

## Top tips for Re-opening your business – keeping your customers and employees safe

From the 15<sup>th</sup> June non-essential retail businesses can start to reopen. Every business will have different challenges depending on the type of retail they are involved in, their location and range of customers.

The following are a few tips which can help you manage re-opening, supporting your customers and your staff. You can find helpful advice at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches> or at <https://www.businesscompanion.info/>

**As a business you can play a leading role in preventing the spread of Covid 19, keeping you, your customer and your staff safe.**

**Maintaining the social distancing rules, use of hand sanitisers and increasing cleansing are all vital in achieving this.**

### What do I need to do to plan for re-opening?

- **Undertake a Risk Assessment of your business** - You must make sure that the risk assessment addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. The above link provides a helpful guidance to the risk assessment and what you should consider.
- **The layout of your premises** – Spend time looking at the how your premises is laid out, so you can have a smooth flow of people, maintaining social distancing. Installing visible markers encouraging 2m's apart can help, particularly in areas such as entrances and exits and at pay points. Aim to have one-way flows with markers or arrows in place where possible particularly if aisles are narrow.
- **Speak to suppliers** – It's important to plan how and when goods and supplies arrive at your premises to make sure it has minimum disruption to your suppliers and with your customers.
- **Talk to your customers** – Your website and social media is a good way to let your customers know what they can expect when they visit your business. Early Communication can help you and your customers understand the changes to your retail premises, how many people will be allowed in the shop at any one-time, contactless payment whenever possible, the use of hand sanitisers and the additional cleaning routines being followed. This will give your customers confidence that they can shop at your premises safely.
- **Communicating with your neighbours** – It may be that your neighbouring businesses are planning to reopen at the same time. Talk to them early about how they intend to operate. and how you will both control entrance and exit of customers.

### What can you do to support your customers and staff?

- **Your staff** – Talk to your staff about the changes that you have made, serving and helping customers, payments and managing stock. This includes those customers who may be queuing. If possible, organise your staff so they work in set teams. This will help minimise the risk of spread between staff. Importantly, your staff may have their own concerns about returning to work. Consider how you can protect staff who may be more vulnerable from COVID-19 (individuals with underlying health conditions, pregnant staff and staff from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups). Can these staff continue to work from home or be assigned non-public facing roles to reduce the chance of exposure to the virus. Spending time checking on their wellbeing and signposting them to support is key to helping your business run smoothly. You can access advice on mental wellbeing by visiting [www.mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you](http://www.mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you)
- **Your Customers** – Welcoming your customers and explaining the changes to your premises when they enter will make their customer experience more enjoyable. Reducing

the range of stock on display and encouraging customer to ask about products, rather than not touching products can be a valuable way of reducing the spread of the virus and will help keep them and your staff safe.

- **Contactless payments** – Encourage your customers to use contactless payments whenever possible.
- **Increased cleanliness and Hygiene** - Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched within the workplace, using your usual cleaning products. No additional PPE is required other than what you would normally use for cleaning. Hand sanitisers on entry and exit and encouraging customers and staff to use them can help reduce the risk of spread.
- **Keeping Safe** - Ensure hand washing facilities or hand sanitisers are made available to staff to use between customer collections and frequently throughout the day.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>
- **Returns Policy** – Don't forget that consumers' still have the same statutory rights. They can return goods that are not of satisfactory quality, not fit for their intended purpose or not as described. Keep returns away from display for 72 hours as the virus presence on materials and surfaces is likely to be significantly reduced after 72 hours.
- **Personal Protective Equipment** - When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE. Inappropriate use of PPE presents risks in itself. Your staff may have lots of questions about the use of PPE so be clear and share the latest guidance with them.

#### How can I best support my local area?

- **Queue Control** - It is vital that you take steps to minimise and control queueing. Managing outside queues will help to ensure they do not cause a risk to individuals or other businesses, for example by introducing queuing systems, using barriers and having staff to direct customers.
- **Door Control** - If possible, use different entry and exit points to your premises. Where this is not possible, ensuring there is door control can prevent customers from stepping forward to enter and other customers are exiting and help maintain social distancing.
- **Talk to you neighbours** - Liaise with your local authority and neighbouring businesses to help identify the best way to take into account the impact of your plans, including queues, on public spaces such as high streets and public car parks. Your local council can provide helpful advice and guidance for your premises and the wider public space.
- **Use of Hand sanitisers** - Encouraging customers to use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises to reduce the risk of transmission by touching products while browsing. Working with your local authority or landlord.
- **Signage** - Be clear with customers where to queue, and place 2m markings with instructions/visual aids. Your local district or borough council will be able give you good advice which can compliment any plans they have for the area.

#### What does Test and Trace mean for my business?

- Test and Trace will provide testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus to find out if they have the virus.
- Test and Trace will get in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to help them share information about any close recent contacts they have had.

- Test and Trace will alert those contacts, where necessary, and notifies them if they need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus.
- Within a retail business naturally there will be an element of risk of coronavirus transmission between individuals including employees and customers. It is therefore vital that employers are prepared for this and encourage workers to follow any instructions to self-isolate and support them when in isolation. Employers must not ask employees who are needing to self-isolate to come into work.
- Although this may seem disruptive for businesses, it is less disruptive than an outbreak of COVID-19 in the workplace will be, and far less disruptive than any further periods in lockdown.
- If people can't work from home, employers must ensure any self-isolating employee (who has COVID-19 or has been identified as a contact of a positive case) is receiving sick pay and give them the option to use their paid leave days if they prefer.
- The NHS test and trace service will provide a notification that can be used as evidence that someone has been told to self-isolate.

(For further information please see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance>)

### **Other helpful links**

#### **Health & Safety Executive (HSE):**

Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak – a short guide and links to industry specific advice (pdf): <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/working-safely-guide.pdf>

Talking with your workers about working safely during the coronavirus  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/talking-with-your-workers.pdf>

#### **The Food Standards Agency (FSA)**

A checklist to support food businesses to reopen safely during COVID-19 after a period of inaction:  
<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-checklist-for-food-businesses-during-covid-19>

**Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH):**Resources relating to COVID-19 including downloadable signage links, safe shopping guides, food delivery, legionella  
<https://www.cieh.org/policy/coronavirus-covid-19/resources/>