

COVID-19: Supporting the High Street in Newark and Sherwood

Guidance on Re-opening Retail Shops



3. Introduction

3. Working safely during COVID-19

4. Risk assessments

5. Enabling social distancing in your workplace

6. Managing queuing in your workplace

8. Preparing to re-open

10. Get in touch

Introduction

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused many retailers to close, but as plans for recovery are being made, businesses are looking to take steps to prepare for reopening.

Newark and Sherwood District Council understands that there is a lot to consider to ensure you, your staff and customers return to a safe environment. This advice pack has been designed to assist you with your planned re-opening and set out the changes that you need to make to help ensure you are working safely.

Working safely during COVID-19

The Government has published guidance to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the pandemic. [It can be accessed here.](#)

Within the guidance linked above, the Government - in consultation with industry and unions - has produced eight workplace-specific guidance documents to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible. These eight guides cover a range of different types of work.

- [Construction and other outdoor work](#)
- [Factories, plants and warehouses](#)
- [Labs and research facilities](#)
- [Offices and contact centres](#)
- [Other people's homes](#)
- [Restaurants offering takeaway or delivery](#)
- [Shops and branches](#)
- [Vehicles](#)

Many businesses operate more than one type of workplace, such as an office, factory and fleet of vehicles. You may need to use more than one of these guides as you think through what you need to do to keep people safe.

Businesses that are reopening on Monday, June 15 must now consider how to ensure that their workplaces are safe for customers and workers.

Visit the Government's dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for full guidance.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments in the workplace are a legal requirement under health and safety law. Any risk assessment you have previously undertaken will need to be reviewed and amended to take account of COVID-19 and its implications for the workplace.

Where there are five or more employees, the risk assessment will need to be recorded in writing. The Health and Safety Executive has [guidance for business](#) on how to manage risk and risk assessment at work along with specific advice to help control the risk of COVID-19 in workplaces.

Sharing the Risk Assessment

Government advice states that:

You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. If possible, you should consider publishing it on your website (and we would expect all businesses with over 50 employees to do so).

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your business addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to, to enable a safe working environment.

Enabling social distancing in your workplace

Social distancing is achieved by maintaining a distance of 2 metres (approximately 6 feet) between everybody. Social distancing involves reducing day-to-day contact with other people as much as possible, in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



Workplaces must avoid crowding and minimise opportunities for the virus to spread by maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) between individuals wherever possible. This applies both to inside the workplace and to where staff may need to interact with customers.

One-way system

Wherever possible, there should be minimal contact between staff. One means of achieving this is by the introduction of one-way pedestrian traffic routes around the premises. Where the same aisle or gangway is used then consideration should be given to utilise suitable passing places where appropriate.

Limitations on the number of customers in your premises

In retail businesses, limitations on the number of customers who can be in a retail store at once is important. There may need to be a member of staff to direct customers to maintain determined ratios. This member of staff directing the public should also maintain social distancing. Taping off floors both inside and outside to maintain 2 metre separation distances can be useful.

Staff breaks

Allowing staff to go to for a break at different times to stagger the potential for contact during break periods is good practice, especially in small retail stores where rest facilities are small. Setting eating areas/tables at least 2 metres apart is a good practice (where appropriate).

Screens and barriers

The provision of Perspex screens or barriers at the counters to protect the sales staff and other customers reduces the potential transmission from customers.

Other points to consider to enable social distancing

- If possible, encourage all payments to be by debit/credit cards and using the contactless facility (where appropriate).
- Baskets and trolleys should be cleansed with a suitable bactericide between use. Some stores may arrange for a member of staff to do this at the entrance to the store.

A downloadable checklist is [available here](#) for retailers to help you implement social distancing measures within your premises.

How to manage queuing in your workplace

Queuing arrangements will need to consider a number of factors and as such cannot be designed or implemented in isolation. A collaborative approach between neighbouring shops, offices and other organisations will be required to ensure a safe and well managed



When designing a queuing strategy, consideration should be given to the nature of the area, the immediate streetscape and neighbouring premises including residential, retail, businesses, schools, health establishments and transport hubs, among others. This advice is not exhaustive and focuses on key considerations for external queuing systems and social distancing. It does not cover internal queuing measures required within premises. However, the consideration of this should form part of your risk assessment.

Planning a queuing area

Firstly, calculate the store capacity with social distancing measures in mind. Instead of working back from the existing store capacity, start from zero. Consider how many people can safely fit inside the business with a 2m distance between each person along with a spacious distance for circulation. Then consider how the business has previously operated taking into account pinch points, browsing areas, customer behaviour and the position of any infrastructure.

Review the entry and exits to the premises. Is it possible to introduce a one-way system to minimise cross flow of people at entrances? Where possible, allocate different doors for entry and exit, deploying staff at each door to monitor numbers within the store at any given time.

If it is not possible to allocate separate doors for entry and exit, consider marking a line on the floor or signage within the premises to separate entry and exit by a 2m distance. If the door is not wide enough, staff or stewards will need to manage the entry and exit of people to ensure social distancing is managed.

If there is a high volume of customers leaving the premises at any one time, there may need to be consideration for a holding area with social distancing enforced inside the exit for people to queue as they exit.

Ensure emergency exits remain accessible at all times.

External queuing space

Each premises should review its business operation, anticipated footfall and the time customers are likely to spend in the shop to make an assessment as to how much queuing space they would aim to create.

Remember that arrival rates are not constant, depending on the type of business, and some people will arrive in clusters of family or household groups. For retail outlets in particular, service rates are not constant and the time spent in store will vary.

Queue spaces should not be positioned near live traffic where possible. When this is unavoidable, they should be positioned away from the kerb edge. Once you have identified the area for the queue, mark this space into 2m spaces to allow for social distancing within the queue.

If additional pavement space is required to create a safe queue, businesses must liaise with the neighbouring premises on the street to ensure that their plans are fully coordinated. These plans must ensure that proposed queues do not overlap. This is particularly important where the pavements are narrow and queues are likely to merge. A staffing or stewarding plan should be implemented for the queue space to ensure sufficient resource is allocated to manage and monitor the queue space (for further information see 'How to manage a queue' section below).

Consideration needs to be given to existing street furniture in the vicinity of a premises as well as bus stops or waste collection routes. Plans must ensure that a pinch point for public access isn't created.

How to manage a queue

- Identify an agreed queuing capacity.
- Ensure there are sufficient numbers and suitably trained staff and/or stewarding resources to manage the queuing area.
- Ensure signage is visible and displayed in appropriate locations including at the end of the queue.
- Queues need to be monitored to ensure they do not exceed capacity.
- At the end of the trading day, only allow customers in the queue who will be able to enter the premises before closing.

Other considerations

Provide clear information to your customers on their arrival in relation to social distancing and hygiene – signage and visual aids, for example.

Give consideration to the size of groups allowed and the impact on queue space required (as well as inside).

Review opening hours when considering how to manage deliveries to deconflict where possible.

Ensure any changes to entries, exit and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including those with accessibility requirements.

Consider support that may be required for those with hidden disabilities such as deafness and visual impairments when following instructions and queueing.

Always maintain emergency access and exits.

Preparing to re-open

Legionella

Stagnant water systems can support the growth of legionella, which can then be released in an aerosol spray, resulting in respiratory infection if inhaled.

To avoid this, the water system should have been flushed on a weekly basis. If this is not the case and your premises has been closed for more than one month, the following measures are recommended:

- Flush out the system – please refer to the guidance to understand how to do this without risk of infection
- Disinfect to 50ppm of free chlorine or equivalent biocide
- Run water heated to 60C through the whole water system
- Carry out a risk assessment

Further guidance can be found below:

- In the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's new guidance document: Legionnaires' disease: lockdown risks and reopening safely
- In the Health and Safety Executive's information on [Legionella risks during the COVID-19 outbreak](#).

Fire risk assessments

You may have used the closure as an opportunity to refurbish or have created a new one-way system to adhere to the social distancing requirement. Fire doors must always be kept clear and you should ensure you have not made any changes that can affect fire risk assessment. Fire safety equipment that was due an inspection should be checked and any planned maintenance due should be booked in as soon as possible.

More information on fire risk assessments is published on the [Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service website](#).

Cleaning

All businesses will also need to consider additional cleaning measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

The Government has issued guidance on the appropriate cleaning measures that will need to be undertaken if someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 has visited your premises.

Some basic cleaning advice is provided below. You should ensure cleaning is undertaken as frequently as you deem it necessary depending on the nature of your business and the number of customers using the premises. As a minimum it should be cleaned every day prior to opening and before closing.

Using a disposable cloth, firstly clean surfaces with warm soapy water or detergent. Increase routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces which include:

- Fridge and freezer handles
- Debit card pin pads
- Door handles
- Screens on self-service checkouts
- Light switches
- Trolley/basket handles

Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected regularly - at least every two hours. Cleaning with soap and water reduces the number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface.

Personal Hygiene

You should also follow strict hygiene measures, including frequent handwashing with soap and warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds. Hand sanitiser can be used between hand washing.

Disinfection

You then need to use a disinfectant to clean the surface, killing the germs:

- Antiviral disinfectants which have been tested to British Standard BS EN 14476:2019 should be used.
- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.
- Diluted household bleach is also known to kill similar viruses if appropriate for the surface.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and use in relation to wearing gloves and appropriately ventilating after cleaning.

Always follow instructions for dilution, application and contact times for detergent and disinfectant products. Contact time is the time that the disinfectant/bleach solution must be in contact with the surface. It's important to follow instructions as wiping them off too soon might clean the surface without properly disinfecting it.

Get in touch

If you have any queries about safely re-opening, please do not hesitate to contact us.

01636 650000

covidadvice@nsdc.info