COVID-safe communities: customer confidence toolkit

Supplementary information for businesses on Step 4 of the roadmap

August 2021

**Purpose of this guide**

This guide will assist businesses in carrying out a health and safety risk assessment, including the risks associated with COVID-19, and to take reasonable steps to mitigate the risks you identify.

In order to meet the standards of the Customer Confidence scheme being run by your local authority as a minimum your risk assessment should follow the *Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)* guidance in England https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19, including relevant specific workplace guidance, and should provide measures for:

* Adequate ventilation of your premises
* Cleaning more often
* Turning away people with COVID-19 symptoms
* Communicating and training staff on measures in your risk assessment

Your risk assessment should be reviewed if there are any changes to requirements announced nationally or locally.

While no longer national requirements, dependent on the type of business and premises, you may wish to include additional health protection measures in your risk assessment such as continuing to request customers to wear masks when entering your premises, limiting capacity in areas of your business, enabling people to check into your venue with by displaying an NHS QR code. These are optional to the standards in the scheme.

Under each standard, the guide explains:

* What you need to do to meet the standards
* What additional steps you might want to take to meet your own requirements
* Setting specific additional information

There is a section at the end on events which contains more detailed considerations of the risks and mitigations if you are considering running an event as part of your business.

Please note that this guide is a summary of more detailed workplace specific guidance, so always ensure you follow links for most up-to-date information. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19

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**1.0 Risk assessment**

**1.1 Overview**

* As an employer, you must protect people from harm. This includes doing a risk assessment to decide what reasonable steps you need to take to protect your workers and others from coronavirus (COVID-19)
* A generic risk assessment is unlikely to be specific or detailed enough. For example, it might not identify adequate ventilation requirements or sufficient cleaning controls for particular areas and circumstances

**As part of your risk assessment, you must:**

* Identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)
* Think about who could be at risk – this could include workers, visitors, contractors and delivery drivers
* Decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
* Identify the controls needed to reduce the risk

If you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write anything down, but it might help if you do. Find out more about managing risk and risk assessment https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm.

You should ensure you consider the risk to groups of workers who are particularly vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19) and put controls in place to reduce that risk. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/protect-people.htm>

When you’re doing your assessment, you must talk with your workers about the measures you’re considering. They can provide valuable information on how you could reduce risks. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/talking-to-your-workers/index.htm>

You should put monitoring and supervision in place to make sure the controls you have are working as expected.

Failure to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and put in place sufficient control measures to manage the risk may be considered a breach of health and safety law. There is a simple template that can be used for the risk assessment <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm>, while there is more specificrisk management template for events. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#events-4>

**1.2 Consult your workers**

As an employer, you have a legal duty to consult workers on health and safety matters. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the work they do and how you will manage the risks from COVID-19.

You may do this by consulting with any recognised trade union health and safety representatives.

If you do not have any, you can consult with a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues. If you cannot do this, see below for other steps you can take.

**1.3 Managing risk**

**Objective:** to reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures.

As an employer, you have a duty to take reasonably practical steps to manage risks in the workplace. The main way of spreading COVID-19 is through close contact with an infected person. When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles (droplets and aerosols) containing the virus that causes COVID-19. These particles can be breathed in by another person.

Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated with COVID-19 when people who are infected cough or sneeze near them or if they touch them.

You must work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace to protect everybody’s health and safety.

Consider reasonable adjustments for workers or customers with disabilities, including hidden disabilities that are not immediately obvious.

To carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, you should consider the different ways the virus can spread and put in place measures to reduce the risk of each of these different ways.

You should use the relevant workplace guidance in Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) to consider the risk within your business and decide the appropriate measures to adopt. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19>

This guidance suggests ways to reduce the risk of each of the different ways the virus can spread. You may also identify other measures to reduce risk when carrying out your risk assessment. Some of the measures may help reduce the risk of more than one of the different ways the virus can spread.

As well as an overview the guidance contains specific information for:

* Construction and other outdoor work https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work
* Events and attractions https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions
* Hotels and guest accommodation https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/hotels-and-guest-accommodation
* Offices, factories and labs https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/offices-factories-and-labs
* Restaurants, pubs, bars, nightclubs and takeaway services https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/restaurants-pubs-bars-nightclubs-and-takeaway-services
* Shops, branches, and close contact services https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/shops-branches-and-close-contact-services

**1.4 Sharing the results of your risk assessment**

You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce.

If possible, consider publishing the results on your website. We would expect all businesses with over 50 workers to do so.

All businesses should show their workers and customers that they have:

* Properly assessed their risk
* Taken appropriate measures to mitigate this

**2.0 Mitigating risks – reducing the risk of spreading aerosols**

**2.1 Providing adequate ventilation**

**Standard**

You should make sure there is a supply of fresh air to indoor spaces where there are people present. This can be natural ventilation through opening windows, doors and vents, mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts, or a combination of both. You should identify any poorly ventilated spaces in your premises and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas. In some places, a carbon dioxide (CO2) monitor can help identify if the space is poorly ventilated. Read the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE) advice on air conditioning and ventilation. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm>

**Summary**

* Through doors, windows and vents
* By mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts
* Through a combination of both

This is because fresh air helps to dilute the virus in occupied spaces. If you have mechanical ventilation, you should maximise the fresh air your system draws in and avoid systems that only recirculate air and do not draw in a supply of fresh air.

* Identifying any poorly ventilated spaces and taking steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas. A CO2 monitor could help you assess whether a space is poorly ventilated. If you can’t improve ventilation in poorly ventilated spaces, minimise use of these spaces
* Encouraging use of outside space where practical. Identifying any areas of congestion in your venue and considering if any reasonable steps could be taken to avoid this

**Identifying poorly ventilated spaces**

The priority for your risk assessment is to identify areas of your workplace that are usually occupied, and poorly ventilated.

You should prioritise these areas for improvement to reduce the risk of aerosol transmission. The HSE provides guidance on how to identify a poorly ventilated space. It also explains steps you can take to improve ventilation in these spaces. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm>

If you can’t improve ventilation in poorly ventilated spaces, you should consider whether it’s safer to restrict the time spent in these spaces and the number of people that access these spaces or stop using them.

**Using CO2 monitors**

People exhale CO2 when they breathe out. If there is a build-up of CO2 in an area, it can indicate that ventilation needs improving. You may wish to consider whether a CO2 monitor would be useful in your premises.

Although CO2 levels are not a direct measure of possible exposure to COVID-19, checking levels using a monitor can help you identify poorly ventilated areas. Read the HSE’s advice on how to use a CO2 monitor. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/identifying-poorly-ventilated-areas.htm>

CO2 measurements should be used as a broad guide to ventilation within a space rather than treating them as safe thresholds.

Outdoor levels are around 400 parts per million (ppm) and indoors a consistent CO2 value less than 800ppm is likely to indicate that a space is well ventilated.

A CO2 concentration of above 1,500ppm in a space is an indicator of poor ventilation. You should take action to improve ventilation where CO2 readings are consistently higher than 1500ppm.

Where there is continuous talking or singing, or high levels of physical activity (such as dancing, playing sport or exercising), providing ventilation sufficient to keep CO2 levels below 800ppm is recommended.

CO2 monitors can be used to check ventilation in a wide range of settings. In large areas, multiple sensors may be required to provide meaningful information.

There are some spaces where CO2 monitors are less likely to provide useful readings. These are:

* Areas occupied by people for short periods or for varying amounts of time
* Areas where air cleaning units are in use. Filtration can remove contaminants like COVID-19 from the air but not remove CO2
* Small spaces like changing rooms, toilets or small meeting rooms
* Spaces used by low numbers of people
* Areas where CO2 is produced as part of a work process

Read the HSE’s advice on the suitability of CO2 monitoring in different types of space. Where CO2 monitors cannot be used, you should still provide adequate ventilation. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/identifying-poorly-ventilated-areas.htm>

**2.2 Measures additional to the standard which may help to reduce the risk of the virus spreading through droplets**

While these are not core standards of the scheme, they are additional measures you may wish to consider in your risk assessment and maintain to suit your particular circumstances. If they are included as measures in your risk assessment, then they should be implemented.

**Summary**

Putting in place measures to reduce contact between people, particularly between customers and workers. Where practical, measures could include:

* Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using ‘fixed teams or partnering’ (so each person works with only a few others)
* Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other, or using back-to-back or side-to-side working, instead of face-to-face
* Screens are only likely to be beneficial if placed between people who will come into close proximity with each other
* Encouraging the use of face coverings by workers or customers in enclosed and crowded spaces. From Step 4 there is no longer a legal requirement for this

**Face coverings**

A face covering is something which safely covers your mouth and nose. Face coverings are no longer required by law. However, the government expects and recommends that people continue to wear face coverings in crowded, enclosed spaces.

Where worn correctly, this may reduce the risk of transmission to themselves and others. Be aware that workers may choose to wear a face covering in the workplace.

Consider encouraging, for example through signage, the use of face coverings by customers and workers, particularly in indoor areas where they may come into contact with people they do not normally meet. This is especially important in enclosed and crowded spaces.

When deciding whether you will ask workers or customers to wear a face covering, you would need to consider the reasonable adjustments needed for staff and clients with disabilities. You would also need to consider carefully how this fit with other obligations to workers and customers arising from the law on employment rights, health and safety and equality legislation.

Some people are not able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances. Be aware that face coverings may make it harder to communicate with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions, and clear sound.

If your workers choose to wear a face covering, you should support them in using face coverings safely. This means telling them:

* Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and before and after removing it
* When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
* Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you’ve touched it
* Continue to wash your hands regularly
* Change or wash your face covering daily
* If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer’s instructions; if it’s not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste

**Reducing contact for workers – workplaces and workstations**

From Step 4, social distancing guidance no longer applies and there are no limits on social contact between people from different households. COVID-19 can still be spread through social contact. You can mitigate this risk by reducing the number of people your workers come into contact with.

Examples of ways to do this include:

* Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using ‘fixed teams or partnering’ (so each person works with only a few others)
* Screens or barriers to separate people from each other, or using back-to-back or side-to-side working, instead of face-to-face (screens are only likely to be beneficial if placed between people who will come into close proximity with each other)

You should take account of those with protected characteristics and discuss with disabled workers what reasonable adjustments can be made to the workplace so they can work safely.

To reduce contact between people when they’re at their workplaces and workstations, if possible.

Workstations should be assigned to an individual if possible. Often this will not be possible, and if they need to be shared, there should be ways to clean them between each user.

**Additional information for specific settings**

**Close contact services**

* Letting clients know virtually that they’re ready to be seen
* Asking clients to arrive at the scheduled time of their appointment
* Using screens to create a physical barrier between workstations, where this is practical
* For equipment, wherever possible:
  + **K**eeping sharing to a minimum
  + **A**ssigning items to individuals
  + **U**sing disposable items, for example nail files
* Making sure you clean and disinfect or sterilize non-disposable items between clients
* Using disposable gowns for each client. Where this is not possible, use separate gowns and towels for each client. Wash them between uses and dispose of them appropriately as required

**Work-related travel**

Consider encouraging people travelling together in any one vehicle to, wherever possible use fixed travel partners and clean shared vehicles between shifts or on handover.

**Hotels and guest accommodation**

There are no capacity caps on the number of people permitted to visit hotels or guest accommodation facilities (for residential stays or events, or to use hotel facilities), or the groups they can visit in. However, you may wish to take steps to ensure customers can attend safely, for example by introducing one-way systems to minimise crowding.

These are likely to be specific to your type of venue or event, so you should think about the most appropriate steps you could take to manage risk.

For example, you could:

* **Consider how you can reduce risk to staff who work with large numbers of guests.** For example, installing screens can be beneficial if placed between people who will come into close proximity with each other. You could consider installing screens at receptions and providing hand sanitiser for staff and customers
* **Consider using a CO2 monitor to assess whether there is sufficient ventilation in your venue.** If you identify that ventilation is poor, you should take steps to improve fresh air flow. If you cannot increase the supply of fresh air, you should consider whether you can reduce the number of people in your venue. You can find more information on ventilation and CO2 monitors in the guidance on ventilation <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/hotels-and-guest-accommodation#facility-3>
* **Identify areas of crowding and consider what steps can be taken to avoid congestion**, if they present a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission. For example, if you have guest areas which are enclosed or have limited ventilation, measures such as limiting the number of people entering the space will help to manage capacity and avoid overcrowding
* If your facility includes auditoriums and theatre-style settings (such as conference facilities), consider:
  + **Providing allocated seating where possible. You** should ensure that your facility is accessible (in line with your responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010) and that seating arrangements take into account the needs of people with disabilities and wheelchair users, and support from carers. You should also consider how seating arrangements work with any other accessibility services you offer, such as access to captioning or audio description services
  + **Where allocated seating is not possible, consider other ways to reduce these risks**, such as additional stewarding. You can find more information on crowd management measures in the guidance for events and attractions <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions>

**3.0 Mitigating risks of infection through touching contaminated surfaces – clean more often – surfaces and cleaning**

**Standard**

It is especially important to clean surfaces that people touch a lot. You should ask your staff and your customers to use hand sanitiser and to clean their hands frequently.

**Summary**

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through contaminated surfaces, consider:

* Maintaining regular cleaning of surfaces, particularly surfaces that people touch regularly
* Ensuring sanitary conveniences are kept clean with good supplies of soap and drying facilities
* Having hand sanitiser at strategic points in the business
* Advising customers and workers to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser frequently. This is particularly important before and after touching shared objects or surfaces that other people touch regularly

**3.1 Keeping the premises clean**

To keep the workplace clean and prevent the spread of COVID-19 from touching contaminated surfaces consider.

* Frequently cleaning objects and surfaces that people touch regularly. This includes for example door handles, lift buttons, handrails, counters, tills, self-checkouts, trolleys, coffee machines, betting machines or staff handheld devices. Make sure there are adequate disposal arrangements for cleaning products. For example, touch-free bins
* If you’re cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19, referring to the guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
* Frequently cleaning work areas and equipment between uses. Use your usual cleaning products
* Providing extra non-recycling bins for workers and clients to dispose of single-use face coverings and PPE. You should refer to the guidance on how to dispose of personal or business waste, including face coverings and PPE <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste>
* Providing hand sanitiser in multiple accessible locations in addition to washrooms. Also consider the needs of people with disabilities

**3.2 Additional information for specific settings**

**Sanitary accommodation**

You should ensure that sanitary accommodation whether for staff or the public should be clean and promotes good hygiene.

Consider:

* Using signs and posters to make people aware:
  + Of how to wash their hands well
  + That they should wash their hands frequently
  + That they should not touch their faces
  + That they should cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into their arms if a tissue is not available
* Making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe, practical and accessible. Ensure suitable handwashing facilities are available. This includes running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying. Namely paper towels, continuous roller towels or hand dryers. Consider the needs of people with disabilities
* Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. You should use normal cleaning products and pay attention to frequently hand touched surfaces. Consider using disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces
* Keeping the facilities well ventilated. For example, by ensuring any mechanical ventilation works effectively and opening windows and vents where possible
* Putting up a visible cleaning schedule. Keep it up to date and visible
* Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection

For close contact services, also consider:

* Sanitising any reusable equipment after each appointment and at the start and end of shifts. For example, client chairs, treatment beds, and tools such as scissors. Use your usual cleaning products
* Using disposable gowns for each client. Where this is not possible, use separate gowns and towels for each client. Wash them between uses and dispose of them appropriately as required

**Customer changing rooms**

Objective: to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in customer changing rooms.

The enclosed nature of changing rooms may result in increased risk of COVID-19 spreading. You should manage them carefully to reduce that risk. Businesses should update their risk assessments for each premises where changing rooms are being used.

You should ensure adequate ventilation in changing rooms. For example, by ensuring mechanical ventilation works effectively and opening windows and vents where possible. Read the advice on air conditioning and ventilation. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm>

Consider:

* Where possible, leaving doors or curtains open in vacant changing rooms. This will increase fresh air flow into cubicles that have recently been occupied before the next customer enters
* Making hand sanitiser available on entry and exit
* Leaving a gap of several minutes between one customer leaving a cubicle and the next customer entering. For stores with two or more cubicles, you could do this by alternating cubicle usage
* Setting clear use and cleaning guidance, where changing rooms are cleaned frequently or between every use. Use normal cleaning products. Pay attention to frequently hand touched surfaces and consider using disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces
* Creating procedures to manage clothes that have been tried on, to minimise contact between customers and staff

**Restaurants, pubs and nightclubs**

Consider:

* Using signs and posters to make people aware:
  + Of how to wash their hands well
  + That they should wash their hands frequently
  + That they should not touch their faces
  + That they should cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into their arms if a tissue is not available
* Making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe, practical and accessible. Ensure suitable handwashing facilities are available. This includes running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying. Namely paper towels, continuous roller towels or hand dryers. Consider the needs of people with disabilities
* Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. You should use normal cleaning products and pay attention to frequently hand touched surfaces. Consider using disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces
* Keeping the facilities well ventilated. For example, by ensuring any mechanical ventilation works effectively and opening windows and vents where possible

**Events**

* Frequently clean audience or spectator areas, including seating and concourse areas. Pay particular attention to touch-points such as doors, door handles, seat arms, handrails and taps. Where possible, you should organise your attraction or event so that these areas are cleaned between use by different customers. For example, cleaning seating areas between theatre performances or elite sport competitions
* Frequently clean toilet facilities. Set clear use and cleaning guidance to ensure they are kept clean, including putting up a visible and up-to-date cleaning schedule. Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks. Take steps to reduce crowding in toilet facilities where possible, for example by implementing one-way systems
* Put in place hygiene measures to reduce the risk of transmission. This should include providing handwashing facilities and hand sanitiser, particularly in high-traffic or higher-risk areas, such as reception and entrance foyers, doorways, lifts and bathroom facilities. This could include placing hand sanitiser stations at the entrances of different buildings or areas within your event site
* Ensure handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser stations are available near shared facilities, equipment and objects. For example, at the entrance and exit of theme park attractions and rides
* Ensure that handwashing and hand sanitiser facilities are checked and refilled regularly, and that any equipment placed is accessible to (and does not impede) wheelchair users

**Hotels**

* Clean keys between guests
* If you are cleaning after a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19, follow the guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>   
  You may need to provide cleaners and housekeeping staff with personal protective equipment (such as a face mask or visor) to protect their eyes, mouth and nose, when cleaning areas where there is a greater risk of exposure to the virus (for example, in a hotel room where someone unwell has spent the night)
* Put in place hygiene measures to reduce the risk of transmission. This should include providing handwashing facilities and hand sanitiser, particularly in high-traffic or higher-risk areas, such as reception and entrance foyers, doorways, lifts and bathroom facilities.
* Ensure that housekeeping staff follow guidance on handwashing and hygiene, particularly after cleaning rooms and items which have been in contact with guests
* Ensure handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser stations are available near shared facilities, equipment and objects
* Ensure that handwashing and hand sanitiser facilities are checked and refilled regularly, and that any equipment placed is accessible to (and does not impede) wheelchair users

**Handling goods, merchandise and other materials**

Objective: to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through contact with objects that come into the premises.

Consider:

* Encouraging people to wash their hands more often. Put in place more handwashing facilities for workers who handle goods and merchandise. Provide hand sanitiser where this is not practical
* Reducing risk when handling merchandise. For example, through different display methods, new signage or rotation, or cleaning of high touch stock with your usual cleaning products
* Putting in place a process to manage customer use of testers. For example, have staff monitor the use of testers, limit customer handling, and clean them between uses. For cosmetic and make-up testing, you could also use disposable applicators and place them into disposable pots, use sanitised tiles, and decant products
* Putting in place pick-up and drop-off collection points to reduce the number of people workers come into contact with
* Setting up ‘no contact’ return procedures, where customers take return goods to a designated area
* Encouraging contactless refunds, where possible
* Providing guidance to how workers can safely assist customers with handling large item purchases
* Cleaning touch points after each customer’s use or handover. Consider interior and exterior touch points in certain cases. For example, rental equipment and test drive and rental vehicles

**4.0 Turn away people with COVID-19 symptoms**

**Standard**

Staff members or customers should self-isolate if they or someone in their household has a persistent cough, a high temperature or has lost their sense of taste or smell. They must also self-isolate if they or a close contact has had a positive COVID-19 result, or if they have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. If you know that a worker is self-isolating, you must not allow them to come to work. It’s an offence to do this.

**4.1 Outbreaks in the workplace**

You will usually need to:

* Make sure your risk assessment includes an up-to-date plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak. This plan should nominate a single point of contact (SPOC) where possible. The SPOC should lead on contacting local public health teams
* Inform your [local authority public health team](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council) if you become aware of any positive cases of COVID-19 in your workplace
* Immediately identify any close workplace contacts and ask them to self-isolate. You should not wait for NHS Test and Trace. This prompt action will help reduce the risk of a workplace outbreak

If the local PHE health protection team declares an outbreak, you will be asked to:

* Record details of staff with symptoms of COVID-19
* Assist with identifying contacts

You should therefore ensure all employment records are up to date. You will be provided with information about the outbreak management process. This will help you to:

* Implement control measures
* Assist with communications to staff
* Reinforce prevention messages

**Self-isolation**

NHS Test and Trace workplace guidance https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance

Objective: to stop people physically coming to work, when government guidance advises them to stay at home. This includes people who:

* Have COVID-19 symptoms
* Live in a household with someone who has symptoms
* Are required to self-isolate as part of NHS Test and Trace https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/

You should also make sure that workers and customers who feel unwell stay at home and do not attend the venue, and address the following:

* Enable workers to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate. It is illegal to knowingly require or encourage someone who is being required to self-isolate to come to work
* Read the guidance related to statutory sick pay due to COVID-19 for:
  + Employers
  + Employees
* Ensure any workers who have symptoms of COVID-19 self-isolate immediately and continue for the next 10 full days, even if their symptoms are mild. This means that if, for example, their symptoms started at any time on the 15th of the month their isolation period ends at 11:59pm on the 25th

These symptoms are:

* + A high temperature
  + A new, continuous cough
  + A loss or change to their sense of smell or taste
  + Workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate immediately and continue for the next 10 full days. Workers that test positive but have no symptoms must also self-isolate in this way. Sometimes workers develop symptoms during their isolation period. In these cases, they must restart their 10-day self-isolation period from the day after they develop symptoms. See the guidance for people who live in households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infections https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection
  + Self-isolating workers who have tested negative for COVID-19 may be able to return to work, although some exceptions apply https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance
* Ensure any workers who are contacts of individuals who test positive for COVID-19 self-isolate for a period of 10 days. Contacts must self-isolate immediately and continue for the next 10 full days
* Ensure any workers who have been informed by NHS Test and Trace that they’re a close contact of a person who has had a positive test result for COVID-19 follow the requirement to self-isolate. See the guidance for those who have been in contact with, but do not live with, a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person

You should also make sure that workers and customers who feel unwell stay at home and do not attend the venue.

**4.2 Measures additional to the standard which may help early identification of positive cases of COVID-19**

**Testing**

Regular testing could help identify more positive cases of COVID-19 in the workplace. Read the guidance on getting COVID-19 tests for your employees. <https://www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests>

**How can a business access testing for its staff?**

Anyone with coronavirus symptoms can get a free NHS test https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test.

There are lots of ways for your staff to access tests if they do not have symptoms. These include:

* COVID-19 rapid lateral flow tests can be accessed either from a local pharmacy or by ordering them to your home from gov.uk
* Read guidance on accessing tests if you do not have symptoms of COVID-19 <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>
* If you want to provide tests directly to your staff, you can buy them from the private market (see below)
* Vulnerable settings will continue to be offered a national regular asymptomatic testing offer under a test to protect framework for staff and for service users, particularly those who are especially vulnerable to contracting COVID-19. This includes NHS staff, hospices, prisons, adult social care and independent healthcare providers. Workplace testing will also continue for those who work in operational roles at the UK Border. Any relevant settings will be contacted if they are required to continue workplace testing
* Your local authority may be in contact with you should they feel testing is appropriate in your workplace. Local authorities are focused on targeting disproportionately impacted groups and in a minority of cases, they may decide to give tests to workplaces for this purpose

**What do I need to do if I am providing on site testing?**

If you are providing testing on-site, you should ensure that workplace testing is carried out in a safe manner and in an appropriate setting where control measures are in place to manage the risk of COVID-19 spreading during the testing process. These include:

* Frequent cleaning
* Good hygiene
* Adequate ventilation

You should also ensure that an appropriate setting is available for individuals to wait in while their test is processed.

**If I want to go to a private provider for tests how will I know if they are genuine?**

You can pay an approved provider to provide tests or run a test site for your workplace, however the provider should be UKAS-accredited. A list of general COVID-19 testing providers has been compiled with locations by region alongside each entry, however note that the government does not endorse, recommend or approve any private test provider. Individuals and employers should conduct their own research about available providers and the testing services they supply. For information about customer service, please check consumer review websites. The organisations on this list do not constitute fully UKAS-accredited providers but have demonstrated compliance with the applicable minimum standards, as they progress through the accreditation process. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004542/covid-private-testing-providers-general-testing-210721.csv/preview>

**Enable people to check in at your venue**

You are no longer legally required to collect customer contact details, but doing so will support NHS Test and Trace to contact those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 so that they can book a test. You can enable people to check in to your venue by displaying an NHS QR code poster. You do not have to ask people to check in or turn people away if they refuse. If you choose to display a QR code, you should also have a system in place to record contact details for people who want to check in but do not have the app. https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster

**Additional information for specific settings**

**Hotels**

Take steps to ensure that customers who have symptoms or who are self-isolating do not attend your facility. Clearly communicate that customers should not come to your facility or event if they need to self-isolate, for example because they have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace; are required to isolate after travel; or because they are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature, new and persistent cough, or a loss of/change in sense of taste or smell), even if these symptoms are mild.

Customers should be informed that if they, or anyone they live with, have one or more of these symptoms they should not attend, and should follow the guidance on testing and self-isolation. However, people who need to self-isolate but do not have suitable accommodation may need to self-isolate in a hotel or guest accommodation facility. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

You should consider how to manage this (for example, if you only offer shared facilities this may not be possible in your facility) and clearly communicate your policy to customers. You can find more advice in the guidance on managing guests who have confirmed or suspected COVID-19. If a guest staying at your facility presents with symptoms, or you become aware of a case of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 on-site, follow the steps set out. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/hotels-and-guest-accommodation#customers-5>

**5.0 Communicate and train**

**Standard**

Keep all your workers, contractors and visitors up to date on how you’re using and updating safety measures.

Objective: to make sure all workers are updated on how you are implementing or updating safety measures.

Consider:

* Engaging with workers on an ongoing basis. This includes through trade unions or employee representative groups. Do this to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments
* Being aware of and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. See the guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of COVID-19
* Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language. You should consider people:
  + Who do not have English as their first language
  + Who have protected characteristics, such as visual impairments
* Using visual communications to explain changes to appointment schedules or stock shortages. For example, whiteboards or signage. Do this to reduce the need for face-to-face communication
* Communicating approaches and operational procedures with suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.

**5.1 Additional guidance**

**Events**

Assess the risks relevant to your event and put in place practical measures to reduce them.

* Follow the steps in the guidance on risk assessments, and pay particular attention to the advice for events. This sets out the key risks for events identified by the Events Research Programme, and can help you to understand how the characteristics of your event may affect the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and which mitigations are likely to be most appropriate
* Consider how best to manage your customers based on your risk assessment, for example by putting in place crowd management measures if your event involves large numbers of attendees <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#customers-4>
* You can use the risk management template to identify risks and risk management options specific to your event or setting, and help you to plan your event

Engage with local authorities and other relevant bodies early in your event planning process, to ensure your event can take place as safely as possible.

* Local authorities and local transport operators play an important role in enabling events to take place as safely as possible. Engaging with these groups as early as possible in the planning process will help all partners to understand how you have identified and mitigated any risks, and ensure your event can take place as safely as possible
* You can find more information on working with these groups in the guidance on working with partners https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#events-3

The Events Research Programme identified the following risks associated with specific settings or events, though it is important to recognise that not all of these risks are associated with every venue or setting. You should consider taking additional steps to manage risk if the event site or venue includes one or more of the factors below.

The risk of COVID-19 transmission at any event will depend on several factors, including the prevalence of the virus at the time and the characteristics of the event and the event venue. The highest risks of transmission happen when multiple factors such as venue environment, attendee behaviours and travel to and from events are combined. For example, an indoor event with a large number of people mixing in close proximity for a prolonged period of time is likely to present a higher risk than fewer people outside for a shorter period.

* **Indoor events:** indoor events present a significantly higher risk of transmission than similar events taking place in outdoor spaces. Poor ventilation in indoor spaces increases the risk of transmission further. Ventilation is the process of introducing fresh or cleaned air into indoor spaces. The more fresh or cleaned air that is brought inside, the more diluted any airborne virus will become. In poorly ventilated spaces the amount of virus in the air can build up, and residual virus can remain in the air after an infected person has left, increasing the risk of spreading COVID-19
* **Outdoor events (including those with indoor areas):** although outdoor events typically present fewer risks than indoor events, there may still be some indoor spaces within outdoor venues where risks are likely to be higher. This could include areas where people congregate at higher densities (such as concession stands, bars, turnstiles and toilets), in which ventilation may be poorer. These risks can be reduced through implementing such things as queuing systems and appropriate signage to avoid congestion (see ‘congested areas’ below for further details). Indoor settings such as private boxes and restaurants may still be occupied by some attendees for several hours during an event classified as ‘outdoors’. Ensuring that these spaces are sufficiently well-ventilated, and following the steps set out in the guidance for hospitality venues, can reduce transmission risk in these areas <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/restaurants-pubs-bars-nightclubs-and-takeaway-services>
* **Congested areas:** some areas are more prone to potential congestion and crowding, including concession stands, bars, toilets, turnstiles, lifts, corridors, walkways, entry/exit points and ticket collection points. Congested areas or ‘pinch points’ will be present at all types of events (including outdoor events), and could potentially lead to an increased risk of transmission. Event organisers may want to consider additional risk management in these areas such as limiting the number of individuals who congregate for a longer duration, staggered entry and exit, or greater levels of ventilation in these zones
* **Events with free movement between people:** Events where there is significant close-mixing of people typically pose a higher risk, especially at those events where people will naturally tend to come together and mix for prolonged periods of time (for example, in front of a stage at a live performance or on a dancefloor)
* **Crowd density:** as crowds at an event become denser (particularly in relation to venue size and capacity), it becomes more difficult for people to be physically distant from each other, and close contact inevitably increases. The Events Research Programme found that increasing crowd density can have an impact on localised ventilation which may in turn result in an increased risk of transmission. Key areas of higher density were observed in queues, in hospitality areas, and when attendees were leaving the venue at the end of the event
* **Large numbers of attendees:** events where large numbers of people attend do not necessarily constitute a greater risk than smaller events, (particularly if the event is outside or attendees are dispersed over a large area). However, end-to-end transmission risks are increased through large numbers of people travelling to and from venues and visiting nearby premises such as pubs, bars and restaurants. Early engagement between event organisers and local transport authorities to manage crowds near transport hubs and routes to and from the venue should be factored into the event planning process
* **Events involving energetic activity:** observations from the Events Research Programme indicate that unstructured and energetic activity with a high crowd density may lead to higher airborne transmission risks. This could include activities such as actively chanting and celebrating while attending sporting events, singing along at gigs and concerts, or dancing/singing at a nightclub

If you have identified that your event involves higher risks of transmission, you should take steps to manage this, by reducing the risk or mitigating its impact. Many large events will inherently involve multiple factors such as crowd density and free movement, but this guidance sets out ways you can mitigate these risks to ensure that they can take place as safely as possible. There is advice on the types of measures you can take to reduce risk at events in the guidance on managing customers and audiences https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#capacity, and the steps you should take in the guidance on event planning. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#eventplanning>

You can use the risk management template to identify risks and risk management options specific to your event or setting, and help you to plan your event. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#events-4>

**5.2 Communications and guidance**

Take steps to ensure that customers who have symptoms or who are self-isolating do not attend your facility.

* **Clearly communicate that customers should not come to your facility or event if they need to self-isolate**, for example because they have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace; are required to isolate after travel; or because they are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature, new and persistent cough, or a loss of/change in sense of taste or smell), even if these symptoms are mild
* Customers should be informed that if they, or anyone they live with, have one or more of these symptoms they should not attend, and should follow the guidance on testing and self-isolation https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/
* Ensure customers know how to visit your venue or event safely
* Consider how you can inform visitors of any changes to processes in advance of their visit, for example on your website, when booking by phone or email, and in your digital marketing
* Ensure you make any entry requirements (such as the NHS COVID Pass – see below) clear to customers before booking, and at the point of sale
* Take steps to remind visitors of special measures if they are complex, varied or likely to be forgotten. For example, you could reinforce messages on signs through spoken communication from a greeter, or other staff such as ushers or curators
* Think about how to communicate important information to all of your customers, for example those who do not speak English as a first language, and those with protected characteristics (such as people who are hard of hearing or visually impaired)
* Encourage customers to follow good hygiene practices, such as using hand sanitiser when they enter the building and washing their hands regularly. Consider how to ensure safety messages reach those with hearing or vision impairments
* Pre-event communications can be a particularly effective measure for events. You can find further advice about communications for events in the guidance on event planning https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#eventplanning

**5.3 Reducing risk to customers**

Do not admit customers who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

* If a customer presents with symptoms, or you become aware of a case of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 on-site, they should not be admitted or should be asked to leave the facility or event, unless they need to be transported to hospital for treatment. The customer should be advised to self-isolate in line with NHS guidelines and to take a PCR test
* Where possible, the customer should be assessed on-site (by a medical professional, if you have this provision). Unless they are in need of urgent medical attention and need to be transported to hospital for treatment, they should be encouraged to take a supervised lateral flow test. Any customer returning a positive result from a lateral flow test must be required to leave the facility or event. They should be advised to self-isolate in line with NHS guidelines and to take a PCR test, unless they need to be transported to hospital for treatment <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

Consider displaying an NHS QR code so that customers can check in using the NHS COVID-19 app. <https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster>

* You are no longer required to collect customer contact details, or keep a record of your staff and visitors
* However, you are advised to continue to display an NHS QR code for customers wishing to check in using the app, as this will help to reduce the spread of the virus and protect your customers, visitors and staff. You do not have to ask customers to check in, or turn them away if they refuse
* If you display an NHS QR code, you should also have a system to collect (and securely store) names and contact details, for those who ask to check in but who do not have access to a smartphone or who prefer not to use the app

Consider using the NHS COVID Pass to reduce the risk of transmission at your venue or event.

* The NHS COVID Pass allows people to demonstrate that they are at a lower risk of carrying COVID-19 and transmitting it to others, through vaccination, testing or natural immunity. It can help organisations to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19
* The government will work with organisations that operate large, crowded settings where people are likely to be in close proximity to others outside their household to encourage the use of the NHS COVID Pass
* To support businesses, organisations and individuals in these settings, the NHS COVID Pass will be available through the NHS App, the NHS website, or as a letter that can be requested by ringing NHS 119. Visitors will also be able to show text or email confirmation of test results
* If you use the NHS COVID Pass, you should ensure that you comply with all relevant legal obligations and guidance, including on equalities. You can find more information in the NHS COVID Pass guidance
* Even when using the NHS COVID Pass, it is still important that you follow the rest of the guidance and put measures in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading at your venue

**Consider how best to reduce risks to customers**

* Minimise unnecessary contact. You could do this by using online booking and pre-payment and encouraging contactless payments wherever possible
* Ensure that any measures you put in place are suitable for your facility or event. For example, for business events and conferences, you could consider providing (or recommending the purchase of) name tags and a badge holder for business cards, to avoid the exchange of business cards
* There will be additional factors to consider if you are operating a large or complex event, such as a conference or festival. You can find additional information in the guidance on crowd management and events https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#customers-4
* There will also be additional factors to consider if your facility is (or you are holding events in) a venue with specific requirements, such as a historic building like a stately home or castle. You can find more information on safety measures in heritage locations (including consent and planning permission) in the additional guidance for heritage locations https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#heritage, and further advice in Heritage England’s guidance on reopening a heritage location https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/reopening-heritage-locations/
* You should not introduce measures which involve spraying people with disinfectants (such as in a tunnel, cabinet, or chamber) under any circumstances. You can find more information about these types of measures in the HSE’s guidance on disinfecting using fog, mist and other systems <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/disinfecting-premises-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>
* The use of temperature screening products is not recommended by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), as there is little scientific evidence to support temperature screening as a reliable method for detection of COVID-19, particularly for asymptomatic cases <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dont-rely-on-temperature-screening-products-for-detection-of-coronavirus-covid-19-says-mhra>

**5.4 Managing customers, spectators and audiences**

There are no capacity caps on the number of people permitted to attend visitor attractions or events. However, you may wish to take steps to ensure customers can attend as safely as possible, for example by introducing one-way systems to minimise crowding.

These are likely to be specific to your type of venue or event, so you should think about the most appropriate steps you could take to manage risk.

For example, you could:

* **Consider how you can reduce risk to staff who work with large numbers of guests.** For example, installing screens can be beneficial if placed between people who will come into close proximity with each other. You could consider installing screens at ticket offices or box offices, and providing hand sanitiser for staff and customers
* **Consider using a CO2 monitor to assess whether there is sufficient ventilation in your venue.** If you identify that ventilation is poor, you should take steps to improve fresh air flow. If you cannot increase the supply of fresh air, you should consider whether you can reduce the number of people in your venue. You can find more information on ventilation and CO2 monitors in the guidance on ventilation https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#facility-3
* **Identify areas of crowding and consider what steps can be taken to avoid congestion,** if they present a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission. For example, historic buildings such as places of worship or ruined structures often have constrained spaces such as small rooms, narrow staircases and limited entrance or exit points. Measures such as limiting the number of people entering the space or staggering entrance and exit times will help to avoid overcrowding

**In stadiums, auditoriums and theatre-style settings, consider:**

* Providing allocated seating where possible. You should ensure that your facility is accessible (in line with your responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010) and that seating arrangements take into account the needs of people with disabilities and wheelchair users, and support from carers. You should also consider how seating arrangements work with any other accessibility services you offer, such as access to captioning or audio description services
* **Where allocated seating is not possible, consider other ways to reduce these risks**, such as additional stewarding. You can find more information in the guidance on crowd management and events https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#customers-4

**5.5 Crowd management and events**

You should take additional steps to manage risk, if the event or attraction:

* Takes place indoors
* Takes place outdoors, but also has indoor spaces
* Includes congested areas
* Involves free movement between people
* Includes crowd density; or
* Has a large number of attendees

Many large events, such as music festivals, will inherently involve multiple factors such as crowd density and free movement. This guidance sets out ways you can mitigate these risks to ensure that they can take place as safely as possible, including options for managing attendees to reduce risk.

Not every option will be applicable or practical for every event and setting, so you should consider the options that will be most appropriate for your event. This may mean incorporating different measures for different areas and different time periods within the same venue, particularly for large events. For example, some measures such as queue management will be appropriate for external and hospitality areas, but other measures are likely to be more suitable around stages or performance areas.

You should consider the risks and measures relevant to your event through your risk assessment, and you can use the risk management template to help you to assess options and plan your event. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#events-4>

When considering any interventions, you should take into account the impact on people with protected characteristics, and the need for any reasonable adjustments. You should also take into account the impact of measures on clinically extremely vulnerable people, who may require different support and interventions to other attendees.

**5.6 Crowd management measures**

**Stewarding/licensed door supervision**

* Consider using stewards, ushers or licensed door supervisors to manage attendees, to reduce the risks from crowding. Ensure they are aware of any attendee obligations or requirements and are able to provide appropriate guidance and respond to queries
* Consider how they can be best used within your event or venue. Extra stewarding may be helpful at pinch-points where queues will normally form, outside the venue and in any seating areas
* Take into account any risks to stewards and other staff, and ways these can be reduced. Stewards, licensed door supervisors and other staff and volunteers face the same risks as event attendees. Consider in your risk register whether there are any steps you can take to reduce these risks, such as using designated positions to supervise crowds

**Zoning**

* Consider dividing the venue into zones so that attendees can be managed in smaller groups to reduce mixing, especially within structured settings
* This could include using floor markings or temporary barriers and controlling the flow and numbers of attendees in each zone. For example, each group of attendees could use separate turnstiles, stairwells, bars, toilets and seating areas within a stadium
* Coloured wristbands could be used to signpost which zones attendees should or should not enter, along with close supervision by stewards and/or licensed door supervisors to manage any overcrowding issues and ensure safe control and compliance

**Crowd movement strategies**

* Implementing queue management outside venues, which could include using barriers and ensuring that there are sufficient venue staff available to direct attendees appropriately, to avoid congestion and blocking areas and routes being used by people not attending the event. Where necessary, discuss with local authorities the closure of pavements, highways and other public spaces adjacent to venues, in order to manage queuing arrangements safely and effectively
* Where multiple checks for entry are required, consider staggering checking processes to ensure efficient entry to venues
* Using controlled access and egress in higher-risk areas, such as concession stands/bars, toilets, turnstiles, lifts, corridors, walkways and entry/exit points and at standing performances
* Using as many entry and exit points as possible to reduce congestion, both outside and inside the venue, and ensure these are clearly marked
* Introducing a one-way flow system with clear markings and signage
* Using clear signage, video screens and PA/audio announcements to provide additional information to attendees and to reinforce crowd movement messaging
* Encouraging attendees to purchase tickets in advance and send by post or electronically to avoid ticket collection queues
* Using timed ticketing for all-day events/activities