

Restarting your business after Coronavirus

(June 2020)



Restarting your Business after Covid-19

It is vital to Merseyside that our businesses get back to doing what they do best, working hard and building up our local economy. This document will assist you to reopen your business after Coronavirus and get back on your feet after the lockdown.

You will be able to find the latest Government guidance and what it means to your business, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and a back-to-work checklist of things to consider before re-opening your business. You will also find a selection of posters you can print and display to help your staff and customers visit safely.

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Please note, information in this document is correct at the time of publication.

Acknowledgement:

Thank you to Wirral Council for the wording provided to produce this document.

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Latest guidance from the Government

We understand this is a challenging time for your business and sometimes it can be difficult to keep up-to-date with all of the latest information. The Government has announced that although a large number of businesses are still required to be closed to prevent the spread of coronavirus, certain businesses can start to re-open in the near future.

Businesses will be permitted to open in stages. Some businesses such as food retail shops, chemists and takeaway food businesses have been able to operate through the period of lockdown. As of 1st June, should they be able to operate safely, then outdoor markets and car showrooms will be able to trade, and from 15th June all 'non-essential' retailers will be able to commence trading once more.

The final phase will start no earlier than 4th July. This phase will see the reopening of at least some of the remaining businesses and premises that have been forced to close. Such businesses include hairdressers and other personal services businesses, some hospitality venues, and public spaces including places of worship.

The latest news about which businesses can re-open and when can be found [here](#).

Online guides for employers, employees and the self-employed

To help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic, the Government has put together an extensive online guide which you can find [here](#).

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You can find specific information related to your business and each of the following sectors:

- 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

What to do if a member of staff or customer displays coronavirus symptoms

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance. If you or an employee are experiencing symptoms, visit **NHS 111** online or call **111** if there is no internet access. In an emergency, call **999** if they are seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection.

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Advice for businesses

As a business community we need to work together to ensure visitors feel safe and have the confidence to come back to our shops, our businesses or the services we provide. You are required by law to protect your employees, and others, from harm, so it is important you undertake a risk assessment to help you understand the risks and what changes need to be made.

- Identify what could cause injury or illness in your business (the hazards).
- Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk).
- Take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk.

You can find examples of risk assessment forms as well as a template for you to use [here](#).

It is important to note that risks can differ from business to business, so do not just copy another business. You need to consider specific hazards relevant to your business and ways that you can take action.

Once you have completed your risk assessment there are four key steps to operating safely:

1. Before you re-open your doors to staff and customers:

- Check for signs of pests, for example rats, mice or cockroaches. Signs could include a musky smell, droppings or shredded materials (eg. cardboard). If you think your premises might have pests, contact a pest control technician for appropriate treatment and advice.
- When buildings reopen after lockdown, it is essential that water systems are not put back into use without considering the risks of Legionnaires' disease from stagnant water. More information on how to prevent Legionnaires' disease and

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avoid water stagnation can be found [here](#).

- For any questions about environmental health, please email your local Environmental Health Department.

2. Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures

- Business owners are advised to implement regular cleaning protocols. It is advised that touch points (e.g. handles, baskets, debit card PIN pads) should be a particular area of focus for increased cleaning. You may also wish to introduce cleaning stations or hand sanitiser points at the front of your business for customers to clean hands, trolleys and baskets.
- To help everyone maintain good hygiene, your premises should have sufficient handwashing facilities which should be kept clean.
- Signs should be displayed to build awareness of the importance of handwashing. Printable signage can be found in this document.
- Businesses are advised to provide hand sanitisers (with a minimum alcohol content of 60+%) at entrances and exits.
- The risk of catching COVID-19 from a package that has been exposed to an infected person is very low. However, efforts should be made to ensure food, equipment and packaging are cleaned and handled in line with usual food safety practices.

3. Encouraging social distancing

Your risk assessment should have identified any areas of your business where maintaining 2m social distancing might be difficult.

To help encourage staff you could consider:

- Displaying posters to promote social distancing and good hygiene.
- Avoid the sharing of workstations and space desks 2m apart.
- Use back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible.
- Where people cannot be two metres apart, manage transmission risk by opening windows or installing plexiglass

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barriers.

- Stagger arrival and departure times and introduce shifts.
- Reduce the number of people each person has contact with and, if possible, switch to seeing visitors by appointment only or deliver services remotely (by telephone, video or web).
- Install plexiglass barriers at counters and checkouts to protect staff.

To help customers you could consider:

- Displaying clear marking on floors to help customers maintain social distancing, especially in areas where there is likely to be queuing.
- Use posters and your public address system to remind customers and staff to maintain social distancing.

In this toolkit you will find signs that you can download and print.

You may also wish to review how your business operates and the service you offer. This might include the introduction of click and collect, and an option to deliver direct to a customer.

4. Help people to work from home

We understand that it is not possible for all employees to work from home but where possible, staff should be encouraged to do so. Ensure people working from home have the right equipment, are included in all necessary communications and their physical and mental wellbeing is considered.

If your staff do need to come in to work, it's important that you support them with their journey planning. Although public transport services are running, spaces on buses, trains and ferries will be limited due to social distancing and services may be running revised timetables. Consider staggering shifts and introducing more flexible working patterns so your staff can avoid the peak.

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Merseytravel has plenty of journey planning advice including paying by contactless, leaving more time for journeys as well as transport information and timetables.

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Frequently Asked Questions

I am about to re-open my business. What do I need to know about operating my business safely?

The Government has published eight separate guides covering different types of work environments. These guides set out the steps that you as an employer can put in place to meet your health and safety obligations in the workplace during the coronavirus pandemic.

Many businesses operate more than one type of workplace, for example, you may have an office, a factory, and a fleet of vehicles. To ensure you keep your staff and customers safe you may need to use more than one of these guides.

Each of the eight separate guides can be found [here](#).

If your business premises have been closed for some time then there are certain steps you should take to ensure they are safe and free from pests and Legionnaires' disease.

Why are some shops able to open sooner than others? When will I be allowed to open my business?

The Government recently announced that easing of the current lockdown arrangements will be implemented in stages, in order to limit any spread or increase of coronavirus. Some businesses which are considered to be essential have been able to trade during the lockdown period. Others, where contact between the customer and business is greater, are not still not able to open as the risk of transmission is much higher.

The Government has produced guidance on which shops and businesses must remain closed and exceptions that can stay open. You can find it [here](#). In many cases there are conditions attached to businesses that are allowed to continue to trade.

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I have plenty of room to operate my business safely but according to the Government website my business must remain closed. Can I open up anyway?

To reduce social contact, the Government has required, by law, that certain businesses and venues must close to members of the public. If your business does not meet any of the legal exceptions set out in the Government guidance below then it must remain closed. It would be an offence to open your businesses prior to the restrictions being lifted.

You can find more information [here](#).

Other businesses in the same sector as my business have opened up. Can I do the same?

Provided your business is not on the list of premises that must remain closed, which you can find [here](#), then you are allowed to open on condition that you can do so safely and are able to follow relevant social distancing guidance.

At my place of work staff have been told to take social distancing and handwashing seriously. Some of my colleagues aren't doing this. What can I do?

Employers and staff should discuss and agree working arrangements. This would include identifying the precautions needed to manage risk and your employer should discuss the workplace risk assessment with you to identify the practical ways of managing those risks. It might also help to display posters to remind staff of the importance of social distancing (you can find some printable posters in this toolkit) or sending out regular communications (such as emails and screensaver messages or newsletter articles) to remind people.

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If you remain concerned that your employer is not taking all practical steps to promote social distancing then you can report this to your local authority or the Health and Safety Executive, which can take a range of actions including, where appropriate, requiring your employer to take additional steps.

I don't think I can safely social distance in my job but my boss has asked me to return anyway. What can I do?

There are clear, practical steps that businesses should take to ensure their workplaces are safe for staff returning to work. The Government has produced **guidance** which businesses should follow to give their staff the confidence to return back to work.

The guidance includes examples of how to keep people safely apart from those they do not live with, in various workplace settings.

Do I need to provide Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for my staff to protect them from Coronavirus?

This will depend upon your risk assessment and what area of work your business covers. Government guidance differs for 'Health and Social Care' settings and 'Non-Health and Social Care' settings.

As a general rule, for workers and sectors not included as health or social care, based on current evidence, there is very little scientific evidence of widespread benefit from PPE. Instead, practising good hand hygiene and social distancing is key to minimising the risk of infection.

Further guidance for both sectors can be found **here**.

There is no requirement for businesses in the food retail sector to wear PPE. However, if your business is in this sector, then you may wish to supply PPE equipment such as masks and gloves to those who request them, and your customers may feel reassured if they

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see staff wearing them. It is important that these are used correctly to minimise the risk of infection.

The use of such PPE does not replace or reduce the need to follow the government guidance in relation to hygiene practices.

My job involves me going into people's homes. What do I need to be aware of in getting back to work?

This is a complex area due to the varied employment relationships, including the self-employed, employers and agencies. The Government has produced guidance for those working in, visiting or delivering to home environments.

These include but are not limited to, people working in the following areas:

- in home workers – such as repair services, fitters, meter readers, plumbers, cleaners, cooks and surveyors (this is not an exhaustive list).
- to home services – such as delivery drivers momentarily at the door.

The guidance can be found [here](#). This guidance does not directly apply to nannies who spend all their time with one household, or to their employers.

I'm a delivery driver and when I visited a business today it was clear that social distancing measures were not being adhered to. What can I do about it?

In the first instance you should bring this to the attention of the manager or owner of the business. Alternatively, you can report the matter to the local authority where the business is based, or the Health and Safety Executive. Both organisations can take a range of

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actions, including where appropriate requiring the employer to take additional steps.

I'm a hairdresser and my job involves lots of contact with clients. Where can I get more information about how to return to work safely?

Hairdressers and beauty salons remain closed, at least until 4th July, because the risk of transmission in these environments is higher due to the indoor environment and closer physical contact. The Government is working with the personal care sector to develop safe ways for them to open at the earliest point at which it is safe to do so. Further guidance on opening up safely will follow, or you may wish to contact your trade body who may be able to assist.

I run an ice-cream van and in this hot weather the queues are down the street. Is it my responsibility to manage the queue?

You should consider as part of your risk assessment how any queues of customers for your business may affect the public highway, and the interaction with the surrounding businesses and areas. You may wish to consider putting posters up in your business to remind people to queue responsibly.

If your business contributes to a 'gathering' of customers where social distancing measures are not being upheld safely, then you may be asked to close your business until safety measures are put in place.

Some businesses have introduced temporary barriers, or markers for the pavement to encourage customers to queue 2m apart or to come back later if there is no room to queue.

Please note that you should be able to remove any temporary measures prior to your business closing at the end of the day. As

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some barriers or markings may constitute an obstruction with safety consequences for pedestrian and traffic movement (and be in breach of the Highways Act) please discuss any proposal with the Council.

I want to trade on a street. Do I need a licence?

Yes. In order to trade on a street you will need a licence, authorised by the Council. A street includes any road, footway, beach or other area to which the public has access without payment. To apply for a licence and for further information please visit [this website](#).

I have a café and would like to place tables and chairs on the public highway. Am I allowed to do this?

In order to place tables and chairs on the public highway you will need a licence, authorised by your local Council.

I run a B&B - what extra support is available to me?

Businesses providing holiday accommodation (including hotels, hostels, B&Bs, campsites, caravan parks, boarding houses and short term lets) should now have taken steps to close for commercial use. The Government has not yet announced when these businesses can reopen and so you should remain closed for now.

The only exceptions to this is where:

- The accommodation provider is part of the response to support key workers or vulnerable groups.
- There is a specific need for some or all of the site to remain open (for example they are housing people who have been flooded out of their homes, being used by public services to provide emergency accommodation or are not able to return to their primary residence).
- Businesses are providing rooms to support homeless people,

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through arrangements with local authorities and other public bodies, they should remain open.

- A holiday park or caravan park is your primary residence you can remain on site.

You can find government guidance and advice for those providing hotel and other accommodation [here](#).

You can also find a comprehensive summary of guidance to tourism businesses on the [Visit Britain website](#).

Should I tell my customers that I plan to re-open?

You'll want to let your customers know that you plan to reopen and to also tell them about the safety measures that you intend to put in place to keep them safe. Use all the communication channels opens to you such as updating your website and social media platforms.

It will be important to think carefully about these measures and demonstrate that the safety of your customers is paramount and well thought through. Be mindful of your reputation. If you have not thought about the measures you need to put in place to keep your customers safe, or there is confusion about how your customers will visit your business safely, then opening too soon may do more harm to your reputation than good.

You might also want to talk to your suppliers to ensure that they can support your plan to reopen. They may have their own supply or transportation issues. You should check that they can supply in advance of you opening and continue to fulfil your order, even if this might not be in quite the same way as it was before. If the supply chain will impact on your customers then you should make them aware of this in order to manage their expectations.

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Resources for your business

On the following pages you will find a series of posters and resources you can print out and use at your place of work to reinforce messages about social distancing and hygiene.

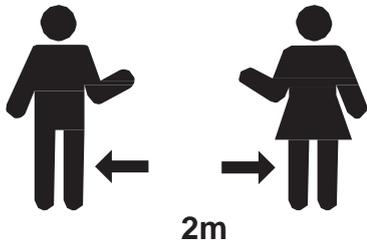
Click 'print' and select which page(s) you wish to print.

5 STEPS TO MAKING YOUR BUSINESS SAFE

CORONAVIRUS
PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS

1 CLEAN REGULARLY

Refresh your cleaning procedures. Identify regular key touch points (eg handles, keypads, baskets) and disinfect regularly. If you have erected plastic barriers at the checkouts, clean them regularly.



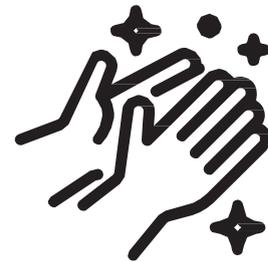
SOCIAL DISTANCING

Use floor markings every two metres anywhere queues are likely. Limit the number of entry and exit points to the store and reduce the number of customers allowed in at any one time.



3 WASH HANDS

Remind employees and customers to wash their hands for 20 seconds, more frequently. Provide hand sanitisers (with minimum alcohol content of 60%) at exit for customers to clean their hands.



PPE

Government guidance is that PPE (eg face-masks), is only necessary for those working in clinical situations. However, it is good practice to supply masks or gloves to those who request them.



5 ILLNESS

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in the workplace, they should be sent home and advised to follow the stay-at-home guidance.





HM Government

NHS



CORONAVIRUS

RISK OF INFECTION

Remember it's critical to keep washing
your hands regularly for 20 seconds.

For more ways to stay safe go to [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES

CORONAVIRUS

**PROTECT
YOURSELF
& OTHERS**

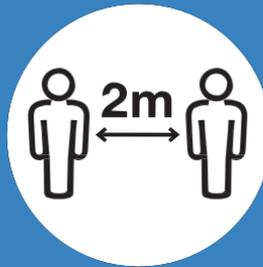
PLEASE CONTINUE TO USE SOCIAL DISTANCING

'Social Distancing' will help protect you and the most vulnerable people.

Please take the following steps



AVOID
close contact
with others



DISTANCE
yourself at least 2
metres (6 feet) away
from other people



DON'T ARRANGE
to meet up with other
groups



AVOID
going out in groups of more
than two people, unless
from the same household



AVOID
an area if it looks very
busy and go somewhere
else for your walk

[nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

PLEASE
KEEP
2 METRES
APART



WELCOME BACK

We're following
current COVID-19
guidelines to
make your visit
as safe as
possible.

Thank you

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Financial aid for your business

The Government has announced a package of financial measures to support businesses financially during the Covid-19 outbreak. To find out more information about the following schemes, [click here](#).

- **Cash grant support**

A range of businesses are eligible.

- **Business rates support**

A 12 month business rates holiday has been confirmed for nurseries, retail, hospitality and leisure properties during the 2020-2021 tax year.

- **Bounce back small business loans**

This fast-track loan scheme is interest-free for the first 12 months and allows businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000 and to access the cash within days.

- **Job retention scheme**

Furloughed workers can receive 80% of their current salary, up to £2,500.

- **Combined Authority Business support**

A £15m support package from existing Combined Authority projects to support businesses and the community and voluntary sector.

- **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme**

Self-employed workers can apply for a grant worth 80% of their average monthly profits, up to £2,500 a month.

- **Coronavirus Future Fund**

This scheme will issue convertible loans between £125,000 to £5 million to innovative companies which have been financially affected.

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Further Information

We're doing everything we can to help you get your business back to normal and we're here to support you.

If you require further help or advice reopening your business safely, please call or email your local Council.

Don't forget to visit your Council's website to keep up-to-date with the latest coronavirus guidance.

There are a number of businesses who can supply resources to you to help make your workplace safer. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce.

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has lots of useful information about managing employees on [their website](#)