12 August 2020

FAO: All business operators in North Tyneside

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for all the work that you have done so far in North Tyneside during the coronavirus pandemic – as North Tyneside Council's Director of Public Health, I know how challenging it has been across every aspect of our borough.

Together with our partners, we recently published an outbreak control plan for North Tyneside. The plan sets out how we are working together to prevent outbreaks in the borough and if we should experience an outbreak how we will respond. The plan is important as it can help us to avoid a local lockdown like we have recently seen in other areas of the country.

In recent weeks, yours may have been one of many businesses that have re-opened or you may be making plans to do so as further phased lifting of restrictions take place.

All businesses have a key role to play in preventing the spread of the virus and we are keen to support you by making sure you have access to the latest information and guidance so that businesses can operate safely, protect their staff, customers and community, and remain within the law.

Within this letter, you will find some key information together with an action card, which provides general guidance on helping to prevent the spread of the virus within the business and the action you should take in the event of a case of COVID-19.

Our plan and all of the information in this letter is also available on the council's website and also the North Tyneside Business Forum website.

I hope you find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me or our Environment Health Team on (0191) 643 6100 by emailing environmental.health@northtyneside.gov.uk should you require any further information.

Thank you for your continued support in protecting staff, residents and visitors and helping to keep North Tyneside safe.

Yours faithfully,

Wendy Burke
Director of Public Health.

1. **Make sure your business can open and is safe to do so**

Business that can reopen must only do so if they can work safely. All businesses have a legal responsibility to protect their employees and other people on site at their premises. The government has set out five steps to working safely which all help to prevent the spread of coronavirus, they include:
- Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment
- Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures
- Help people to work from home
- Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible
- Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

Carrying out a COVID-19 risk assessment is a legal requirement for all employers, it will help you to manage the risk associated with re-starting or running your business during the outbreak, making sensible adjustments to the site and workforce. For further information:
- Health and Safety Executive
- GOV.UK

The government has also provided detailed sector-specific guidance to help you apply the other essential safety measures to your operations. A list of businesses which must remain closed can be found on the government's website.

2. **Support the NHS Test and Trace Service**

The NHS Test and Trace service is really important in preventing the spread of coronavirus.

Depending on the nature of your business, you may need to collect details and maintain records of staff, customers and visitors to your premises to support NHS Test and Trace. You can check whether you are one of the organisations that should be collecting this information here.

If this requirement does apply to you, you should keep a temporary record of your customers and visitors for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for your business and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if requested.

Employees must not attend the workplace if they have symptoms of coronavirus - they must isolate at home with their household and book a test.

3. **Notify cases of COVID-19**

You might be informed of a confirmed case of COVID-19 by an employee, customer, NHS Test and Trace Service or by Public Health England North East Health Protection Team.

If you have any concerns about a case or if you are informed of **more than one case,** you should immediately speak to Public Health England North East Health Protection Team by **telephoning 0300 303 8596 and selecting option 1**. **Prompt action is very important to prevent a wider outbreak in the community**. The team will work with you to assess the situation and will advise what action to take.

Depending on the outcome the Health Protection Team may contact me, as the Director of Public Health, to establish an Outbreak Control Team to help you manage the situation.