

Reopening your business

Covid 19 Guidance

Businesses in all sectors have been hit hard by Covid-19 and this guide is here to help you prepare to fully re-open your business once the Government have decided it is safe to do so.

The Government route map for lifting lock down in Scotland has been set out in a four-phase plan that began on 28th May 2020.

You may already be operating a home delivery or collection model whether you are in the catering industry or the wider retail sector. Based on what we know now, there is likely to be continuing disruption and uncertainty for all businesses for some time to come. A key area is maintaining social distancing rules both for customers and your employees. Therefore, you will need to take steps to ensure that this and other coronavirus controls are in place in your business for the foreseeable future.

Re-opening is not as simple as opening the doors and starting to trade again. Not only are there a number of rules in place on social distancing and the provisions and use of personal protective equipment (PPE), but your business may have been closed for a number of weeks. Scottish Borders Council are here to help you and have produced this guidance to support you through the various stages of re-opening, including steps required during your continued closure, during the weeks leading up to re-opening and ongoing COVID-19 precautions for when you are open. There are handy sections on each aspect of the controls you will need to consider, from purchasing supplies to serving customers. Links are provided to further Government and industry guidance and Appendices include posters that you may wish to print out and laminate to help reiterate and remind staff of these essential controls for their own and customer safety, along with risk assessment templates that you will need to use to help you ensure a safe environment for staff, customers and others who visit your business.

The first thing you must do is check your business is allowed to reopen. Check the Government website before you re-open your business for details of any trading restrictions. You can do this by following the links below.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-what-you-can-and-cannot-do/pages/shopping-eating-and-drinking-out/>

At the time of writing this document restaurants, pubs and cafes etc. must remain closed apart from deliveries/takeaway/retail functions, although Phase 2 may see these restrictions eased.

You may find a phased opening, trialing out any new measures that you intend to put in place will help to guide you in the measures that work best and how these measures will affect the number of staff that are required and the effect that this will have on the profitability of the business.

This guidance will be kept under constant review, so please regularly check the Scottish Borders Council website and Facebook pages as we will revise the document when guidance and best practice change in line with advice from Government and public health authorities.

If you have any questions regarding this guidance then please contact the Food Safety and Health Team on Placehealth@scotborders.gov.uk

Where To Start

When you are thinking about the wide range of factors that need to be considered as you re-open, you may find it helpful to split these under headings of People, Premises and Product. Below are a range of issues that you will need to think about

People

Personal Hygiene

Handwashing facilities must be available to all staff and they should be encouraged to wash their hands regularly with hot water and soap.

They should always wash their hands when arriving at work and regularly throughout day for at least 20 seconds.

Consider increased levels of hygiene management including keeping hands clean and coughing and sneezing into tissues which are immediately disposed.

Make available sanitising hand gel for use in addition to regular hand washing.

For tasks where gloves are used – staff must always wash/sanitise hands before putting on a new pair of gloves and change them regularly.

All staff should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth and avoid handshakes.

All personal items should be stored in designated area to prevent contamination of kitchens and other staff belongings

Reusable cups and bottles should not be bought into the work premises.

Personal Protective Equipment

Disposable gloves – Gloves should only be used where the risk cannot be controlled in other ways. Hand washing and sanitising are more important than wearing gloves.

There should not be an over-reliance on gloves as they can themselves increase risks and staff must be reminded that gloves are not a substitute to proper hand washing and must be changed on a regular basis.

Face coverings/masks (non-surgical) – the government is now advising that people should wear face coverings in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not always possible and staff come into contact with others that they do not normally meet (such as on public transport). Face coverings are not intended to help the wearer but to protect others if they are not showing symptoms.

However, it is not recommended that you wear face masks in hot kitchens as this may encourage people to touch their face more often and become a hazard rather than a control.

Some employees may choose to wear masks for their own personal well-being (even though there is no evidence that non-surgical masks provide protection) and you may find that the public are provided by a degree of confidence in the early days of reopening. However you will need to ensure this is done

safely and advise them to wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on and after removing it; and when wearing a face covering, to avoid touching the face or covering, as it can be contaminated with germs from hands. Face coverings should be changed if it becomes damp and wash your face covering daily.

As an employer your decision to provide face coverings should be based on risk assessment and hierarchy of control. In the unlikely scenario where they are required, they should not be medical grade as this could disrupt essential NHS and care worker supplies. For businesses such as bakeries where flour dust is a problem, then FFP3 masks may be required for health & safety. A key requirement is face coverings are used safely and do not become a source of infection. The Health and Safety Executive provides advice on face masks and there is a government page on how to wear and make face coverings. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/ppe-face-masks/face-coverings-and-face-masks.htm>

Ensure all PPE is stored in a clean, protected location.

Lidded foot pedal bins should be provided for disposal of PPE.

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-the-correct-order-for-donning-doffing-and-disposal-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-for-healthcare-workers-hcws-in-a-primary-care-setting/>

Training

Remember to train any new or replacement staff before they start work on all Covid-19 controls and if you operate a food business, on food safety matters. It may be helpful to develop a form that staff can sign, confirming that they have read and understood your policy on Covid -19 controls.

Staff

As an Employer what should I do?

Identify those at risk due to medical conditions and those who are shielding and excluded from work.

You should confirm in writing to staff that they must not return to work if suffering from Covid-19 symptoms, or if a member of their household is affected and follow current Government guidance and the NHS website if you have symptoms. <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

Advise employees to avoid public transport where possible or to travel at quieter times. Capacity will be limited due to social distancing on public transport. Ask employees to travel by car, walk or bicycle if they can. They should follow current government guidance on wearing face coverings on public transport.

You could consider developing a Return to Work for that staff are required to complete prior to them returning to the premises – an example of this type of form is provided within this Guidance. This will help you establish if staff have been unwell, live within a household where someone else has recently been unwell or consider themselves vulnerable.

What if an employee becomes ill?

If an employee becomes ill with Covid-19 you will have to follow the NHS guidance. If a team member is sick they will have to self-isolate for 7 days and other team members may have to self-isolate for 14 days or for 7 days after they become ill. They must contact the NHS and comply with the Track and Trace requirements

The premises will require a thorough clean and disinfection using chemicals that work for Covid-19. See the 'Cleaning' section for more information.

Health and Safety

Review your risk assessments and ensure all controls for Covid-19 have been included.

Information on appropriate Risk Assessments can be found in this Guidance

If a single member of staff is opening the site, the door should be locked until the site is due to open and/or another member of staff arrives.

Staff should have access to a telephone so they can contact emergency services in the event of any issues arising.

Follow all your usual health & Safety procedures.

Ensure you have COSHH data sheets and PPE for any new chemicals purchased.

Premises

Gas

When returning to your premises if you think you have a leak or can smell gas contact the National Gas Emergencies number immediately on 0800 111 999.

When shutting down kitchens, the gas valve for each piece of equipment (every range, fryer, oven, water heater, salamander etc.) should have been closed and will need to be re-opened. The main gas service for the building or location may have been closed and in some cases, the gas utility company may have closed the service themselves. If this is the case, you will need to call and request to restore gas. This should be addressed as soon as possible, as utility companies will be extremely busy and usually service will be on a first come first served basis.

Appliances: Check they are all working and ensure preventative maintenance has been completed, where necessary by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

<https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>

Electricity

Check the electrical panel and we recommend that all fuses are switched on one by one and very slowly to allow the system to start gradually and avoid power surges that can blow a circuit. Take advice from your approved electrical contractor.

Check your installation inspection certificate remains valid - arrange a re-inspection by an NICEIC electrical contractor if necessary.

Pest control

Check for signs of any pest activity – droppings, gnaw marks/new holes, dead pests, bad smells. Remove any potential for pest harbourage. Check bait boxes are in place – the correct way up, and in the location agreed with the pest control technician. Reinststate pest control visits, if necessary.

If there are any serious pest issues you must contact your pest controller and take advice on eradication as quickly as possible.

Equipment

In catering kitchens, turn on refrigeration equipment and let it run for 24 hours, then check the inside temperature against the temperature taken with a calibrated probe temperature to ensure it is accurate before storing foods inside.

Arrange for any preventative maintenance and necessary repairs to be carried out

Clean and sanitise all fridges and freezers – including those in staff rest rooms

Flush through all plumbed-in equipment (e.g coffee machines, slush-ice makers, post-mix guns, soft drink machines and some water coolers). – Legionella controls?

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

Social and Physical Distancing

Post signage promoting social distancing upon entry.

Display signs in multiple locations that indicate the **maximum number** of customers and staff a premises can accommodate at any one time.

Mark direction of travel to designate entrances and exits, pick up areas and toilets.

Redesign floor plans to demonstrate required social distancing.

Mark the floor where queues may occur (such as toilets, takeaway pick up etc.) and/or provide directional signage to indicate flow through the premises as well as outside.

Where furniture cannot be removed to adjust for physical distancing, mark certain tables and chairs unavailable for use.

Table dividers could be investigated to make social distancing easier.

Remove waiting area seating.

Clearly designate takeaway/pick up locations when separate from dine-in operations.

Install physical separation between customers and staff in counter service and payment settings.

Where possible and weather permitting, entrances and exits, that are **not Fire Doors**, should be propped open to limit need for staff and customers to open/close doors.

Use technology where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction, for example mobile ordering, menu tablets and contactless payment options.

Engineering/physical controls

The following could be considered:

- Evidence suggests that the virus is less likely to be passed on in well-ventilated buildings and outdoors and therefore where possible you should increase ventilation rates in the work environment. This could be as simple as opening a window. You should use external extractor fans where available to keep spaces well ventilated and make sure that ventilation systems are set to maximise the air flow rate. Heating and cooling systems can be used at their normal temperature settings.
- If you have outside areas you should look to maximise their use.
- You should check the duct cleaning certificates and if required arrange for cleaning. You should clean the ventilation filters.
- Check the fire suppression system and if servicing is required complete this service.
- Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards.

Outside Areas

Outside areas are likely to play a significant role in a premises reopening and the public may feel safer visiting premises with outside space. So now is the time to look at your outside areas if you have one.

Do you need to order things such as outdoor heaters?

Look at the layout, will you require temporary fencing or large planters to ensure social distancing.

If you have children's play equipment you may wish to close this as cleaning and disinfecting these areas will be difficult or use the space for more outside seating.

If you do not have an outdoor area you might want to investigate pavement licensing with your local authority.

Provide access to hand sanitiser

The use of outside areas must be included in your risk assessments

Product

Suppliers

Suppliers will also be starting up again and a number may not open. There may be shortages in most supply areas and you will need create back up plans to address and substitutes may be required.

Communicate with suppliers prior to opening to find out whether they will be reopening and if they anticipate shortages; also, if there is any advice on alternatives and timescales they can provide. If not, check substituted brands enable you to make safe and suitable choices particularly if you run a food business. Substituted foods may contain unexpected ingredients and allergens and so your allergens matrix may need to be reviewed.

All business will need to review their suppliers and delivery systems in order to ensure Covid-19 controls are in place. This review will extend to all the risk assessments that you have in place with regard to Health & Safety matters and in the case of food business, it is essential that your CookSafe document is part of this review and in particular the Cleaning Schedule. Advice with regard to cleaning can be found within this Guidance

Stock check/food disposal

As many businesses will have closed unexpectedly and at short notice, checks should be made for expired durability dates. You must remember to include partially used items such as sauces that require to be used within a specific period once open. Ensure waste food is disposed of appropriately and quickly and is not allowed to accumulate inside or outside the premises.

As daily temperature monitoring will not have been undertaken check there is no evidence of temporary power failures within your equipment such as fridges and freezers. If there is any evidence that defrosting may have occurred the food should be disposed of. It is difficult to assess for evidence of temporary power failure within refrigerators, so where there is any doubt whatsoever about product safety then all relevant precautions must be taken i.e. disposal of products.

It is however highly likely that food items stored within the refrigerator will now have exceeded their durability dates and should therefore be discarded. Oil in fryers should be replaced.

Staff Return-to-Work Questionnaire – COVID-19 SPECIFIC

This form is to be completed by all staff and managers **PRIOR** to returning to work after the extended period of closure as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This form is in addition to the standard food handlers return to work questionnaire and must be completed over the phone **PRIOR** to the member of staff returning to work. It must also be completed if a staff member is off work ill with COVID-19 symptoms, has a positive test or if household members are ill and they are self-isolating or if they have been contacted by track and trace before they come back to work.

Name of staff member		Proposed Date of return	
Position		Date of Completion	

Please answer the following questions:

Do you currently have any of the following symptoms or have experienced them within		
Continuous cough	YES	NO
Loss of taste	YES	NO
Loss of sense of smell	YES	NO
High temperature	YES	NO
Do any persons or family members with whom you live with have any of the following symptoms or have experienced them within the last 14 days?		
Continuous cough	Yes	No
Loss of taste	Yes	No
Loss of sense of smell	Yes	No
High temperature	Yes	No

Testing		
Have you tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 7 days	Yes	No
Have any persons or family members with whom you live tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?	Yes	No
Have you been contacted by the track and trace service in the past 14 days and been requested to self-isolate?	Yes	No

Travel		
Have you recently from travel outside of the UK and been required to self-isolate for period of 14 days?	Yes	No
If yes, please detail how many days longer you have to self-	days	

Home arrangements		
Do you fall into either of the 'extremely vulnerable or vulnerable category and are currently shielding?	Yes	No
Do you live with any persons who are classed as 'extremely vulnerable' or 'vulnerable' and are currently shielding?	Yes	No
If yes, please provide detail below:		

By signing, I confirm that the information given is accurate and true		
Signature of Staff Member		Date
Signature of Manager		Date