



Statement
September 2020
Covid 19 Enforcement

We represent the Environmental Health managers employed by Councils in Sussex.

Environmental Health Officers have been at the forefront of curtailing the infections of Covid-19 by working with businesses and voluntary groups and carrying out enforcement, where necessary. Initially, by ensuring businesses closed during the lockdown and recently on Covid secure measures and procedures.

We have been working closely with our colleagues in the police, public health and trading standards.

We are concerned about the inability of EHOs to quickly act against those businesses that do not follow Covid secure rules and endorse the statement and recommendations produced by ALEHM (attached). If we had enforcement powers the equivalent of our Welsh colleagues SI 2020 No. 725 (W. 162) which contains provisions for Premises Improvement Notices and Premises Closure Notices our ability to respond would be so much more effective and simpler.

This is vital to protect public health and create a level playing field between businesses that comply voluntarily.

We request the HSE reviews its previous advice that prohibition notices under the Health and Safety at work etc Act 1974, should not be served in relation to workplaces which are not Covid secure, in the light of recent evidence and the serious risks to employees over 50, BAME employees or those with existing medical conditions, who may be hospitalised, if infected.

We also support the proposals by the LGA to temporarily change the licensing objectives under the Licensing Act 2003, to include public health, allowing objections to be made about events that are not Covid secure. Temporary event notifications should be required to include a Covid-19 risk assessment during the pandemic.

Statement ENDS

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The views and opinions expressed in this statement do not represent the views or opinions of any individual local authority or individual.