face-covering inside and outside if you can't stay 2m from people.**
- **Ask for help when you need it:** isolating is hard, particularly when we've just started to come back into seeing people. And limiting who we see is hard. Newham's COVID-19 help line remains open 1pm-7pm, 7 days a week on 0207 473 9711 (1-7pm, 7 days a week).

# Social distancing reminder

- With the number of **new Covid-19 cases on the rise both in Newham and nationally**, it is vital **that everyone that does access our offices or other work sites follows all of Newham's workforce social distancing protocols.**
- Staff are to maintain the **2 metre distancing rule at all times** (wherever practically possible) when working in any Council building.
- We have **increased cleaning regimes & improved access to sanitisers & wipes**: please use these to minimise the risk of infection.
- **Only one person is allowed in a lift at any one time** – enclosed spaces increase the risk of infection.
- **Staff are to use stairs to go down & elevators to go up** floors (unless they cannot use stairs).
- Some of **desks have been closed off to enable staff to maintain social distancing**, Only use desks identified as being available to use.
- Any **one-way building circulation advice and meeting room capacities should be strictly followed.**
- You should make **increased use of the hand sanitisers and desk wipes that have been made available at our open sites.**
- **Strictly follow any advice on face coverings or personal protective equipment that you have been issued with** in relation to your particular role.

# Testing

- If you have symptoms, stay home for 10 days and to try and get a test if you can.
- If you are worried about your symptoms **please call NHS 111 or your GP.**
- The walkthrough test site in East Ham is currently seeing high demand so **you should not attend without a booked test** (as you may not be able to get a test as a walk-up).
- If you live with someone who has symptoms you **need to stay home for 14 days.**
- If you have been in close contact with someone who has received a positive test or has symptoms, **stay home for 14 days.**
- If you develop symptoms during isolation, **try to get a test and stay home.**
- Please **do not get tested if you have no symptoms.**
- The new NHS Test and Trace App is an additional tool that you can use to help keep yourself safe and stop the spread of the virus. [www.newham.gov.uk/testandtrace](http://www.newham.gov.uk/testandtrace)
- **Health and social care COVID-19 priority testing is available.**
- NHS and Social Care staff and members of their household can access priority testing if they have symptoms via the NEL Portal: <https://nhscovidtestlondon.onk2.com> or by calling 0191 691 3656.