

HSE and Sefton Council target Liverpool City Region for COVID-secure spot inspections

Sefton Council is one of many local authorities working with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) checking on businesses to make sure they are COVID-secure.

Sefton is part of the Liverpool City Region that has just been placed in the highest lockdown tier following discussions between central and local government.

HSE inspectors and Sefton Council's Environmental Health officers have been conducting spot checks and inspections on businesses from all different sectors in the area to check they are following government guidelines.

Being COVID-secure means that businesses need to put adjustments in place to manage the risk from coronavirus to protect workers, visitors and customers.

Sefton Council is responsible for the enforcement of health and safety legislation in sectors which includes shops, pubs and restaurants, whereas HSE regulates health and safety in areas such as construction and manufacturing.

By putting in COVID-secure measures to protect employees, visitors and members of the local community, it will help businesses to continue to operate which is key to the local economy.

Sally Nicholson, HSE Head of Operations, North West, said: "Across the country we are working with local authorities, like Sefton Council, ensuring businesses are checked and are COVID-secure.

"All workplaces are in scope which means businesses of any size, in any sector can receive an unannounced check, by us or a local authority.

"If you are contacted by the HSE or your local authority, please engage with us as it is your duty to ensure employees and visitors at a workplace are protected from the virus.

"By making sure that businesses have measures in place to manage the risks, we can benefit the health of local communities as well as support the local and national UK economy."

During the checks, advice and guidance can be provided to help the business to implement work practices that reduce the risk of virus transmission, but where businesses are not managing this, enforcement action can be taken. This can range from the provision of specific advice, issuing enforcement notices, stopping certain work practices until they are made safe and, where businesses fail to comply, prosecution.

Cllr Paulette Lappin, from Sefton Council, said: "As the Liverpool City Region has further lockdown measures in place, ensuring workplaces are COVID-secure needs to remain a main priority for all businesses in Sefton and beyond.

"It is a legal duty for businesses to protect their workers and others from harm and this includes taking reasonable steps to control the risk and protect people from coronavirus.

"Being COVID-secure can help reduce these risks and we want every business in the borough to follow the guidelines that ultimately protects our communities.

"Working with the HSE has enabled us to target the whole of the Sefton area from small businesses to large manufacturers, whether Local Authority or HSE enforced, ensuring all workplaces understand the importance of being COVID-secure."

HSE and local authority inspectors are finding some common issues across a range of sectors that include: failing to provide arrangements for monitoring, supervising and maintaining social distancing, and failing to introduce an adequate cleaning regime particularly at busy times of the day.

For more information on HSE's spot checks and inspections, see www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/spot-inspections.htm

For the latest information and safer business guidance, see www.gov.uk

/Ends

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. <https://www.hse.gov.uk>
2. Local Authorities have the same enforcement responsibilities and powers as the HSE for certain types of businesses within their area, including shops, restaurants, licenced premises, offices and warehouses.
3. HSE news releases are available at <https://press.hse.gov.uk>

For HSE's working safely guidance see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>

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