



# COVID-19 communications

## Half-term messaging for London

### Aim

With half-term approaching and rates of COVID-19 on the increase, we are asking partners to amplify the messaging in this pack to remind Londoners of COVID-safe behaviours.

### Data overview

- Rates of infection remain high in London and are increasing.
- Rates are higher now than the same time last year. During October half-term in 2020 (26/10/2020 to 01/11/2020), the rolling 7-day rate in London decreased from 156.6 per 100,000 to 144.9 per 100,000. By comparison, the 7-day rate for London currently stands at 248.9 per 100,000 and has been steadily climbing in recent days. [Data](#)
- Although London currently has the lowest regional rate of COVID-19 in England, it remains too high and some of our boroughs have rates higher than the national average. [Data](#)
- Rates of infection in London are currently highest in 11-19 year olds. [Data](#)

### Key messages

- The COVID-19 pandemic is not over – Cases are high and steadily rising and Londoners are still at risk of picking up the virus and passing it on to others.
- Take simple steps and actions to enjoy the half-term break safely and keep your family and friends safe.
- Get vaccinated - COVID-19 vaccines have prevented thousands of hospitalisations and deaths in London and across the country. With cases on the rise in London, being fully vaccinated with two doses and getting the booster when offered is the best way of protecting yourself and others this winter.
- Wear a face covering – the virus spreads through the air by droplets and aerosols that are exhaled from the nose and mouth of an infected person. If you're out and about this half term you should wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed areas where you come into contact with people you do not usually meet, for example on public transport or in shops, museums, theatres, and cinemas.
- Keep testing - regular LFD testing can help uncover hidden cases of the virus that would otherwise go undetected. Keep testing yourself and your children regularly using LFDs over half-term, even though they aren't at school.



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- If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, even mild, stay at home and arrange a PCR test immediately.
- Wash your hands regularly to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and other circulating winter viruses such as coughs, colds and flu.
- Meeting outdoors is safer but let fresh air in if you do meet indoors - meeting outdoors vastly reduces the risk of airborne transmission, but this may not always be possible. If you're indoors, you should let fresh air in to reduce the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19.
- These steps will help protect you from COVID-19 as well as other circulating winter viruses. Respiratory infections and common colds thrive in the winter months thanks to the lower temperatures and people mixing and socialising more indoors.
- With far fewer restrictions in place, this is the first winter where we will face COVID-19 alongside other serious winter viruses such as flu, and vaccines offer the best protection against both.

*Further guidance:*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

## Regional position statements

**Professor Kevin Fenton, London Regional Director of Public Health, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), said:**

“The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is becoming part of our everyday lives in London but we have reached another turning point in the progression of the virus in the city. Case rates have been stable in recent weeks, although at a higher rate compared to October last year, and now they are starting to increase again.

“With winter rapidly approaching and the potential for more social mixing over half-term, it’s important that Londoners step up their action to prevent catching and spreading Covid, which we know can have a devastating impact on our communities and city.

“Whilst we’re able to enjoy more freedoms now than before, we must keep in mind that the virus is still circulating at high levels and increasing day-on-day. I would therefore urge Londoners to get fully vaccinated without delay and get the all-important booster jab when offered. Do get back to wearing face coverings in enclosed and crowded places especially on the tube and buses, wash your hands and test regularly, stay at home if you’re unwell, and don’t forget about good ventilation as it really does help.”



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**Dr Yvonne Young, London Deputy Director for Health Protection at the UK Health Security Agency, said:**

"We are carefully tracking rates of COVID-19 throughout London and there has been a recent notable increase in cases affecting all age groups. The higher case rates started in west and south west London but are now affecting half of our boroughs, some of which have infection rates that exceed the national average.

"We have seen this pattern throughout the pandemic and know that rates can rapidly increase across all boroughs as people mix and move around, so I would encourage Londoners to increase their vigilance and take the simple steps necessary to keep themselves and their friends and family free from infection. Many of our cases are in school aged children so it's important that young people and families enjoy half-term safely.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is continually evolving and we face an unpredictable winter with other seasonal viruses such as flu likely to be in the mix. Vaccines remain our best defence against both COVID and flu. They are very effective and significantly reduce severe illness, hospital admissions and death."

## Suggested example tweets and available social media assets

<b>Halloween</b> <i>Enjoy your Halloween traditions safely by holding your celebrations outdoors where #COVID19 particles can blow away. If you meet indoors, open windows to let fresh air in.</i>  <i>If you're trick or treating this Halloween, remember to carry your hand sanitiser to help stop the spread of COVID-19, coughs and colds.</i>	Assets are due to be uploaded to the <a href="#">Coronavirus Resource Centre</a> by Cabinet Office on the afternoon of Thurs 21 Oct.
<b>Half term activities</b> <i>If you're out and about in London this half term visiting museums, shopping or going to the theatre, remember to wear your face covering in enclosed, crowded spaces, where the risk of catching or passing the virus on might be higher.</i>	<a href="#">COVID-19 behaviours social assets – testing, symptoms, ventilation, face coverings, NHS T&amp;T app</a>  <a href="#">NHS T&amp;T app animations</a>



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*Don't forget to check in to your half term activities using the NHS #COVID19 app. The app will also inform you if you have been in close contact with someone who has since tested positive for #COVID19.*

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-covid-19/>

## Vulnerable friends and family

*If you're visiting elderly or vulnerable friends and family this half term, make sure to take steps to keep your visit safe. Even if you are double vaccinated, you can still pass COVID-19 on to others. Understand the risks here:*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

*If you are unwell, whether it's a cold, flu, or COVID-19, you should stay away from others to reduce the risk of passing on illnesses that could be serious for others.*

[COVID-19 behaviours](#)  
[social assets – testing,](#)  
[symptoms, ventilation, face coverings, NHS T&T app](#)

## Travel

*Are you taking the train or bus to see friends and family this half term? Don't forget to wear your face covering to keep others safe on the journey.*

*If you're travelling abroad for some winter sun this half term, make sure you're up to date with the steps to take before, during and after your journey to stop the spread of #COVID19. [www.gov.uk/travel-abroad](http://www.gov.uk/travel-abroad)*

[COVID-19 behaviours](#)  
[social assets – testing,](#)  
[symptoms, ventilation, face coverings, NHS T&T app](#)

[Travel abroad social assets](#)

## Testing

*Don't forget to keep taking twice weekly LFDs this half term to ensure a safe return to school once the break is over. Regular LFD testing helps uncover hidden cases of the virus that would otherwise go undetected.*

*Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don't have any symptoms of COVID-19. Keep testing your child over half term to help spot hidden cases and ensure a safe return to school.*

[School testing social assets](#)

*If you have any symptoms of #COVID19, even mild, stay at home and arrange a PCR test immediately. Don't visit friends and family this half term, even if they are double vaccinated.*

[COVID-19 behaviours](#)  
[social assets – testing,](#)  
[symptoms, ventilation, face coverings, NHS T&T app](#)



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*At this time of year, we're more likely to pick up coughs and colds as we spend more time indoors in close contact with others. If you have any symptoms of #COVID19, arrange a PCR test immediately and stay away from others.*

## Vaccination

*Cases of #COVID19 in London are on the rise. Being fully vaccinated with two doses is the best way of protecting yourself and others against #COVID19 this winter, when respiratory viruses spread more easily. Book your appointment now: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>*

*If you haven't had chance to get your #COVIDvaccine yet, why not use this half term to #GrabAJab? The vaccine is preventing infections, hospitalisations and deaths every day. Find your local walk-in site here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/>*

[COVID-19 vaccine suite of assets](#)

## Useful links

- Guidance: [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#)