

Covid Community Information Champions

In It Together

Information correct as of 23.11.20

Here at Wokingham Borough Council, our core aim is to keep our residents safe. The Covid-19 pandemic will continue to impact our community now and in the future, so we feel it's important to find new ways to keep residents up to date with the latest advice.

That's why we've introduced our Covid Community Information Champions initiative. By ensuring that everyone in the Borough has the accurate information they need to safely go about their day-to-day life, we can truly strive to be in it together.

We will ensure that we give our Champions the latest information about Covid-19 via regular email updates and you will help your family friends and other community members to make sense of this. We would also appreciate your feedback on what is and isn't working, so we can ensure it runs as smoothly as possible.

What is a Covid Community Information Champion and can anyone sign up?

Covid Community Information Champions are volunteers who will help to provide Wokingham Borough residents, including friends, family and other community members, with up-to-date and accurate information on Covid-19. We're specifically inviting representatives from key groups to sign-up to become Champions, although the scheme is open to all.

What will my role as a Covid Community Information Champion involve?

You will be empowered to become a point of contact within your community (family, friends, neighbourhood, place of worship, community organisation etc) and will be able to pass on the key Covid-19 messages to your contacts.

All you will need to do is share the information we send you with your community - friends, family, colleagues or other contacts - in whichever way you want.

As a champion, you may also receive information from your community and contacts and we ask that you pass that back to us via the [online reporting methods available](#).

How will I receive the information I need to share with my friends, family, and community?

Your welcome pack will be full of useful information on Covid-19, including social distancing rules, self-isolation guidance, the support available from Wokingham Borough Community Response, and more.

As a Covid Community Information Champion, you'll be signed up to receive a weekly e-bulletin with the latest key messages and insights from our Public Health team. You will also be sent links to social media assets that you will be able to use in any online community groups.

We are in the progress of organising virtual video conference sessions for Champions to join.

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Our commitment to the community

There are things we are doing as your local authority to reduce the risk and impact of Covid. For example, we have:

- Protected our care homes from people being discharged from hospital with Covid-19
- Worked with our wonderful voluntary sector to provide help to those who need it
- Distributed grants to businesses and, more recently, payments to those self-isolating
- Helped schools and businesses to stay open as safely as possible
- Inspected and taken action against organisations and premises flouting the rules
- Bought an emergency supply of testing kits that are reserved for emergency situations

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Each and every one of us owes it to our friends, family and neighbours to follow all the rules, all the time. Covid-19 has hit every part of our community. But it will not defeat us if we are in it together. Therefore, we must commit to:

- Following all the social distancing rules
- Getting a test if we have Covid-19 symptoms
- Self-isolating when we are told to do so
- Wearing a mask or face-covering wherever required
- Washing our hands regularly and properly
- Minimising household mixing – the fewer people we meet, the less the virus spreads

Current social distancing guidance

As we approach winter and spend more time indoors, it is important to follow Government guidelines around washing your hands, covering your face and creating space with other people. In this section, we explain more about the current social distancing advice.

Local restrictions tiers

From 2 December, the government is introducing a regionally-differentiated approach to restrictions, where different tiers of restrictions apply in different parts of the country. You can read the full breakdown of levels and guidance on the [Gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

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Alert levels are determined as Medium, High and Very High and are implemented based on a range of measures, including local infection rates. The main difference in rules include:

Medium

- Follow the rule of six if meeting indoors or outdoors
- Pubs and restaurants to have last orders at 10pm and close by 11pm
- Avoid travel to Tier 3 areas

High

- No households mixing indoors
- Rule of six applies outdoors
- Pubs and restaurants can only serve alcohol with substantial meals
- Avoid travel to Tier 3 areas

Very High

- No households mixing indoors
- Rule of six applies in outdoor public spaces like parks
- Pubs and bars closed, with the exception of takeaway, drive-through or delivery
- Guidance against traveling in and out of the area

Wearing a face covering

In England, you must wear a face covering when on public transport, in shops and supermarkets, in hospitality venues (when not seated at a table) and in a number of other settings.

Please bear in mind that there are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. It is important to be mindful and respectful of this. Templates for face covering exemption cards can be found on the [Gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

The full list of when you do and do not need to wear a face covering can be found on the [Gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

Good hygiene

There are general principles people can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing your hands more often - with soap and warm water, for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitiser, when you get home or into work, when you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, eat or handle food
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who have symptoms
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home

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Following these simple steps could make a difference in reducing the transmission of Covid-19.

Useful links

The following links provide useful, accurate and regularly updated information about Covid-19. Please feel free to share these with your communities:

- Latest [NHS information and advice](#)
- Latest guidance and advice from [Public Health England](#)
- Latest information from [Wokingham Borough Council](#)

Understanding the symptoms and getting tested

The main symptoms of Covid-19 are:

- 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

People should only book a test if they are displaying one of these symptoms. You can [book a test on the Gov.uk website](#), or order a home test kit if you cannot get to a test site. Please note that this service is currently very busy.

NHS Test and Trace

The NHS Covid-19 app is now available and is part of the contact tracing programme called NHS Test and Trace. The purpose of the app is to notify you if you've come into contact with someone who later tests positive for Covid-19.

It is not a legal requirement to download the app, however it does mean you can check yourself in when visiting venues across the borough (if they are open), such as restaurants and pubs.

If someone receives a notification of a positive test result, NHS Test and Trace will attempt to contact them to identify who they have been in contact with, and subsequently ask them to self-isolate.

Our involvement in NHS Track and Trace

We have recently launched a local scheme to support the Government's NHS Test and Trace efforts. This means if the NHS Test and Trace team cannot reach the person who has tested positive in the area, a member of the Wokingham Borough Council team will then try to get in touch.

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You may receive an initial text message from our tracing team, who will then follow-up with a phone call. If they are unable to reach you by phone, they may visit you at home.

Please note individuals will never be asked to make payments or provide bank details to the test and trace team. No-one should ever provide details of any other accounts or set up a password or PIN number over the phone. If there are concerns, contact the [Covid Fraud Hotline](#).

Self-isolation

It is now the law to self-isolate when instructed to do so by NHS Test and Trace. Not self-isolating can put others at severe risk, so self-isolating when instructed to do so is vital.

If people don't comply with the requirements, this may result in a fine of at least £1,000 and up to £10,000 for a repeated or serious offence. This also applies to employers who do not allow employees to self-isolate.

People should self-isolate immediately if:

- They have any symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste)
- They have tested positive for coronavirus
- They live with someone who has symptoms or tested positive
- Someone in their support bubble has symptoms or tested positive
- They're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS Covid-19 app
- They arrive in the UK from a country with a high coronavirus risk

The length of self-isolation depends on the circumstances above.

- **If you have symptoms or tested positive you must self-isolate for at least 10 days**
 - If you get symptoms after your test, you should self-isolate for a further 10 days from when your symptoms start
 - You can stop self-isolating after 10 days if you feel ok, if you no longer have symptoms, or if you just have a cough, change to your sense of smell or taste, or fatigue, aches and pains – these can last for weeks after the infection has gone
 - You should continue self-isolating after 10 days if you have any of the following symptoms: a high temperature or feeling hot and shivery, a runny nose or sneezing, feeling or being sick, diarrhoea. You should only stop self-isolating when these symptoms have gone, and 48 hours after diarrhoea or vomiting has stopped

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- **If you live with someone who has symptoms or tested positive you must self-isolate for 14 days**
 - This starts from when the first person started having symptoms
 - You can stop isolating after 14 days if you do not get symptoms
 - If you do get symptoms, you should keep self-isolating and get a test
 - If your test is negative, you must keep self-isolating for the rest of the 14 days
 - If your test is positive, you must self-isolate for 10 days from when your symptoms started
- **If you've been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS Covid-19 app, you must self-isolate for 14 days**
 - Please note it might take 14 days for symptoms to appear

Self-isolation payments

If someone is asked to self-isolate, they may be able to claim a Test and Trace Support Payment. In order to apply for this payment of £500, they must meet the following criteria:

- They have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive
- They are employed or self-employed
- They are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result
- They are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit

If someone meets all the above criteria, but does not receive one of the named benefits, they may be entitled to a discretionary payment. They can apply for this if they are on a low income and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating.

For more information and to apply for a payment, visit our [website](#).

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Wokingham Borough Community Response

The Wokingham Borough Community Response (WBCR) was launched at the start of the pandemic and continues to support those who need extra help at this time.

One Front Door, led by Citizens Advice Wokingham, is the fastest way to get help as it works closely with us and a range of local voluntary organisations such as the Wokingham Volunteer Centre, First Days, Involve, LINK Visiting Scheme, Age UK Berkshire and Involve Community Services - to name a few. The team can help with:

- Collecting prescriptions
- Delivering food and store cupboard essentials
- Making welfare checks
- Pairing lonely residents with a telephone buddy
- Offering practical help and advice around employment, housing and more

You can contact One Front Door 24/7 via its website, or call the team on (0300) 330 1189, Monday to Fridays 9am to 5pm, and Saturday 9am to 1pm. You can also leave a voicemail out of hours. If you are hard of hearing, you can use the text relay service by calling 03444 111 445.

Visit the [One Front Door website](#).

Our outbreak prevention plan

We want to reassure our community that we have a coherent outbreak prevention plan in place. This ensures that we have a robust and safe way of managing an outbreak within the borough.

You can view this via this [link](#).

Further guidance and support

We are here to support our community. For more information, please use the advised sources below:

- Government website: www.gov.uk/coronavirus
- Local help and support: www.citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk
- Business advice: www.berkshirebusinesshub.co.uk/coronavirus-advice-for-businesses
- Health advice: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus
- Testing and Tracing: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-and-tracing
- Mental wellbeing support: www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk