

Environmental Health Coronavirus Work (March 2020 to present)

Throughout the pandemic Environmental Health staff resources have had to be diverted to the Council's public health protection duties to prevent the spread of coronavirus within public and business premises. These duties are in addition to the team's pre-covid duties.

Some of these additional duties being carried out by the Environmental Health team included: -

Reviewing legislation / guidance and updating notice and letter templates, and the provision of written information direct to business and on the Council's website.

In response EH has had to make **165 revisions** to its documentation to date in response to the 165 amendments that have been made to legislation and guidance (OPPS).

All sectors of businesses in the Borough affected by the covid-19 restrictions have been contacted either by phone, text, email, or letter. Some Businesses have been contacted several times due to the repeated introduction and subsequent lifting of restrictions. The purpose of contact is to provide them with advice on what they need to do to operate safely and prevent the spread of covid for customers and staff.

More than 3000 visits have been made to businesses by officers. These have been to: -

- check businesses are complying with the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus regulations
- responding to complaints and allegations from the public about businesses who are not complying with the regulations.
- To carry out enforcement actions in response to non-compliance.

Officers from Environmental Health have routinely carried out monitoring visits during evenings and weekends throughout the pandemic. A good number of these have resulted in joint operations with the Police.

Environmental Health Officers have investigated the cause of covid-19 outbreaks in 14 businesses, ensuring on completion that covid safe hygiene measures are in place to prevent recurrence.

Officers are now **visiting residents who have tested positive for either covid-19 or a variant of concern**, on behalf of Public Health England to notify the resident that they must self-isolate.

Events – Environmental Health Officers are reviewing the risk assessments of all events held in the Borough to ensure that the organisers are giving sufficient consideration to prevent the spreading covid-19. Officers will often carry out unannounced visits during events to observe practices, particularly where the organisers have had to have a lot of EH input into managing the covid risks.

Working outside of normal office hours – throughout the pandemic the EH team has routinely been working outside of normal office hours to carry out routine spot-checks on businesses to ensure compliance with covid regulations. Further, officers also carry out out of hours visits to investigate allegations made by the public or other agencies about non-compliance. This out of hours work impacts on resource availability during normal office hours.