

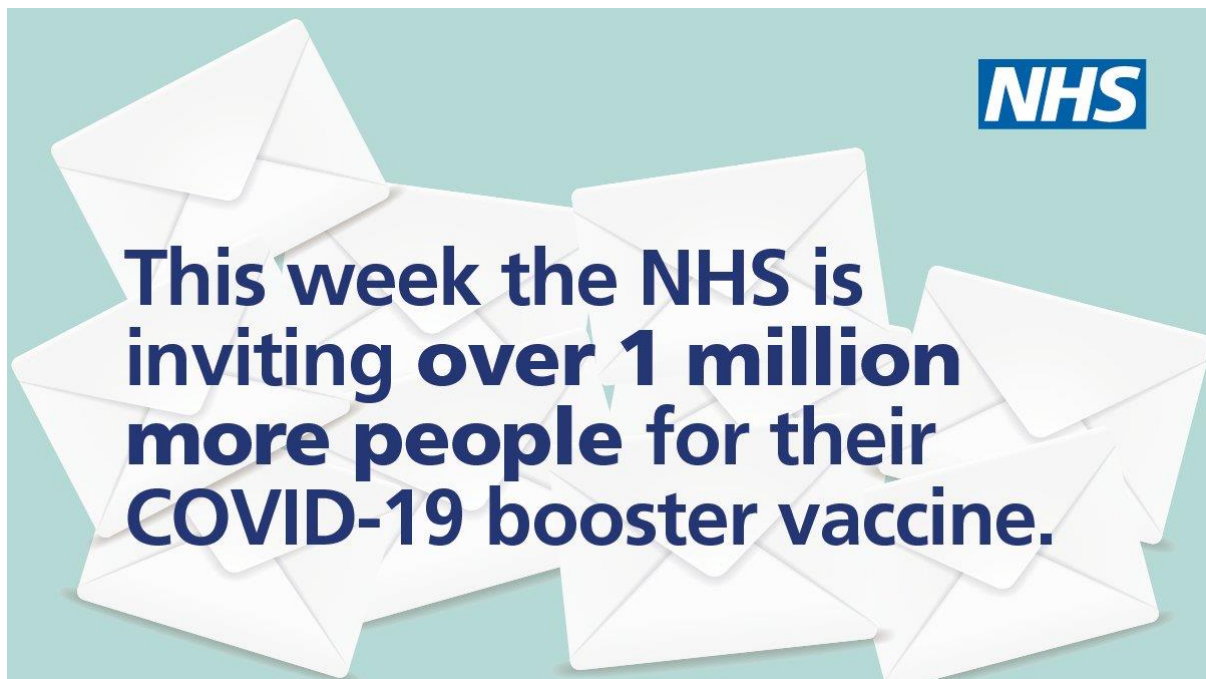


**Key Messages for London's Faith and CVS groups
(Updated 05/10/2021)**

Whilst most of the legal COVID restrictions in England have now ended, the virus remains a serious health risk and we need to remain cautious to protect ourselves and our communities.

As with the rest of the country, London has seen a slight rise in cases over the past week, with 18,751 testing positive, compared to 17,514 in the previous full week. It's important that we continue to be cautious - to meet outside where possible, let fresh air in when indoors, wear masks in crowded places (including public transport), take up the offer of free testing and self-isolate if required, wash our hands regularly and, for those who have not yet done so, get vaccinated.

An effective vaccine is still the best way to protect people from coronavirus and there is evidence to show that thousands of lives have already been saved because of them. Alongside vaccine rollout, regular testing is at the heart of plans to reopen society and the economy and will help to suppress and control the spread of variants.



Data on numbers of cases, hospitalisations and vaccination rates in your local area can be found [here](#).

Staying safe and helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Most legal restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID have now been lifted and many people have been vaccinated, but it is still possible to catch and spread COVID-19, even if you are fully vaccinated.

COVID-19 will be a feature of our lives for the foreseeable future, so we need to learn to live with it and manage the risk to ourselves and others.

The following key protections will stay in place;

- **testing** when you have symptoms and targeted asymptomatic testing in education, high risk workplaces and to help people manage their personal risk.
- **isolating** when positive or when contacted by NHS Test and Trace.
- **border quarantine** for all arriving from red list countries.

Most legal restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID have now been lifted and there are no plans to reimpose them.

- Since Step 4 in the road map, we have seen **a gradual return to offices and workplaces**. As workers return to their workplaces, employers should continue to follow the working safely guidance.
- It is **expected and recommended that people wear face coverings in crowded areas** such as public transport
- **You should meet outdoors where possible and let fresh air into homes or other enclosed spaces.**
- **You should minimise the number, proximity and duration of social contacts** – keep the number of people you socialise with to a minimum and try to reduce the how long you spend with them and be mindful of how close you get to them
- The Government is **encouraging and supporting businesses and large events to use the NHS COVID Pass in high risk settings**. The Government has said they will work with organisations where people are likely to be near others outside their household to encourage the use of the pass. There are some settings where the NHS COVID Pass should not be used as a condition of entry to ensure access for all. This includes essential services and essential retailers which have been able to stay open throughout the pandemic.

More information can be found [here](#).

More information on the NHS COVID Pass can be found [here](#).

Testing

People who have **any** of the following symptoms, even if they are mild, should book or order a PCR test [here](#) as soon as possible:

- a high temperature, a new and continuous cough and, a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

A PCR test kit can be sent to your home or you can book an appointment at a walk-in or drive-through test site.

You and the people you live with should self-isolate until you get your test result and you should only leave home to take a test or to post a test kit.

There are some reasons people without symptoms may need a PCR test and more information can be found [here](#).

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don't have any symptoms (asymptomatic) and may be unwittingly spreading the virus. Regular rapid testing for COVID-19 is now being offered to everyone without symptoms and people encouraged to take these tests to help prevent outbreaks. The test usually involves taking a sample from your throat and from your nose, using a swab. You can get a result in 30 minutes.

Anyone in England can access free, rapid lateral flow tests (LFDs) for themselves and their families to use regularly. You can either [order testing kits online to be sent to your home](#) or you can collect testing kits from a [local pharmacy](#) or [testing site](#).

When ordering online, you can order one pack a day and each pack contains 7 tests. If collecting the tests yourself from a nearby pharmacy or testing site, you can collect 2 packs at a time, (14 tests in total).

If you cannot order online, then please call 119 (Lines are open 7am-11pm and calls are free).

You can still also be tested at a local testing site. Find a local testing site at: [Find where to get rapid lateral flow tests – NHS \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](#)

Vaccine roll out

Vaccines are the most effective way to prevent infectious disease. Most of us, including our children and wider families, have already had at least one, and they are responsible for stopping up to three million deaths worldwide every year. Analysis by Public Health England shows that, for the first time, 2 doses of COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta variant.

Almost 6 million people in London, including the most vulnerable and those who care for them, have already received their first dose, and over 5 million have now also received their second dose.

Everyone aged 12 and over can now get vaccinated against COVID-19.

- If you are aged **over 18 years**, you do not need to wait to be contacted by the NHS. You can book appointments at a larger vaccination centre or pharmacy now.
- If you are aged **16 or 17**, the NHS is offering a 1st dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. You can book your appointment at a larger vaccination centre or pharmacy now, or you can wait to be invited to go to a local NHS service.

All children aged **12 to 15** will be offered a 1st dose of a COVID-19 vaccine (including children who turn 12 on the date of vaccination).

Parents and guardians will get a letter or email with information about when the vaccine will be offered and will be asked to give their consent.

Most children will be given their vaccine at school during school hours.

Any children who miss the 1st vaccination in their school, for example if they are absent from school on the day the vaccine is offered, will be offered a vaccine at a later date.

Children who do not attend school, for example if they are home schooled, will also be offered a vaccine. Parents and guardians will be contacted about when and where the vaccine will be offered.

Children at high risk from COVID-19

Some children are being offered 2 doses of the vaccine if either:

- they live with someone who is more likely to get infections (such as someone who has HIV, has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis)
- they have a condition that means they're at high risk from COVID-19

Conditions that mean your child may be at high risk and eligible for 2 doses are:

- a severe problem with the brain or nerves, such as cerebral palsy
- Down's syndrome
- severe or multiple learning disabilities (or they're on the learning disability register)
- a condition that means they're more likely to get infections (such as some genetic conditions or types of cancer)

If your child is eligible for 2 doses of the vaccine, you'll be contacted by a local NHS service such as their GP surgery to arrange their appointments.

Booster vaccine

Booster vaccine doses will be available on the NHS for people most at risk from COVID-19 who have had a 2nd dose of a vaccine at least 6 months ago.

This includes:

- people aged 50 and over
- people who live and work in care homes
- frontline health and social care workers
- people aged 16 and over with a health condition that puts them at high risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19
- carers aged 16 and over
- people aged 16 and over who live with someone who is more likely to get infections (such as someone who has HIV, has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis)

People who are pregnant and in 1 of the eligible groups can also get a booster dose.

You'll be offered a booster dose at least 6 months after you had your 2nd dose.

The NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have a booster dose. It's important not to contact the NHS for one before then.

When you have arranged your appointment, **please make sure you attend.**

If you were contacted, but have not booked your appointment, you're still eligible and can book your appointments anytime.

For the vaccine to be effective, we need as many people to step forward as possible. Doing so means protecting ourselves, our parents, our grandparents, even our children from the impact of this deadly virus. It is a choice that we are very fortunate to have. There is information available about the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme including an easy-read guide to coronavirus and vaccinations.

Even when people have had the COVID-19 vaccine, they are advised to continue to following advice to keep themselves safe.

Useful resources

Caution

- [Short film](#) featuring Dr Amir Khan highlights importance of remaining cautious as those vaccinated can still pass on the virus

Places for worship, religious services and gatherings

- [COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations](#)

Vaccines

- [General information provided by the NHS on the safety and importance of vaccines](#)
- [Leaflet](#) for people who have had their first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine but have concerns about having the second dose
- [Video message](#) on vaccine safety for BAME communities

General COVID-19 resources

- [COVID-19 resources in your language](#): guidance and advice in various languages on topics such as health and wellbeing, employment and welfare, domestic abuse, housing and homelessness
- Doctors of the World have provided [translated resources into 60 languages](#) aimed at migrants and asylum seekers which are informed by government and NHS advice.

People with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)

- This [tool](#) gives information about where migrant families can get help with housing and financial support when they have no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

Migrant Health

- This [resource](#) provides advice and guidance for healthcare practitioners on the health needs of migrant patients and has been updated to include a summary of changes after the Brexit transition period and information on COVID-19 vaccination.

Mental Health

- [Coping with mental health problems during coronavirus](#): support if someone is experiencing mental health problems such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or bipolar disorder.
- [Accessing mental health treatment and support during coronavirus](#): advice on getting medication, tips for online therapy and using care services, and other ways to access treatment and support for mental health.
- The NHS Volunteers Service provide a telephone 'check in and chat' if someone has mental health issues and are feeling isolated during the pandemic, have a long term condition, are self- isolating or have caring responsibilities. Call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week) or visit the [website](#).
- People who care for or work with children and young people aged up to 25 who have been affected by COVID-19 (or other emergencies or individual crises) will be able to access a new [online Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) training course](#). The online course, developed by PHE, offers training on how to provide practical and emotional support to children and young people affected by emergencies or crisis situations.

COVID-19 posters and social media resources

- The [PHE campaign resource centre](#) contains a collection of useful public health messaging resources for coronavirus
- Promotional material on [COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for adults](#)