

# Suffolk woman: 'Covid could have been worse if I was unvaccinated'

Local businesswoman Sarah Stamp is urging everyone to get their jab after she was infected with coronavirus at a job interview.

By **Danielle Lett**

**E**ighteen months since the world entered the coronavirus pandemic – and while the vaccine programme has been rolled out and restrictions have eased – people are still testing positive for the virus.

Last month, West Suffolk councillor and businesswoman Sarah Stamp, was among them.

Despite being double jabbed, Sarah, of Bury St Edmunds, caught the virus following a job interview with a prospective employee – with both her and her managing director John testing positive just days later.

She is still suffering from the effects, weeks later.

“We asked the person we were interviewing to do a lateral flow test before they came in, which they did.

“We were all sat socially-distanced, but we were in an office and did take our masks off during the interview,” explains the director of operations at Infusions Group.

The next day, the interviewee started showing symptoms. “They took another lateral flow test, which came back positive. And just four days later, John and I both tested positive.

“We had been so careful, and this was the first time any of us at work had contracted Covid. We’ve got a fairly robust Covid policy at work – we wear masks, regularly sanitise, do lateral flow tests, and take our temperature every day. Coincidentally, two other members of the team also caught Covid the week after we did. It’s been a fairly rocky couple of weeks for us at work.”

Before contracting the virus, the pandemic had already greatly affected Sarah’s business and day-to-day life.

“We supply the hospitality sector, so obviously with lockdown upon lockdown, our business took a nosedive. It’s been a very difficult time for all of us,” she adds.

Explaining her symptoms following the positive test result, she says: “I had a high temperature, a headache and aches all over. I also lost my sense of taste and smell, but for me, my two main symptoms were



Bury St Edmunds businesswoman and councillor Sarah Stamp is urging everyone to get double jabbed after contracting Covid

Picture: CHARLOTTE BOND

breathlessness and fatigue.

Luckily Sarah didn’t need hospitalisation, but she did seek medical advice as her breathlessness was especially bad during her first week of illness.

“I dread to think how worse it might’ve been for me had I not been double vaccinated, though. I am overweight, but I’m also fairly fit, active and healthy otherwise. I didn’t have a reaction with either of my vaccines, but I’ve been hit

quite hard with Covid. The breathlessness is still there, which I’m struggling a bit with it.

“Recovery is definitely taking a lot longer than I hoped it would. I’ve gone back to work this week, but I haven’t been able to do a full day yet. I still get breathless quite quickly and I’m sleeping a lot more than I’d like to.”

As Sarah focuses on getting back to full health, she is incredibly thankful to have been

vaccinated – and urges everyone to get their jab.

“I think people still need to be aware of Covid and its effects.

“People have gotten complacent, thinking it’s gone away and they’re safe from it – but no one’s safe.

“It doesn’t discriminate. I’d encourage anyone who hasn’t got the vaccine to go get it.

“The scientific evidence is

there, and it’s a simple precaution and safety measure we can all take.

“And it’s not just about being fit and healthy – I consider myself fit and healthy and have been badly affected by it.

“It’s about also protecting those who are vulnerable, such as the elderly and those who are pregnant.

“We’ve got a duty to keep everyone safe.”



Sarah contracted Covid following a job interview last month

Pictures: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

### What is 'Long covid'?

Long covid is a term used to describe a series of signs and symptoms that occur after someone has recovered from Covid-19. These last for around for 12 weeks or more, and is sometimes also known as post-Covid syndrome.

According to the NHS, how ill you were when you contracted Covid isn't linked to your chances of developing long covid.

#### Symptoms that you may be suffering from long covid include:

- Extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain or tightness
- Problems with memory and concentration (also known as 'brain fog')
- Difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- Heart palpitations
- Dizziness
- Pins and needles
- Joint pain
- Depression and anxiety
- Tinnitus and/or earaches

- Nausea, diarrhoea, stomach aches, loss of appetite
- A high temperature
- A cough
- Headaches
- A sore throat
- Changes to sense of smell or taste
- Rashes

The NHS advises you contact your GP if you're suffering from any of these four weeks after having recovered from covid.

Your GP will then recommend a number of tests to find out more about your symptoms, and rule out anything else that could be causing them.

If you are diagnosed with long covid, you may be referred to a specialist rehabilitation service or a service that specialises in the specific symptoms you have, in order to help you manage your symptoms and recover.

For further advice, visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



Sarah says she dreads to think how her Covid symptoms would have been had she not been double vaccinated