

COVID-19 Act Now to avoid a Local Lockdown: Community Leaders Meeting

Thank you all for attending the meeting on 15 September 2020, it was great to see so many Community Leaders attend. Below are questions and answers that were raised throughout the meeting along with useful links for more information.

Testing

Is Mildmay Testing Centre functioning properly? Why was it closed?

Mildmay Testing Centre is open and was never closed. It reached capacity at the weekend so stopped walk-in appointments.

Both Mildmay testing centre and the mobile testing unit will continue to operate. Mildmay is open 8am to 8pm seven days a week and you can book both testing facilities by calling the NHS on 119, or online at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>. Redbridge Wellbeing Service can also refer people for a test on 0208 708 5555.

The NHS portal is experiencing some difficulties due to the large number of tests being requested. It is important to only book a test if you are displaying symptoms.

We are doing everything we can locally to increase testing capacity and have [written to the Government to demand additional COVID-19 testing capacity](#).

We have now secured three extra dates in September for the mobile testing unit, see below, and please book before attending.

A mobile testing unit will be in Redbridge at Gants Hill Library Car Park, Clements Road, Ilford, IG1 1EA on the following dates:

- Friday 18 September
- Sunday 20 September
- Monday 21 September
- Wednesday 23 September
- Thursday 24 September
- Saturday 26 September
- Monday 28 September
- Wednesday 30 September

How long will it take to get tested and get results?

The test for Coronavirus involves taking a swab of the inside of your nose and the back of your throat using a long cotton bud. It usually takes just a few seconds to complete each swab.

Most people get their test results the day after taking the test. Some results might take longer, but you should get them within 72 hours.

You'll get a text or email when your result is ready.

If you do not get your result after 72 hours, call the Coronavirus testing contact centre on 119 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). The contact centre is open from 7am to 11pm.

How many people are getting tested on average and how many are positive and how many are negative?

It is difficult to provide a number for this at the moment. The number of positive tests also varies as it depends on people only requesting a test if they have symptoms.

Can you tell us a bit more about the Test and Trace app that's supposed to be going live on 24 Sept? How will it work?

The Test and Trace App allows people to report symptoms, order a Coronavirus test, check in to venues by scanning a QR code and it helps the NHS trace individuals who may have Coronavirus.

The app will help the NHS understand if the virus is spreading in a particular area, and so local authorities can respond quickly to stop it spreading further and save lives.

The app does this while protecting a user's anonymity. Nobody, including the government, will know who or where a particular user is.

Every person who downloads the app will be helping in the fight against Coronavirus (COVID-19).

COVID-19 rates, areas and local lockdown

What are the current infection rates in Redbridge?

For every 100,000 people who live in Redbridge, around 36 people are testing positive for Coronavirus each day.

Do we have a breakdown of what areas and ages the increase has been in?

Yes. The areas with the highest infection rates are:

- Barkingside
- Bridge
- Clementswood
- Chadwell
- Churchfields
- Fairlop
- Ilford Town
- Goodmayes
- Loxford
- Newbury
- Seven Kings

We have seen an increase in infections in people aged 40 and under, but it is important that everyone follows government guidelines.

What does a local lockdown mean?

A local lockdown means a lockdown across London. However, where increased local transmission of Coronavirus is identified, areas may be required to take additional measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

This could include closing certain local premises or restricting the movements of people and interactions with others. For example, restricting access to a particular outdoor or public space. Any local lockdown measure will be clearly communicated online by the Government and the local authority.

Schools

What's the councils plan on COVID-19 outbreaks in schools?

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued new [guidance](#) (17th September) on how to manage suspected or confirmed Covid-19 cases in Schools. There is a new dedicated telephone number for schools to call to get expert public health advice from the London Coronavirus Response Centre (LCRC) Health Protection Team.

The Council's own Public Health teams aim to provide complementary support to schools where required.

The Council is working closely with head teachers to ensure they are kept up to date with relevant guidance, ensuring that schools have appropriate risk assessments in place and that parents are following the key messages to protect themselves and their children from Covid-19 (#Hands Face Space). In addition, Redbridge is supporting schools to access testing for their communities through a limited number of priority booking slots.

What can we do about school drop offs?

For schools who have a single access point, or limited space at the school gates for parents whilst dropping off/picking up, the following message has been send to head teachers to circulate to parents/carers.

To all Parents/Carers – Act Now to Avoid Local Lockdown. When dropping off or picking your child/children up from school gates, remember to keep your distance from other parents. Staying at least 2 metres apart from other parents can help limit your risk of getting coronavirus. Consider wearing a face covering at drop off/pick up to help if you can't stay 2m apart. Remember the golden rules of #Hands Face Space. For more information see <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-hub/>

We are introducing a series of measures to create safe low traffic community spaces, stop rat running, make the roads safer and inspire more walking and cycling. This will generate cleaner air and positive health outcomes for all. It also meets government guidance as we transition out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Part of this will be the introduction of School Streets so that people can socially distance and cars are prevented from idling.

Business enforcement

How is the council supporting businesses to comply with the COVID-19 rules?

Redbridge Council is launching a COVID-19 Safe Scheme to support all businesses in the borough.

This scheme is run in partnership with the Ilford BID and will help businesses adhere to Government guidelines, show they meet safety standards around distancing, hygiene and other COVID-19 rules.

The scheme provides businesses with a consumer mark award to show their customers that they are a safe and responsible business. Businesses will receive a 'COVID Safe Standard' certificate and sticker for their premises to show customers that they have received accreditation from the council.

For more information about the COVID Assurance Scheme, please see www.redbridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-hub/coronavirus-support-for-businesses/redbridge-covid-assurance-scheme

We as a council are also cracking down on businesses that do not comply with COVID-19 guidelines. We encourage residents to also report businesses that are not complying to help keep everyone safe.

[Council cracks down on Woodford restaurant for flouting COVID-19 rules](#)

Residents can also report businesses here: <https://my.redbridge.gov.uk/report/premises-not-in-compliance-with-coronavirus-legislation>

Places of worship

Can we still open places of worship?

As of Monday 14 September, you must not meet with people from other households socially in groups of more than 6. This will apply indoors and outdoors, including in private homes. This change will simplify and clarify the rules on social gatherings, so they are easier to understand and easier for the police to enforce. There will be a limited number of exemptions. COVID-19 Secure venues, such as places of worship, restaurants and hospitality venues, can still host larger numbers in total but groups of up to 6 must not mix or form larger groups.

More information and guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-what-has-changed-9-september>

Rosh Hashana

This weekend, Friday 18 to Sunday 20 September is an important celebration in the Jewish calendar – Rosh Hashana. Please stay safe if you are enjoying the festivities.

Guidance on celebrating High Holy Day safely can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/high-holy-day-services-and-gatherings-covid-19-checklist>

Redbridge Council wants every faith group to safely celebrate important events. Please remember to wash your hands regularly, maintain social distance whilst celebrating, keep at least 2m apart and wear a face covering.

For further guidance about faith celebrations click the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

Park gatherings

What is happening about all the park gatherings? Can we have more enforcement?

Outdoor sports courts, outdoor gyms, outdoor swimming pools and playgrounds and other outdoor sporting activities can reopen if those responsible for them are ready to do so and they can do so safely, following [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#).

From Monday 14 September, when meeting friends and family you do not live with (or have formed a support bubble with) you must not meet in a group of more than 6, indoors **or outdoors**. [This is against the law](#) and the police will have the powers to enforce these legal limits, including to issue fines (fixed penalty notices) of £100, doubling for further breaches up to a maximum of £3,200.

Social distancing guidelines should be followed between people from different households wherever possible. This means a distance of 2m between people from different households, or 1m plus mitigations (such as face coverings or avoiding face-to-face contact) where 2m is not possible.

For more information on how you can meet other people safely, please see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>

Flu jab and COVID-19

How does the flu jab assist with COVID-19?

Certain people are more likely to develop potentially serious complications of flu, such as bronchitis and pneumonia. These people are advised to have a flu vaccine each year.

Having a flu vaccination will lessen your chance of developing the flu which is caused by influenza viruses. It will not lessen your chance of developing Coronavirus, which is caused by the Coronaviruses. You can catch both the flu and Coronavirus at the same time. Having the flu vaccine will also help the NHS, by reducing the number of people who need to go to visit their GP or hospital.

Who is the flu jab being offered to?

Healthy people aged 50-64 years are NOT a priority for the free flu vaccination. This group of people will only be offered the vaccination via a direct invitation from their GP practice and only IF there is sufficient uptake of the flu vaccine amongst those who are normally eligible for the vaccine.

All children in year 7 at school will be offered the free flu nasal spray this year, in addition to all primary school aged children (Reception to Year 6).

See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/> for the list of all people who are eligible for a free flu vaccination.

If you are not eligible for a free flu vaccine, you can purchase one at your local pharmacy for a small fee.

You can have your NHS flu vaccine at:

- your GP surgery
- a local pharmacy offering the service
- your midwifery service if they offer it for pregnant women