

# Coronavirus

(COVID-19)

Standard operating procedure for  
the Voluntary & Community  
Sector (VCS) and community  
centre settings

Public Health  
London Borough of Hackney and City of London  
Corporation

**Guidance correct 22/10/20**

# Introduction

This guidance is for City and Hackney voluntary and community sector providers and community centre settings and provides information on standard operating procedures (SOPs) for prevention, mitigation and control of coronavirus. We aim to explain how the test and trace system works locally in relation to the symptomatic individual(s) and to the setting. We also describe how support is activated by Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell (PHE LCRC) and City and Hackney Public Health with multi-agency partners.

The guidance is intended to keep your setting safe and enables you to know what to do in the event of symptomatic cases of coronavirus in your setting. Our information aligns with national guidance, where possible, and includes frequently asked questions (FAQs). Individual/ collective responsibilities and external support are described in easy to follow flowcharts and your queries will be directed to a centralised email service [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk), from where your queries will be answered within 24 hours by City and Hackney Public Health and other relevant teams during office hours. If your query is out of office hours please contact Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell via e mail [LCRC@phe.gov.uk](mailto:LCRC@phe.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 3030 0450.

## Symptoms of COVID-19

**The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are all or any of the following:**

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature or fever (37.8 or above)
- a loss or change in normal sense of smell or taste

## Prevention responsibilities: Infection Prevention and Control

**Under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), the [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) and other associated legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, employers and those in positions of authority have a legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of those they are responsible for, as well as anyone else affected by their activities.**

## NHS Test and Trace

The NHS Test and Trace service aims to ensure that people who develop coronavirus are tested and that the spread of the disease is reduced. People who have had close contact with someone who has a positive coronavirus test result will be identified and asked to self-isolate to protect others within the community.

### There are 3 levels to NHS Test & Trace:

**Level 3** are nationally recruited call handlers with no clinical background

**Level 2** are nationally recruited call handlers with some clinical/health background

**Level 1** are Public Health England Health Protection Teams (in London this is the Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell PHE LCRC).

Single cases of coronavirus are often handled by level 3 or 2.

## What to do in the event of a suspected outbreak

An outbreak is defined as 2 or more confirmed or suspected cases of coronavirus in your setting or linked to your setting within 14 days.

If you become aware of 2 or more cases linked to your setting, **you must inform:**

- PHE LCRC ([lcrc@phe.gov.uk](mailto:lcrc@phe.gov.uk) or 0300 303 0450) and
- City and Hackney Public Health Team ([testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk))

If there are less than 2 cases linked to your setting, you should contact the City and Hackney Public Health Team for support or advice.

An outbreak is declared 'over' when 28 days have passed since the onset of the last confirmed case in the setting and the results of any possible cases in the 28 day period have been negative.

## Incident Management Team (IMT)

PHE LCRC and City and Hackney Public Health may convene an IMT for outbreaks if:

- there has been a death amongst a suspected cluster or outbreak
- the outbreak is extensive i.e. large proportion of people are symptomatic/confirmed
- the outbreak is ongoing despite usual control measures
- Infection control measures are difficult to implement at the setting and/or there is non-compliance
- there were many vulnerable people involved
- there are other factors that require multi-agency coordination and decision making

## What is an IMT?

An IMT is a team involving PHE LCRC, the Local Authority (may include Public Health, Environmental Health), a HSE and/ or Food Standards Agency representative (where appropriate), among other stakeholders, which will report regularly to the City and Hackney COVID-19 Health Protection Board.

## What is the role of the IMT?

The IMT's purpose is to agree and coordinate the activities of the key stakeholders involved, to manage the investigation and control of an individual outbreak situation. Its objectives include, but are not limited to:

- assessing the risk to the public's health and to identify, coordinate, and ensure the implementation of control measures as soon as possible.
- reducing the likelihood of severe illness in vulnerable groups.
- The terms of reference for the IMT will be agreed at the first meeting and reviewed at regular intervals, until the outbreak is resolved.

## Definitions for a ‘case’ and ‘contact’

### ‘Case’ definitions:

- Single suspected/ possible case: a person with coronavirus symptoms
- Single confirmed case: a person who has tested positive for coronavirus
- Single complex case: a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus where there are complicated factors for the person/ setting (may include non-compliance with self-isolation advice, or specific activities that the symptomatic person was involved in during their infectious period). The infectious period is 48 hours prior to symptom onset to 10 days after (or 48 hours prior to test if asymptomatic)

### ‘Contact’ definitions:

A ‘contact’ is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). For example, a contact can be:

- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- sexual partners
- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
  - being coughed on
  - having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
  - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
  - contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

Infectious Period: 48 hours prior to symptom onset to 10 days after, or 48 hours prior to test if asymptomatic

# COVID-19 testing and contact tracing for voluntary and community sector (VCS) providers and community centre settings

## 1. Infection prevention and control

Please review [whether your organisation can reopen](#) as this may be subject to change. Community facilities that are currently able to open for essential voluntary activities and urgent public services, such as food banks, homeless services and blood donation sessions should operate in line with the core principles of social distancing and shielding for clinically vulnerable people.

Everyone should observe the key 'hands, face, space' behaviours to reduce the transmission of COVID. Further information on face coverings, exemptions and where they are mandatory can be found [here](#).

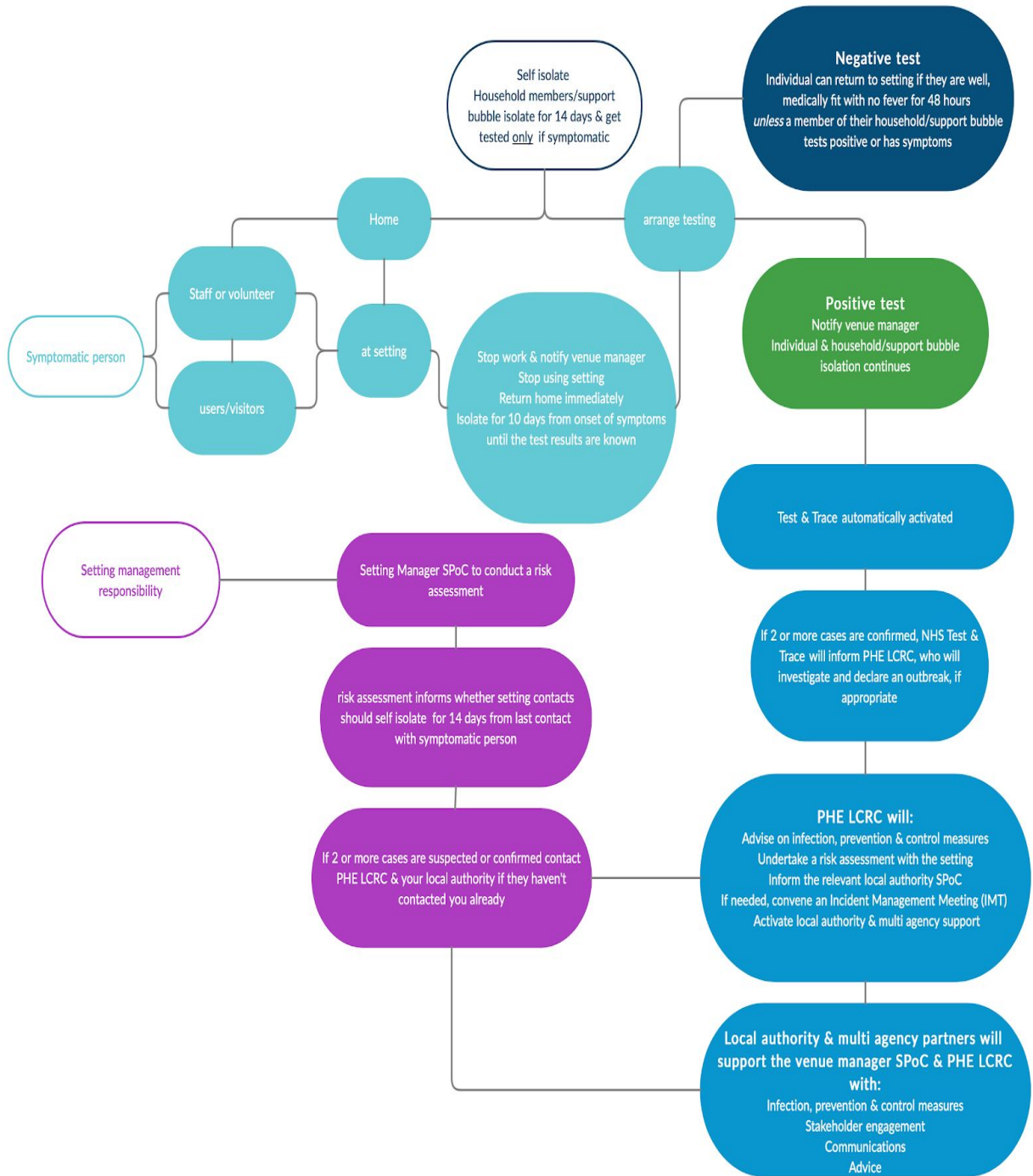
COVID-secure community facilities are permitted to hold outdoors activities in groups of no more than 6. Community facilities can host multiple groups of 6, subject to capacity, but groups must not mix socially or form larger groups.

However, we strongly advise that activities where there is a significant likelihood of groups mixing and socialising should not take place in a community facility. Please follow the [checklist for safe reopening of VCS settings](#) (toilet, handwashing facilities, ventilation, PPE, etc) this should be used to guide reopening of your organisation/setting and includes a [risk assessment](#) which must be completed.

You must choose a Single Point of Contact (SPoC) within your organisation (usually a manager) who will be responsible for conducting a risk assessment and will be a point of contact in the event of an outbreak.

Please follow [cleaning guidance](#) and ensure that frequently touched surfaces are cleaned twice a day; once at the beginning and once at the end of the day as a minimum. Ensure that there is access to hand washing facilities and/or alcohol hand gel for all staff and attendees of your setting.

## 2. Flowchart



### 3. Symptomatic person(s)

If someone is unwell with coronavirus symptoms in your organisation/setting:

- They should go home immediately to self-isolate for 10 days (avoiding public transport where possible).
- Apply for testing [here](#) by or by dialling 119 (home testing or mobile sites are available).
- If someone has difficulties accessing testing or does not have a mobile phone/email address then tests can be ordered for them by someone else.
- If you or someone else need further support with self isolating please email [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk)

#### Positive Test results for COVID-19

- NHS Test and trace will contact the person who tested positive to inform them of this result and obtain details of people who may be at risk due to contact.
- The single point of contact at your organisation may be contacted by NHS Test & Trace to provide details of staff or members of the community who were in contact with the case.
- If you are notified that someone who has visited your setting has tested positive for COVID-19 within 10 days of attending your organisation/setting please contact City and Hackney Public Health Team [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk)
- If you are notified of two cases that are linked please contact the Public Health England [London Coronavirus Response Cell \(PHE LCRC\)](#).
- If anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 has been at your organisation/setting within the last 72 hours undertake enhanced cleaning of the areas they visited in line with [COVID-19 cleaning guidance](#).
- The positive case should self-isolate for 10 days. After 10 days they can return only if well and medically fit (fever free) for the past 48 hours. Household contacts and the support bubble must isolate for the full 14 days.



## Negative Test results for COVID-19

The individual can return if they are well and have been medically fit (no fever) for 48 hours, unless a member of their household and/or support bubble has tested positive or has symptoms.

The individual does not need to self-isolate and can return to setting if they have a negative result as long as:

- Everyone they live with who has symptoms tests negative
- Everyone in their support bubble who has symptoms tests negative
- They were not told to self-isolate for 14 days by NHS Test and Trace
- They feel well – if they feel unwell, they should stay at home until they feel better. If they have diarrhoea or are being sick, they should stay at home until 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped

## 4. Local 'Tiers' of restriction

On 12th October 2020 it was announced that there will be 3 tiers of local coronavirus restrictions depending on infection levels at that time in the local area:

- Medium
- High
- Very high

Since October 14th, London falls into the 'high' tier, the VCS setting will need to follow stricter guidance. This includes restricting face to face learning, stopping community activities indoors and stopping all household mixing.

We are anticipating further information to be released in the near future and will update this guidance when it is available. Please visit the [local COVID alerts](#) to find out what level your area is in and the additional restrictions that apply.

## 5. Rule of 6

There are legal limits on the number of people that someone can spend time within a group at any one time.

Indoors meetings/activities are only allowed between 6 members of the same household or support bubbles.

COVID-secure community facilities are permitted to hold **activities in groups of no more than 6 from the same household indoors.**

**Community facilities can host multiple groups of 6 outdoors, subject to capacity, but groups must not mix socially or form larger groups.** However, we strongly advise that activities where there is a significant likelihood of groups mixing and socialising ( and where it will be difficult to prevent mingling and therefore breaking the law) should not take place in a community facility.

## 6. Outbreak(s)

**What you should do if there is a possible outbreak (2 or more cases linked to your organisation/setting).**

### **Step 1: Identify positive cases**

You may be informed of a confirmed case of COVID-19 linked to your organisation/setting by an employee or member of the community, Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell (PHE LCRC), your local authority public health team (City of London Corporation or Hackney Council), or NHS Test and Trace.

When you are informed of **two or more confirmed cases** go to **Step 2.**

### **Step 2: Report**

Contact PHE LCRC (if they have not contacted you already) via email [LCRC@phe.gov.uk](mailto:LCRC@phe.gov.uk) or telephone (0300 3030 0450) for further advice.

Contact the City and Hackney Public Health Team [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk) who will provide support.

Please do this as soon as possible to reduce the chance of an outbreak spreading.

### Step 3: Respond

PHE LCRC will work with you to assess the risks and advise you on what actions to take.

You can also contact Test and trace as well as the University helpline for advice.

Depending on the outcome, PHE LCRC and your local authority may establish an Incident Management Team (IMT) to help support you to manage the situation.

Your single point of contact will be asked to attend this meeting.

### Information PHE LCRC may request from you

#### Details of your organisation

- Name of organisation and details of single point of contact person (including contact number).
- Location and number of staff/volunteers.

#### Details of the cases

- Contact details for people at the setting with the positive case.
- When this person was last at the organisation/setting and when they became unwell.
- Layout of the building/space and cleaning measures undertaken.
- Any contact with other agencies e.g. Local Authority.
- Any links between the positive cases that are known

#### Types of actions you may need to put in place include:

- Enhanced hygiene, [handwashing](#) and cleaning regimes, and use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Increased staff awareness of, adherence to, and increased monitoring of preventative measures and monitoring of their effectiveness
- Temporary closure of the premises.

## 7. City and Hackney Public Health Team

- Will provide support with self-isolation, particularly for vulnerable groups/individuals
- Communicate with with CCG, GPs and other healthcare providers
- Communicate with your single point of contact in the event that an incident management team meeting needs to be held.
- Provide local communications based on national guidance and taking into account local needs (e.g. materials in specific languages).
- Provide ongoing support with cleaning measures and PPE (if appropriate).
- Please contact [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk) for any questions/ anything that is not clear.

## 8. National Guidance

[Safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)

[COVID-19 guidance for the charity sector](#)

[Manage financial difficulties in your charity caused by coronavirus](#)

[Staying alert and safe \(social distancing\)](#)

[COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)

[NHS Test and trace: how it works](#)

## 9. FAQs

**If the central contact tracing team comes across a contact that is particularly vulnerable how will the local authorities get that data (name/location) to support that person?**

Hackney residents can self refer to the via the Hackney Council support line: [020 8356 3111](tel:02083563111). City of London residents can email [col-covid-19@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:col-covid-19@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

**How do digitally excluded people take part in testing?**

Call 119 and use an approved person such as a family member to register their test online.

**What if a suspected case receives an ‘unclear’/ ‘void’/ ‘borderline’/ ‘inconclusive’ test result for COVID-19?**

This means it’s not possible to say whether the individual had COVID-19 when the test was done. NHS guidance is to get another COVID-19 test as soon as possible if this happens. Further details about needing to self-isolate with this type of test result can be found [here](#).

**Can I get evidence that members of staff have been asked to self-isolate?**

Employees can use this link <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note> to request an isolation note to show their employers. Employers may need this if they are going to claim a Statutory Sick Pay rebate.

**Can someone who is self-isolating (as a result of being instructed to by NHS Test and Trace, because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19) be tested and if they are negative return to work?**

No you must complete the full period of self-isolation. The incubation period for the virus varies between individuals. If you have a negative test result, you must still complete the full period of self-isolation, as you may still become infectious at a later point in the 14 day period. This is in line with national guidance.

**Can I request information to see who has potentially infected my members of staff/ volunteers/ community?**

The NHS Test and Trace system will not share any data with employers/ venue managers for privacy reasons.

**Will PHE LCRC test in a community setting?**

Generally no, unless agreed by an Incident Management Team meeting. Individuals who are symptomatic should be advised to self-refer for testing (through the channels listed above).

**What if a member of my community group or a visitor notifies me that they have COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19 within 10 days of visiting a community setting?**

If you are notified that someone has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 within 10 days of attending your community setting, please contact City and Hackney Public Health Team [testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:testandtrace@hackney.gov.uk) and the Public Health England London Coronavirus Response Cell (PHE LCRC) e mail [LCRC@phe.gov.uk](mailto:LCRC@phe.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 3030 0450.

**For employees and volunteers:****What happens if I am unable to go into my workplace either due to symptoms or contact with a positive case?**

- Venue managers/ employers should support workers who need to self-isolate and must not ask them to attend the place of work
- Employees/ volunteers must isolate if they:
  - have COVID-19 symptoms and are awaiting a test result
  - have tested positive for COVID-19
  - are members of the same household as someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 have been in close recent contact with someone who has tested positive and received a notification to self-isolate from NHS test and trace.
- Employers/ venue managers should continue to communicate with workers/ volunteers in self-isolation and provide support. This includes allowing people to work from home if they remain well and if it is practicable to do so. This might include finding alternative work that can be completed at home during the period of self-isolation.
- If people can't work from home, employers must ensure any self-isolating employee is receiving sick pay and give them the option to use their paid leave days if they prefer. [Further guidance](#) is available on what employees should do if they cannot work.

- Employees in self-isolation are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay for every day they are in isolation, as long as they meet the eligibility conditions.
- If you're asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and you're on a low income, unable to work from home and will lose income as a result, you may be entitled to a payment of £500 from your local authority under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. The scheme will run until 31 January 2021.