



**Knowsley Council**

17 September 2020

**Update for Businesses  
Be Covid Safe, Help Trace the Virus, Stay Up to Date, Be Prepared**

Dear Knowsley Business

Undoubtedly, you will have seen recent media coverage and messages from the Council as a result of COVID-19 cases levels rising considerably across the North West, and more recently in Knowsley and the rest of Merseyside. The purpose of this communication is to outline the latest position and provide as much information as possible, not only as to how we can help to stop the situation from worsening further, but also what the next steps may have to be.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Knowsley has come a long way - partners across the Borough have worked collaboratively and effectively as part of a Knowsley Better Together approach to protecting and supporting our communities, our businesses, and the most vulnerable. This has not been without significant challenges, not least due to the evolving nature of the world's understanding of the virus and the subsequent ongoing global, national and local changes to how it is being tackled.

Our [Workplace Guidance Pack](#) and support from across Council services (such as Environmental Health, Town Centres Management, Business Rates and Business Growth) have provided Knowsley businesses with support and guidance to access funding and help them to ensure that their premises are "Covid secure". Together, we have introduced measures to counter the spread of COVID-19. However despite our best efforts, there has been a very significant increase in COVID-19 cases across Knowsley (as well as regionally and nationally) over the last week.

Last Friday (11 September 2020), the Government announced that Merseyside has been identified as an "Area of Concern" and would therefore be placed on a "watch list" due to the sharp increase in confirmed cases. This meant that local testing data and results would be monitored closely by Public Health England and the Government and that, if cases continued to increase, restrictions would be likely to be imposed.



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Since that announcement, cases in Knowsley and across Merseyside have continued to increase. Restrictions are therefore increasingly likely, and that is why the Council is now encouraging local businesses to “be prepared” as far as possible.

Of course, no-one wants such restrictions and nobody wants to go back into a national or local lockdown situation, so we all need to redouble our efforts and play our part by taking steps to slow the spread of the virus. We want to minimise disruption and prevent any further harm to our personal health and the local economy.

If you are a business located in one of our town centres, you can access support by contacting our Town Centres Management team on (0151)-443 2298 or via email to [towncentremanager@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:towncentremanager@knowsley.gov.uk).

The wider business community can access support through our Business Growth Team on (0151)-477 4000 or by emailing [invest@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:invest@knowsley.gov.uk).

In Merseyside, and here in Knowsley, there is a very important role for our local business community to play, so I want to make you aware of some of the steps which businesses must take to prepare for future potential changes:-

1. Re-review the risk assessments for those of your employees who are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and prepare for the possible re-introduction of shielding;
2. If staff can work from home, prepare to re-introduce working from home procedures and practices;
3. Review the use of temporary workers who may change their site location on a regularly basis - aim to keep this workforce in one location as much as possible;
4. Re-review how “COVID-secure” your business is – the Council and other communications activity will be encouraging residents only to visit COVID-secure settings, and this will be followed up with targeted spot checks and visits to premises where intelligence suggests that businesses are either unable or failing to maintain social distancing and COVID secure practices. For more information on how to become COVID-secure, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>;
5. If your business is customer facing:-
  - You should be advising your staff to wear face coverings at all times when in work;
  - You should be using booking systems where possible;
  - You should robustly communicate your expectations of customers around the use of face coverings and make the

authorities aware of any difficulties you are having in enforcing this on your premises; and,

6. Reinforce the importance of the requirement that staff seek a test if they have developed any symptoms, along with the importance of self-isolation and your staff following Government guidance in doing so.

To help to prevent further restrictions, we must **all**:-

- adhere to the prevailing social distancing guidance;
- wear face coverings in line with the prevailing guidance;
- regularly wash our hands with soap and water (or alcohol-based hand rub if these are not available); and,
- ensure that we stay at home if we have any COVID-19 symptoms (high temperature, a new persistent cough, or a loss of taste or smell).

Further information and advice for businesses to ensure that they are “COVID-secure” can be found in the [Workplace Guidance](#).

### **Helping to Trace the Virus: Play Your Part and Support the New NHS COVID-19 App**

To support the NHS Test and Trace programme, a new app is being rolled out on **Thursday 24 September 2020** to help to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Businesses, community organisations, places of worship and any other public-facing venues across England and Wales are being urged to download QR codes to prepare for the public rollout of the new app. The new app will help us to trace the virus on a more localised level. The app allows people to report symptoms, order a COVID-19 test, and check in to venues by scanning a QR code which will help the NHS to trace individuals who may have COVID-19. If you have more than one venue, you need to create a separate QR code for each location.

To support the effectiveness of the new app, we need **all** appropriate businesses across Knowsley to download the QR code which will enable customers and visitors to “check in”. Please register to receive the QR code by email and then print out the poster to be placed in a prominent position within your premises - ideally at the front entrance or in a window. Just follow the instructions here - <https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster>

Businesses who are already using their own QR system are being encouraged to switch to the NHS Test and Trace QR code. As well as supporting the app, all businesses must also make arrangements to maintain an alternative check-in method to collect the contact details of those who visit your business, for example a handwritten register (as some visitors to your businesses will be unable to use the app to “check in” because they are disabled or do not have the necessary equipment, for example). Using the app will mean that you are playing your part in supporting the NHS Test and Trace programme and helping to prevent further restrictions or a second lockdown.

You can find out more about the new NHS COVID-19 app at <https://covid19.nhs.uk/>.

**Stay up to date and Be Prepared**

Throughout the pandemic, we have provided the most up to date and accurate advice and guidance to our residents and our business communities. You can continue to access the most accurate, up to date and relevant local information from the trusted sources below:-

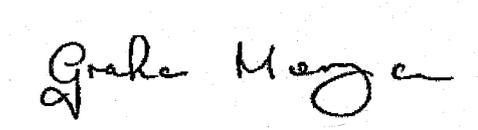
<https://www.knowsleychamber.org.uk/>

<https://www.knowsleynews.co.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/>

Please keep up to date by accessing the most accurate local information - we all need to be prepared.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'G' and 'M'.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM MORGAN  
Leader of Knowsley Council