



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# Reducing spread of respiratory infections and COVID-19 at work



**Easy read booklet**

**Updated June 2022**

# What is in this booklet

- Page 3      **Who we are and what we do**
- Page 4      **Who this information is for**
- Page 5      **Symptoms to look out for**
- Page 6      **What to do if staff have symptoms  
of a respiratory infection**
- Page 7      **Getting vaccinated and letting fresh  
air in**
- Page 8      **Keeping the workplace clean**
- Page 9      **Looking after staff who may get very  
ill from COVID-19**

# Who we and what we do



We are the **UK Health Security Agency**.

We help to keep people safe from things that could be bad for their health like infections.



We want people to live safely with COVID-19 and for you to keep yourself healthy.



There are things we can all do to stop people catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others.



These actions will also help to stop people catching other infections like flu. Infections can make some people very ill.

# Who this information is for



This booklet is for people who:

- employ other people
- manage staff and volunteers
- manage a workplace or organisation



It is important to do this as some people in the workplace may get more ill from COVID-19 than others.



Stopping the spread of infection is important if there are people in the workplace who may get more unwell from COVID-19 than others.



We don't know who will get more ill than someone else. So it's important that employers still follow health and safety guidance around COVID-19.

# Symptoms to look out for



Respiratory infections are easy to catch from other people. **Symptoms** staff should look out for are:

- coughing
- a high temperature, fever or chills
- losing or a change in taste or smell
- finding it hard to breathe
- feeling very tired for no reason
- muscle aches or pains for no reason
- not feeling hungry
- a headache that lasts a long time
- sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
- diarrhoea, feeling or being sick



Even if you still have a cough or feel tired, it does not mean you can still pass the infection on to other people.

Read more on the [NHS website](#).

# What to do if staff have symptoms of a respiratory infection



If a staff member has symptoms of an illness like COVID-19 they will need to follow **guidance**.



This will tell them what to do to keep themselves and other people safe.



There is [guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection](#) available.



In line with other rules for employers, they should think about how they can help staff to follow the guidance.

# Getting vaccinated and letting fresh air in



## Getting vaccinated

**Vaccinations** are very good at keeping people safe from COVID-19, flu and other diseases.

Employers may want to think about how to support their staff in the best way to get vaccinated.

Please read the [COVID-19 vaccination guide](#) to find out more.

You can also read guidance on [vaccinations available from the NHS](#).

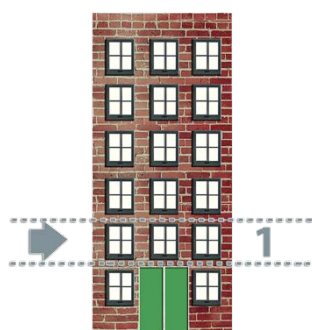
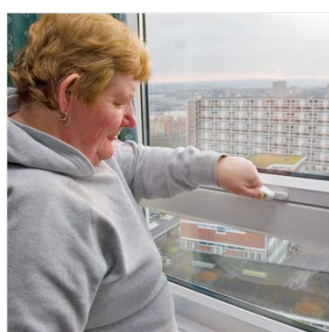


## Letting fresh air in

Letting fresh air into a building helps to stop viruses spreading from person to person.

If someone breathes, sneezes or coughs, they can spread a virus through the air.

Read more about how to [ventilate a building and keep fresh air coming in at work](#).



# Keeping the workplace clean



Keeping the workplace clean helps to stop infections from spreading.

Keep any work surfaces that lots of people use as clean as you can.



For example, in the kitchen or toilet.

You can support staff to keep clean by having:

- cleaning products
- soap and water
- hand sanitiser





# Looking after staff who get very ill from COVID-19



Some staff may get very sick from COVID-19. This is because they cannot fight off illness in the same way as others. This is called having a **weak immune system**.



If you have people working for you who are at more risk, you should follow the [guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk](#)

Employers should think about what staff who may get very sick need.



They should work out what the risks might be for someone who has a weak immune system.

Employers that run places like laboratories will need to make sure their staff are kept safe from COVID-19.



Employers should follow the rules on keeping safe in the workplace.

They may wish to talk to their staff and ask them what they need to keep safe at work.