

Please use this website for further information and guidance:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

SOCIALISING SAFELY IN SANDWELL



If you are running a group or community activity and would like some advice on how to do this safely then please contact public health through:
PHCovid19_Enquiries@sandwell.gov.uk
and we will be happy to help.

**HEALTHY
SANDWELL**

We find the support you need

Living with
Covid-19

COVID infection still remains a risk in our society. Even if you are fully vaccinated, you can still catch and spread the infection.

However, human beings are social by nature and long-term isolation from the things that we love can have significant impact on our physical and mental wellbeing.

Get Vaccinated

Building up a strong immune system will help to provide resistance to serious illness in the event of exposure to COVID and other viruses this winter. Vaccinations develop immunity which in turn helps us to protect ourselves should we be exposed to viruses. It does not mean that we will not develop an infection but it definitely helps to reduce the risk of serious illness and long term consequences of illness.

For these reasons it is important that we get back into our communities to do the things that we love and have missed during the pandemic. There is much that can be done to protect yourself and others from infection and this simple checklist will guide you on how to be safe as we socialise in Sandwell over the upcoming months.

If you are eligible and it is 6 months since you had your second COVID vaccine, please make an appointment to have your booster shot.

Flu vaccines are available for free on the NHS system – contact your GP and ask if you are eligible. If you are under 50, you can get the flu vaccine at any participating pharmacy.



Hands- Face- Space- Fresh Air

Close contact with an infected person is the most significant way COVID-19 is spread. When someone infected with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles containing the virus that causes COVID-19. The particles can come into contact with the eyes, nose or mouth or can be breathed in by another person. The particles can also land on surfaces and be passed from person to person via touch.

In general, the risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 is higher in crowded and enclosed spaces, where there are more people who might be infectious and limited fresh air.



This doesn't mean that we should continue to avoid contact with people! There are precautions we can take to minimise the risk of infection. If we all take care of ourselves, each other and our surroundings, we can continue to socialise safely and enjoy spending time together.

Face

If at all possible, avoid crowded spaces. If this is difficult, using a face covering over both your nose and your mouth, can provide some protection in the form of a barrier.

If you are unsure of whether to wear a face covering, consider the three Cs:

- Crowded
- Confined space
- Close contact

If any one of these conditions exist in an area of the place you are visiting, avoid the area all together. If that is difficult then seriously consider wearing a face covering (unless you are exempt). Try to limit your time in an area with these conditions and if possible move to a less crowded or confined space as soon as you can.



Hands

- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly
- Avoid touching your face
- Use hand sanitiser liberally and often if hand washing facilities are not available
- Always cover your nose and mouth with a tissue if you cough or sneeze – you can use the crook of your elbow if a tissue is not available



Space

- As far as possible, remain 1-2 metres away from other people, especially in social settings where people are laughing, shouting, singing etc.
- Overcrowding of facilities at events should be avoided. If you are part of a group and you meet on a regular basis, ensure the room is large enough to accommodate your group comfortably.
- Stagger arrivals and departures to give people enough space to move through entrances and exits safely (often bottlenecks areas in a meeting room).
- Try not to gather at the refreshments table. Grab what you need and then find a safely distanced spot to sit down together and chat!



Fresh Air

- Meeting outdoors is ideal so if possible, bundle up warmly and enjoy the fresh air!
- However, if it is not possible to be outdoors, try to spend the largest part of a meeting or activity in an area where there is sufficient space for everyone to feel comfortable.
- Try to allow sufficient ventilation through the room by opening windows and doors while the room is occupied, if possible.



Quick Checklist

Vaccinations

- Covid Dose 1 ✓
- Covid Dose 2 ✓
- Booster ✓
- Flu Vaccine ✓

Find out which vaccines you are eligible for at: [nhs.uk/wintervaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations)

Wear a face covering if you are unsure and make sure the covering fits comfortably over your mouth and nose.

Venues:

Not sure when to wear a face covering? Remember the 3 Cs!

- Crowded
- Confined space
- Close contact

A face covering is advised in each of these situations and you are advised to limit your time in them.



Hygiene

- Wash hand often and thoroughly
- Use hand sanitiser when hand washing facilities are limited
- Always cover your nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing



Should you test positive, book a follow up PCR test and self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the positive test. Self-isolation protects other members of the community from potential infection. It's the kindest thing we can do for our friends and family. Self-isolation does not mean you cannot talk to anyone! Stay in touch with them on social media or by phone; ask them to help out with shopping etc, and you'll soon be able to meet up with everyone again.

Use this link for information on testing and self-isolation:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/>

Self-awareness

Not all people who have a COVID infection show signs and symptoms of the infection.

To be safe, test yourself regularly with Lateral Flow Tests which can be obtained as follows:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/>

**Test
yourself
regularly**

