

**Coronavirus: Guidance for Synagogues**  
**Rosh Hashanah Update**  
**15 September 2020**

With just days to go until Rosh Hashanah and, still, with an ever-changing landscape, please see below a summary of key guidance. We realise that there has been much communication shared over the last few days and our intention here is to try to bring clarity and highlight key points. We will update our full guidance ahead of Yom Kippur including information on Succot and Simchat Torah. The most recent version can be found [here](#).

You will have seen the government’s updated [Places of Worship guidance](#) and the guidance relating specifically to the [Yamim Noraim](#). As we have done with previous iterations of our guidance, we take legislation and government guidance as the basis for our decision-making and occasionally choose to take a more cautious approach. Over the last two weeks in particular, we have had positive engagement with local public health teams who support our guidelines and advice.

**Provision**

- Services in our buildings, including on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, can continue as planned, in line with our guidelines.
- Children’s and youth services and programming can go ahead if organised in line with our guidelines.
- Shiurim can go ahead both indoors and outdoors on our sites, in line with our guidelines.

**Health and safety**

- Please note that visors are not an acceptable form of face covering. Members must wear masks that cover the nose and mouth and should be reminded to bring them from home.
- Only those from the same household or support bubble (as defined by the government) may sit together
- All usual health and safety measures apply. Please ensure that there are no obstruction to exits and entrances.

**Food and Drink**

- There can be no kiddush or food and drink consumed on site, either indoors or outdoors and socialising on site must be avoided.
- A takeaway kiddush box or bag is permitted as long as it is collected at the gate. Members should be advised to wait at home to open and enjoy. Sealed products should be used wherever possible to avoid the need for food preparation and handling. For communities outside of an eruv, takeaways can only be handed out on second day Yom Tov.



## Tashlich

- This year, unfortunately, communal tashlich programmes cannot go ahead.
- As tashlich is personal in nature and does not require a minyan, members should be encouraged to say private tashlich throughout the afternoon of the second day of Rosh Hashanah or on any day until Hoshana Raba, except for Shabbat

## Shofar blowing

- It is permitted to blow the shofar indoors and outdoors. If blowing indoors, please note that the room must be well-ventilated and, whether indoors or outdoors, the shofar blower must be asymptomatic and not required to self-isolate. The shofar must be blown at least 3m from any other individual and should not be blown towards someone's face. It must be cleaned before and after use.
- Additional Shofar blowing sessions can take place in a Covid-secure manner with pre-booking in the following ways:
  - Outdoors or indoors on the shul site
  - Outdoors in a public space such as a carpark or playground, only with permission of the local council
  - For communities not in Barnet, outdoors in a public park, again with permission of the local council and with appropriate security provision
  - On streets in the style of 'Clap for Carers' where the members of each household (and no more) gather in their driveways to hear a shofar blown in the street.
  - In a private garden or house (where there is no garden) with no more than 5 individuals present in addition to the shofar blower.

## Programming and services in gardens

- The legislation and government guidance, as we understand it, do not permit services or programming to take place in private gardens. We are aware that, instead, many communities have secured alternative sites, have submitted risk assessments and are awaiting approval from local councils. Please be in touch with us if you do not receive a response by Thursday morning and we will try to progress it.
- Public Health Directors in some boroughs have made special provision for services to go ahead on private land. We recommend that you contact your local public health team for clarification on this matter.

## If someone presents with symptoms on Shabbat or Yom Tov

Many of you have asked for advice on what to do if you hear that a member who attended a service goes on to have symptoms or is tested positive for Covid given that we are not permitted to use the phone or access online advice. We have outlined a protocol below.

- This is not a replacement for advice from doctors, PHE or Test and Trace.
- It is critical that those with symptoms or a positive test result do not return to shul.
- If a member who attended a service on Shabbat or Yom Tov discovers the next day that they have symptoms or is notified that they are Covid-positive, they should try to get a message to an Honorary Officer. As their household must self-isolate, we note that this will be challenging.
- The information required by the shul is:



- Where did you sit? There should be additional cleaning in this area of the shul
- Were you less than 2 metres away from anyone for 20 minutes or more? If this was the case, HOs should advise this individual/these individuals and their household/s to self-isolate until they can contact Test and Trace/book a test
- Who were your nearest neighbours in shul i.e. who was sitting in a 2m circle around you? As an additional precaution, HOs should ask these people not to return to shul over the rest of Yom Tov. HOs should contact the public health team immediately after Yom Tov to confirm that these individuals do not need to self-isolate.
- Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about this protocol.

**Jo Grose, Director of Communities**  
**Rabbi Nicky Liss, Chair, Rabbinic Council of the United Synagogue**  
**15 September 2020**