

STAC Advice Note: Health protection advice for participation in protests

OFFICIAL

To: London Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)
From: London COVID-19 Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell (STAC)
Subject: Health protection advice for people participating in protests
Date: 04/06/20

1. Purpose

The purpose of this advice is to signpost national guidance and signal key harm reduction messages for consideration by people attending protests. The current advice in the UK is that [mass gathering events](#) should not take place. There is also [safer travel guidance](#) available for passengers and specific [guidance for shielding](#) and protecting more vulnerable people. Individuals attending protests are encouraged to adopt a “COVID-19 secure” approach.

2. Advice

2.1 Social Distancing

Social distancing should be practiced traveling to and from, and during the protest.

This means:

- stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from anyone you do not live with when outside your home
- wash your hands with soap and water before you leave the house
- use hand sanitiser gel regularly when you're out
- wash your hands as soon as you get home– do this for at least 20 seconds
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards or use hand sanitiser
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

2.2 Face coverings

- Always wear a face covering when attending a protest. This means something that covers your nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands after touching your face covering.
- Do not share your face covering with others.

2.3 Travel

- Avoid using public transport where possible. Travel to and from protests by foot or cycle.

2.4 Things to consider before choosing to attend a protest

- Do not attend a protest if you have symptoms of COVID-19 (a new cough, fever or change in your sense of taste or smell) – stay home and get tested to protect others.
- Consider who is in your household. Do you live with people who have health conditions and are extremely vulnerable to catching COVID-19 and becoming ill? Think about how they can continue to be protected.
- Avoid protests if you do not feel that you will be able to keep 2m apart from others, to reduce your risk of acquiring infection.
- Consider alternative ways to show your support, such as donating funds, supporting initiatives or virtually protesting via social media channels.
- Handwashing stations won't be available everywhere. Take hand sanitiser with you and use it often.
- Toilet facilities won't be available to use.
- Water filling stations won't be available to use. Bring water with you and stay hydrated. Do not share your bottle with anyone else.

3. Key messages

- Protect yourself and others
- Consider who else is in your household and their vulnerability to infection so that you protect them
- Don't go out to protest if you have any symptoms
- Wash your hands before you leave the house and use hand sanitiser regularly when you're out
- Keep 2m apart from others on your journey to and from, and during the protest
- Wear a face covering
- Walk or cycle there and back if you can

Do not attend a protest if you have symptoms of COVID-19 (a new cough, fever or change in your sense of taste or smell) – stay home and get tested to protect others.

After going to a protest if you develop cough, fever or change in your sense of taste or smell, stay home and get tested.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

Ends.

I confirm that this briefing note was reviewed and approved by the STAC.



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STAC Chair, Professor Kevin Fenton
London Regional Director of Public Health, Public Health England

Contact for further information: Katie.Hunter2@london.gov.uk

Ends.