



Warm Welcomes and Covid-19

Guidance note dated October 2022.

There is currently no government guidance for community venues in relation to Covid-19. Previous government guidance (available at [this link](#)) was withdrawn in July 2021. There is general guidance on [living safely with respiratory conditions](#) and on [reducing the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace](#) which this guidance summarises.

As the colder months approach, more people may meet indoors and of course the Warm Welcomes initiatives encourages this. So it would be good to consider the simple things that we could do to keep each other safe from infections such as Covid-19. This guidance encourages you to consider what you could do at your venue to reduce risk.

This note cannot be a substitute for any official government guidance which may change. We recommend reviewing government guidance periodically and amending any of your policies and procedures accordingly.

The government guidance

1. [Living safely with respiratory infections, including Covid-19](#)

This guidance is for individuals and the actions that we can all take in order to reduce the risk of catching Covid-19 and other illnesses such as cold and flu, and passing them to others. Some people can have respiratory illnesses with no symptoms, but for others it can cause serious illness.

Things we can all do to reduce the risks of catching and passing on respiratory infections include:

1. Getting vaccinated against Covid-19 and flu when offered seasonal boosters

2. Ventilating indoor spaces
3. Practising good hygiene such as:
 - a. Covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing to reduce the risk of spreading infection
 - b. Washing / sanitising hands regularly, especially after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, before eating and when you've been touching lots of surfaces
 - c. Cleaning surfaces, especially ones that have been touched regularly, like door handles and light switches
4. Wearing a face-covering, particularly if you know you will be in contact with vulnerable people, if you have symptoms of a respiratory illness, in poorly-ventilated spaces, or in crowded or enclosed spaces

Further information:

[GermDefence](#) is a useful website that can help you identify ways to protect yourself and others in your household from COVID-19. It provides scientifically proven advice on reducing the risks from COVID-19 and other viruses in your home.

[Guidance and information](#) on the symptoms of respiratory illnesses including Covid-19.

2. Reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including Covid-19, in the workplace

This guidance covers the principles for reducing the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace (including public venues that are staffed wholly or partly by volunteers). The guidance replaces the Working safely during coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance.

The guidance is for people who manage a workplace or organisation (including volunteer-staffed venues) and it is intended to help people to understand how to reduce the spread of respiratory infections, especially as some people can get seriously ill from flu and Covid-19.

While it is no longer a statutory duty to include Covid-19 in your risk assessments, you will still have a duty of care and health and safety obligations, so you may choose to include it.

Things to consider to reduce the risk of spreading respiratory infections

The guidance encourages workplaces and venues to:

1. Know the symptoms, which you can find [at this link](#).
2. Consider what to do if staff or volunteers have symptoms – this might include encouraging them to take time off to recover, avoiding close contact with others, encouraging the wearing of face coverings
3. Encourage and enable vaccination

4. Let fresh air in / ventilate the space – you might also wish to think about how many people it is comfortable to have in your space at any one time. You may want to have disposable masks available for those who choose to wear them
5. Keep the space clean, especially surfaces that are touched regularly and by many people, such as door handles and light switches. You may want to consider having hand sanitiser available
6. Consider adding the risks of infection to your health and safety risk assessment – this is not a legal requirement, but it may help you to have some simple processes in writing

Further information

There is a [COVID-19 vaccination guide](#) for employers which contains information on actions employers can take to enable staff vaccination. There is also guidance available on the [vaccines that are available through the NHS](#).

The Health and Safety Executive provides [guidance on how to assess and improve ventilation](#) in line with health and safety requirements under Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Detailed COVID-19 specific guidance for workplaces and public buildings is provided by the [Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers \(CIBSE\)](#) for those who wish to put additional measures in place.

There is specific [guidance for people whose immune system means that they are at higher risk](#), because they have a reduced ability to fight infections, such as COVID-19.

The Health and Safety Executive has [guidance on how to keep people safe and healthy at work](#).