



## **Joint media release from the Directors of Public Health in Cheshire & Merseyside**

### **For immediate release**

25 January 2021

### **Cheshire & Merseyside Directors of Public Health join call for supermarkets to closely adhere to COVID-19 guidance**

Directors of Public Health across the region are appealing to all supermarkets and food/convenience stores to adhere to the COVID secure public health guidance. Several national supermarkets have recently confirmed that they will be tightening up the rules and enforcing the use of face coverings in their stores which is welcomed by Directors. The Directors of Public Health, who are leading the local public health response to COVID, would like to ensure the public are as protected as possible in light of the high numbers of COVID cases in Cheshire & Merseyside.

The public health guidance for supermarkets includes ensuring the use of face coverings by customers and staff (unless someone is medically exempt), a one way system, a limit on numbers of shoppers in store, social distancing markers for 2 metres and allowing only one person to shop with exceptions such as people who need a carer. It also asks supermarkets to remind customers to only handle products they intend to buy.

Ian Ashworth, current Chair of the Cheshire & Merseyside Directors of Public Health Board said, "Despite the great progress being made with the vaccine roll out, it is still important that organisations continue to keep people safe. Supermarkets and food stores can help reduce the spread of COVID by strictly adhering to the public health guidance. Our hospitals are still extremely overwhelmed with COVID patients so we must do everything we can. If supermarkets and food stores can closely follow the guidance, it will contribute to fewer positive COVID cases in our community. We all want to see an end to this lockdown. We would like to thank everyone working in the food/retail sector who have worked tirelessly to serve their customers throughout this difficult time."

Directors of Public Health would also like to remind members of the public to stay at home and only leave the house for permitted reasons such as essential shopping, exercise and medical appointments. They are also encouraging people to shop locally and use online deliveries where possible. A full list of exceptions to the "stay at home" rules can be found at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

If you develop symptoms of COVID (fever, new continuous cough or loss/change of taste or smell) you can obtain a test by visiting [nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or calling 119. If your test is positive you must follow the guidance including self-isolating immediately. More information on self-isolating can be found at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)

For those who need support during this difficult time please visit [www.kindtoyourmind.org](http://www.kindtoyourmind.org) which has details of 24/7 crisis helplines and resources to help mental wellbeing.

### **Ends**

For media enquiries please contact Tracey Lambert, Champs Public Health Collaborative on 07554 114349 [traceylambert@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:traceylambert@wirral.gov.uk)

### **About Champs Public Health Collaborative**

Led by the Cheshire and Merseyside Directors of Public Health, Champs Public Health Collaborative works across the nine Local Authorities in Cheshire & Merseyside. Champs Collaborative enables resources to be shared and public health initiatives to be delivered across a larger area, improving local health outcomes for its population of 2.5 million people. The Collaborative delivers a number of priorities in partnership with Public Health England North West and the NHS in Cheshire & Merseyside and has been supporting the COVID response in Cheshire & Merseyside. The Champs support team lead, facilitate and enable the delivery of the priorities with local public health teams and partners. The Collaborative is responsible for enabling system leadership, collaborative commissioning, sector led improvement, finance, CPD/events and communications, mental wellbeing and public health intelligence. More information at [www.champspublichealth.com](http://www.champspublichealth.com)