

Offices and contact centres

This prevention card has been developed by the Public Health team at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to help people who work in or run offices or contact centres during COVID-19.

It is designed to supplement Government Guidance and provide local contact details for businesses in Stockton-on-Tees.

Gov.uk Guidance (Click below)

- [Working safely during coronavirus](#)
- [Offices and contact centres](#)
- [Cleaning in a non-healthcare setting](#)
- [General guidance for employees during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [NHS test and trace: workplace guidance](#)
- [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person](#)

General guidelines to prevent spread of COVID-19

There are important actions that everyone should always take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is important that you follow the guidance to minimise the risk to you, your staff, your community and your business.

There are a range of guides to support the safe reopening of your setting. Refer to [Working safely during coronavirus guidance](#) or search the title on GOV.UK. You must carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment for your organisation.

The key messages on this card are specifically in relation to preventing an outbreak and should not replace health and safety and infection steps you already take or have implemented as a result of following the working safely guidance.

Key Messages

Follow the gov.uk guidance – to reduce transmission, to protect your business and customers, and to help avoid a local lockdown.

Communicate these key messages to staff and visitors:

Hands: Wash your hands with soap and water regularly for at least 20 seconds. When you can't wash your hands, use alcohol gel in line with government guidance. This will help to reduce the risk of catching or passing on the virus.

Face: Coronavirus is carried in the air by tiny respiratory droplets that carry the virus. Larger droplets can land on other people or on surfaces they touch. Smaller droplets called aerosols, can stay in the air indoors for at least 5 minutes, and often much longer if there is no fresh air. Face coverings reduce the dispersion of these droplets, meaning if you're carrying the virus, you're less likely to spread it when you exhale.

Space: Transmission of the virus is most likely to happen within 2 metres, with risk increasing exponentially at shorter distances. Always aim for 2 metres, however where this is not possible 1 metre plus additional precautions. For example; ventilation (windows open, do not recirculate air), physical screen, avoid talking face-to-face, avoid talking loudly or singing, stand side to side, wear a face covering

Ventilate: airing rooms is important as it reduces the number of infectious aerosols in the air. Simple actions like opening windows regularly throughout the day and making sure that mechanical ventilation systems and extractor fans are used correctly, will reduce the risk.

Good respiratory hygiene: Catch it, Bin it, Kill it.

Recognising symptoms (any one of the below)

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature).
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If staff/visitors have any of these **symptoms: stay at home, isolate and test.**

If staff/visitors **live with someone with symptoms of COVID-19: stay at home, isolate and follow government guidance,** which can be found [here](#).

If staff/visitors **are contacts of someone with symptoms of COVID-19: stay at home, isolate and follow government guidance,** which can be found [here](#).

Testing is most effective within 3 days of developing symptoms.

Adapt: Consider how to best minimise the opportunity of disease spread by minimising the use of shared equipment including computer equipment and additional cleaning of shared surfaces; socially distance, where possible; provide hand sanitiser and/or handwashing facilities for staff and visitors; consider implementing staff bubbles and staggered shifts; advise wearing face coverings throughout the building; consider the use of screens; implement a one way system, if appropriate; display posters encouraging COVID-19 safety measure; support contact tracing by maintaining a record of staff and visitors; regularly deep clean the premises, specifically frequent touch points.

Communicate your Covid-secure measures at every opportunity – at staff meetings, online, during booking, and prior to entry.

Reporting Cases

If you are notified of a positive case related to your place of work contact Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council via <https://www.digital.stockton.gov.uk/covid19-contactus> and we will provide further advice and guidance.

Resources

Public Health England have produced a range of resources to help you communicate these important messages. You will still need specific communications for your own business, but you may find these helpful. You are responsible for communicating these messages with your staff and customers.

[Symptoms and how to get tested](#)

[Feeling unwell get tested](#)

[Social media resources for employers](#)

[Public Health England Best Practice Handwash poster](#)

[Public Health England Best Practice Hand Rub poster](#)

[COVID-19 risk assessment poster](#)

[Every Mind Matters posters \(sign up required\)](#)

Local Support

If you need any further advice or assistance, please contact us at:

<https://www.digital.stockton.gov.uk/covid19-contactus>