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Coronavirus (Covid-19) recovery checklist for business

The restrictions placed on some business to stop trading to help limit the spread of Coronavirus are being gradually eased. Regular announcements are being made identifying which business may now open, along with the release of Government guidance on what precautions must be in place before trading can restart.

The current list of businesses which must remain closed can be seen at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance#businesses-and-premises-that-must-remain-closed>

Some sector specific Government guidance on precautions to be operated by businesses who may open is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

If you are unable to operate measures suggested for your business to control the current risk from coronavirus, your business must remain closed until the Government says otherwise.

This checklist brings together a range of control measures for businesses to consider operating to assist them to trade in-line with Government requirements and public expectation, while also addressing their responsibilities under Health and Safety law, where no sector specific guidance exists.

Businesses are required to assess, minimise, and control health and safety risks to employees, customers and any other person who may be affected by their business activity. This includes the risk of infection with Coronavirus. If you employ 5 or more employees this assessment must be written down. Control measures introduced following the assessment must be regularly monitored to check they are effective and adjusted if not. This should be done by observation, and discussion with employees so that you are confident you are aware of what is actually happening in practice.

If your business is one which is now allowed to trade you should consider the measures outlined below as part of your assessment if no specific COVID-19 Secure Guidelines for your trade sector are available from the link above.

In determining which measures are necessary at your business you must consider how your business operates against the Government requirements for ***social distancing by vulnerable or infected people, limiting social contact for all, and increased hygiene measures.***

1. Social distancing for vulnerable or infected employees

Control Measure	Considered?
<p>Employees should be reminded daily that they should only be at work if they are well, and the people they are living with are well and not self-isolating.</p> <p>This can be done by posters in prominent positions in the workplace or by you or a supervisor/ manager asking them regularly.</p> <p>Any employee with symptoms, or living with someone with symptoms, must not be at work until they, or the affected person in their household, have self-isolated in-line with Government guidance.</p>	
<p>Employees aged 70 or over, those with underlying health conditions, and anyone receiving a letter advising them to shield themselves are at particular risk and need the highest level of protection, distancing, and separation possible.</p> <p>You must make sure you are aware if any of your employees are in these categories and consider how you can provide additional distancing measures for them.</p>	

2. Limiting social contact between employees

Control Measure	Considered?
<p>Consider if you need all your employees present for you to trade. If not, allow those who can, to work from home. Home workers will need regular contact from a supervisor or manager to help balance their workload, and check upon their welfare, physical health, and any security or mental health concerns.</p>	
<p>Calculate if your workplace has sufficient space to allow employees at work to be 2 metres apart. This separation can be reinforced with markings on the floor or by re-positioning equipment, tables, desks etc.</p> <p>If not, can you decrease the numbers present at any one time during the working day, and on breaks, by operating a shift or rota system, or space out your employees via one way systems or 'one in one out' procedures.</p> <p>Consider organising your employees into dedicated small teams who only have contact with each other.</p> <p>Government advice suggests that employees can work side-by-side or back-to back rather than face-to-face where space is limited, however the scientific basis for this control is unclear and if this is operated it is recommended that screens or physical barriers between staff are also used as an additional precautions against face-to-face interactions.</p> <p>When considering the available space make sure you think about toilets, stockrooms, canteens, staff/break rooms, and smoking areas.</p>	
<p>Consider the use of vehicles in your business, create consistent pairings of employees if people need to be in vehicles together, and review cleaning processes.</p>	

3. Limiting contact with customers, delivery people and other 'visitors'

Control Measure	Considered?
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<p>Consider if you can operate solely or partly via a delivery service and receive orders via telephone, email, or internet? If so you will need to organise a collection point which staggers customer arrivals and enables both them and your employees to stay 2 metres apart.</p>	
<p>Consider the use of digital mechanisms, contactless payments, and remote transfers of information to remove physical materials – money, paper, orders etc. If money is taken consider how it will be handled and stored safely since any virus on it may remain active for 3 days.</p>	
<p>Calculate whether your workplace has sufficient space to allow the expected number of customers to be 2 metres apart from other customers/visitors and staff. This can be reinforced with markings on the floor and by re-positioning equipment, tables, desks etc to close off multiple circulation routes.</p> <p>If not, can you control the numbers present at any one time by spacing out customers, for example with a one-in-one-out procedure and one-way circulation system? Physical barriers may also be needed when restocking takes place during trading hours.</p> <p>If you are limiting customer access, you will also need to organise <u>and</u> manage a queueing system at your entry points. If a neighbouring business will be doing this as well you will need to organise this jointly with them such that your queues do not merge and contravene the 2-metre separation requirement.</p> <p>You may also need to arrange a security or stewarding presence to deal with customers who wish to frustrate your arrangements or to temporarily close the business if it becomes too crowded.</p> <p>With any queueing system priority should be given to the over 70s and vulnerable customers.</p> <p>If your business provides toilet facilities for customers you must consider how you will manage access to these while maintaining the required distancing.</p>	
<p>Deliveries must be considered, and potentially staggered to enable the 2-metre separation to be achieved. If two people are required to handle deliveries arrange that the same people work as a consistent pairing. Delivery people who are not your employees must be permitted and encouraged to use the business welfare facilities for hand washing.</p>	
<p>Face to face contact between employees and customers should be limited as far as possible particularly at service or payment positions. Screens or barriers must be considered together with signs, markings or instructions which exclude face-to-face contact and allow each party to judge and follow the required 2 metre separation distance. An area away from the service point should be provided if purchased goods need to be packed by customers.</p>	
<p>Signs or poster should be displayed at business entrances to remind customers not to enter if they have symptoms of the virus.</p>	
<p>Queueing and customer access arrangements outside of the premises, to ensure that controls can be maintained and managed outside of the premises.</p>	

<p>Consider customer entry and exit points, can separate ones be used; Limiting customer queue numbers, to enable the 2- metre separation to be achieved, clear queuing arrangements, which do not conflict with neighbouring premises. Speak to nearby premises to work together to manage possible shared queuing areas</p> <p>Consider if you need to have staff/signage present to manage and advise waiting customers</p>	
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4. Increased Hygiene precautions

Control Measure	Considered?
<p>Employee handwashing must be encouraged by the provision of adequate washing stations and the opportunity to use them frequently. Supplies of soap and water must be provided and the use of paper towels rather than air driers is recommended.</p> <p>Notices should be considered advising staff to regularly wash hands for at least 20 seconds, and particularly after blowing their nose, sneezing, or coughing, before/after using shared equipment and prior to eating.</p> <p>Where sufficient facilities to wash hands are not available, hand sanitiser should be used which has an alcohol content of at least 60%.</p>	
<p>Bins should be provided for tissues used by staff to cover a cough or sneeze together with a notice reminding employees to wash their hands after these activities.</p> <p>Anyone with a persistent cough should be advised to return home and consult the NHS via the medical help line tel no. 111, or their G.P.</p>	
<p>Cleaning regimes should be increased paying particular attention to surfaces regularly touched by employees, customers, and other visitors. Examples include any shared equipment, printers and copiers, touch screens, tables, chairs, electrical switches, door handles and push plates, handrails, toilet handles, door locks, taps, and towel dispensers. External equipment should also be considered, e.g. ATMs provided by partners, bike racks, tool stores, etc.</p> <p>Any documented cleaning schedule and cleaning checks will need to be reviewed to reflect the new procedures.</p> <p>While soap and water cleaning and use of your normal cleaning products is advised as a first step, it is recommended that cleaning products are checked to see that they are effective against viruses.</p> <p>The WHO have reported that products based on hydrogen peroxide, peracetic acid, sodium hypochlorite (liquid bleach) or containing 60% alcohol are effective against Coronavirus.</p> <p>Care must be taken when cleaning any electrical equipment to avoid electric shock or equipment damage and when handling or mixing bleach.</p>	
<p>New cleaning regimes will be required for any items supplied to customers to use in your business, and it is advisable to involve the customer in these</p>	

<p>processes to build confidence. Examples include hand sanitiser and basket/ trolley wipes at entrance and exit points.</p>	
<p>Employee clothing and uniforms provide a surface on which the virus may remain active for around 3 days. Employees must be encouraged to change and wash their work clothing or uniforms regularly and to change into and out of them when at work. You should consider providing work uniforms, aprons etc where these are not currently part of your normal practice.</p>	
<p>Regular ventilation of the working area with fresh external air via windows and doors is recommended as a control. If this is implemented it may also be necessary to provide additional heat in the workplace dependent upon the external temperature. At present the way the virus interacts with air conditioning systems is unclear and the introduction of new air conditioning systems where it is not already present to increase ventilation is not required.</p>	
<p>Legionella and water systems</p> <p>Due to the enforced closure period simple hot and cold-water systems should be flushed through with mains water before use. Water run to waste should not create spray or steam which can be inhaled by employees.</p> <p>More complex systems especially those involving showers and sprays may require specialist flushing and cleaning/ disinfection to avoid potential risk from legionella bacteria and advice should be obtained from a specialist water hygiene engineer.</p> <p>See https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm</p>	
<p>Premises which have been unoccupied should be visually checked for any evidence of pest infestation or damage with particular attention to any stored foodstuffs and food waste. If evidence is present, advice should be obtained from a professional pest control operator followed by thorough cleaning.</p>	

Further advice and information on Covid-19 and business is available at the following web links

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for->

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[food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19](#)

<https://www.cieh.org/media/4070/covid-19-food-delivery-and-takeaway-guidance.pdf>

<https://www.cieh.org/media/4080/covid-19-safe-shopping-guidelines.pdf>

You may also contact Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council via email at Environmental_Health@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk if you need more advice on measures needed to control the risk presented by coronavirus or which businesses are permitted to trade.