

Infection control for businesses after Covid 19

Covid 19 restrictions have been removed, however businesses still have a responsibility to put in place infection control measures to protect their employees and others.

What are the business responsibilities?

Businesses still have responsibility to minimise the spread of Covid-19 and other infectious diseases within the workplace. These diseases include Covid-19, SARS and Norovirus. A full list of diseases can be found [here](#).

Your local environmental health department may be able to advise on the adequacy of existing measures in place and any additional measures that can be taken by the business to prevent transmission.

Workers and visitors will feel assured that controls are in place and the business is doing what it can to protect staff and others from the risk of infection.

What controls should I be considering?

Effective controls include some of the following simple measures:

- **Ventilation** – good ventilation can prevent many infectious diseases spreading.
 - There is a requirement to provide effective ventilation under the *Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 & L24 Approved Code of Practice*.
 - Further spikes of Covid infection along with other respiratory infections are expected especially during the winter months and now is the best time to prepare to improve natural and mechanical ventilation or install new ventilation systems.
 - Carbon dioxide monitors can be used as a tool to help assess the effectiveness of current ventilation.
 - Hertfordshire is currently offering to provide financial support to improve ventilation within your business:
[Stay Safe, Stay Open packages across Hertfordshire](#)
[Covid-19 Advice and Support](#)

- **Hand washing** - Washing and sanitising hands will continue to help reduce spread of diseases. Therefore, retain hand washing facilities and sanitiser stations to protect staff, visitors, and customers. When hands are not visibly soiled, hand sanitiser is great at reducing and preventing the spread of covid and flu, but it is not effective against some other diseases such as norovirus where hand washing with hot soapy water is the best control.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/best-way-to-wash-your-hands>

- **Sick pay** – In order to protect your employees and your business you need a policy in place for staff members with either symptoms of, or a positive result of, Covid-19 or other infectious diseases. It is also best practise to have procedures in place for any staff who are contacts of a positive case.

- If staff members are symptomatic, it is recommended that they do not come into work.
 - It should be clear in your sickness policy that staff should make you aware immediately of their situation and work from home where possible.
 - If employees come into work as normal this could result in spreading disease amongst other staff and more staff being put at risk and eventually affecting your business continuity.
 - If sick pay is offered by you as an employer, this may serve as a control measure in preventing the spread of infection.
- **Encouraging staff with symptoms not to physically attend work** – as well as providing sick pay, encourage staff not to attend work whilst having symptoms or following a positive COVID-19 test. If staff can work from home this should be encouraged, this is viewed as a positive step in controlling spread of COVID-19 along with other infectious disease. Also see the following link to government guidance [Reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, in the workplace - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reducing-the-spread-of-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19-in-the-workplace)
[People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19)
 - **Retaining screens where possible** – If you have already invested in screens and they can be maintained without affecting your business, screens can help protect your staff and visitors but also help staff that are vulnerable feel more confident about returning to work.
 - **Vulnerable workers** – you may have staff members or customers that are vulnerable. Not only will the above measures help them feel comfortable, but you have a legal duty to protect these employees and staff within your business.
 - **Face coverings** – encourage use of face coverings for both staff and customers when in enclosed and busy areas. The government still recommend their use indoors in certain situations, particularly in confined or crowded spaces.
 - **Cleaning** – Maintaining a higher level of cleaning in busy areas and common touch points will help to reduce the spread of infectious disease. This is particularly important if your business practices hot desking. Information on effective cleaning products are available here: [Antiviral Cleaning Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/antiviral-cleaning-guidance).
 - **Equipment use** – where possible equipment should not be shared. Where this is not possible it should be sanitised between use.

Vaccinations

Encouraging staff to have vaccinations will bolster business continuity and reduce staff sickness. Flu jabs are available annually with further information available via your GP.

[Flu vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Risk Assessment

Finally, all the above controls should be outlined in your risk assessment. Whilst you do not need to produce an infection control specific risk assessment these controls should be integrated into your generic risk assessment or you may wish to produce separate guidance on infection control. If you have under 5 employees, you are not required to write down these controls but are still expected to be able to demonstrate you have controls in place.

If you have five or more employees your risk assessment must be written down.

Risk assessment templates are available here: [Managing risks and risk assessment at work – Overview -HSE](#)

Other support

The Better Business for All (BBfA) partnership has produced a toolkit of resources to help businesses trade safely and comply with the law.

These documents will be regularly updated. Please check back often to ensure you are following the latest version. Some of the guidance may not apply to you directly but can be adapted to suit your business.

[COVID-19 advice and support | Hertfordshire LEP](#)

