

# Guidance for Lancashire community support groups during COVID

## Legal advice

There is a specific exemption for support groups as part of the restrictions on social contact

The latest national guidance is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-levels-what-you-need-to-know#social-contact-restrictions>

As of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the COVID-19 alert level has been reduced from 4 to 3.

## Public Health advice

Gathering limits have been eased. Outdoor gatherings are limited to 30 people and indoor gatherings are limited to 6 people or 2 households (each household can include a support bubble, if eligible).

New guidance on [Meeting friends and family \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-friends-and-family-covid-19) will emphasise personal responsibility rather than government rules. Instead of instructing you to stay 2m apart from anyone you don't live with, you will be encouraged to exercise caution and consider the guidance on risks associated with COVID-19 and actions you can take to help keep you and your loved ones safe. Remember that the risks of close contact may be greater for some people than others and in some settings and circumstances, there will be specific guidance that you will need to follow even when you are with friends and family.

Support groups and parent and child group gathering limits will increase to 30 people (not including under 5s)

Wash hands - washing your hands regularly

Cover face - wear a face covering in enclosed spaces

Make space - stay at least 2 metres apart

Fresh Air – Meet outside in the fresh air where possible, if indoors open windows and doors to keep the area well ventilated

To help reduce confusion over group size limits, we'd encourage sticking to a consistent group of 6 (though legally it could be 15 for a support group)

## Twice weekly testing

About 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others.

Getting tested regularly is the only way to know if you have the virus. If people test positive and self-isolate, it helps stop the virus spreading.

The test for people without symptoms of COVID-19 is called a rapid lateral flow test.

This usually involves rubbing a long cotton bud (swab) over your tonsils (or where they would have been) and inside your nose.

The tests can give you a result in 30 minutes. They use a device similar to a pregnancy test and do not need to be sent to a lab.

You can do a rapid test at home or at a rapid lateral flow test site.

You should log all of your test results on the Track and Trace App [The NHS COVID-19 app support website - NHS.UK](#). If you test positive, you and anyone you live with will need to self-isolate.

Getting a rapid test is quick and convenient. Regular, rapid testing can be delivered through:

- a home ordering service, which allows people to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to their home [Regular rapid coronavirus \(COVID-19\) tests if you do not have symptoms - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- workplace testing programmes, on-site or at home
- community testing, offered by all local authorities
- collection at a local polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test site during specific test collection time windows
- testing on-site at schools and colleges
- collection from participating pharmacies

## **Get the vaccine**

It is important to get the vaccine when it is your turn to do so, in order to protect yourself and those around you.

You can find out how to book your vaccine here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

The NHS has also created a YouTube playlist to answer any questions or concerns you may have about the vaccine [COVID-19 vaccine - Tackling disinformation - YouTube](#)

## **National Guidance on meeting with others**

Rule of 6. No more than 6 people should be meeting indoors, this is a legal requirement and is enforceable by fines. The rules are due to change on 17<sup>th</sup> May please check the latest advice before making any arrangements to meet others.

[\(COVID-19\) Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **National guidance on community centres**

[COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **National guidance on outdoor spaces**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19>