

# How to keep your business COVID safe

**now and into the future**

Guidance and support for your hospitality  
business to stay COVID safe.



## Introduction

This business pack has been produced by local authorities across the North East to help support hospitality business owners/managers to stay COVID safe as they open up following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

The pack has been designed to make it easier for you as a business owner/manager to find the right guidance. We want to support our hospitality sector to be COVID safe.

For the latest government advice please visit:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

In this pack you will find information about:

- **The roadmap**
- **Reminder of key messages**
- **Social distancing for employees**
- **The importance of cleaning**
- **Fresh air**
- **How to help employees to follow self-isolation guidance**
- **Checklist for businesses**
- **Questions**



# Roadmap - Step 2

The roadmap to come out of lockdown in England, as proposed in February 2021, is based on scientific data and consists of four steps.

Step  
1

Permits up to six people or two households meeting outdoors from 29 March (sometimes referred to as recreational contact). You must not meet indoors with anybody you do not live with or have formed a support bubble with. No impact on the hospitality business.

Step  
2

**Outdoor hospitality venues may reopen on 12 April. No need to order a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks and there will be no curfew. Customers must order, eat and drink while seated. Weddings and wakes could have up to 15 people. Indoor events that bring people together - even if they do not mix with other households - must not run until Step 3.**

Step  
3

Indoor areas of hospitality venues may reopen no earlier than 17 May. As per outdoor venues, table service only. Particular attention is to be paid if guidance suggests social contact limits are still in place. Groups may be limited to six people or two households indoors or parties may be limited to groups of no more than 30 people outdoors.

Step  
4

This will be at least five weeks after Step 3, no earlier than 21 June. By Step 4, the government hopes to be able to introduce the following (subject to review):

- No legal limits on social contact
- Reopening of nightclubs
- Larger events. No legal limit on live events

Before each new step of the roadmap, the government will review the latest data using four tests that will consider infection and hospitalisation rates and the impact of the vaccine programme to decide whether this data supports the further lifting of restrictions. There will be at least five weeks between each step.

The dates which each step will come into effect are confirmed by government only when the tests have been met.

Frequently Asked Questions for hospitality businesses in relation to **Step 2** of the governments roadmap are answered below:

**1. Outdoor service is permitted, but what if someone needs the toilet, can they go?**

In Step 2, customers can use the outdoor area of your premises and they can travel through the premises to get to an outside area or access indoor toilets. Please remind customers to wear a face coverings when indoors.

**2. Can music be played at an outdoor venue?**

Yes, but it's advised to have this as background music only to prevent the need for shouting and not to encourage singing or dancing.

**3. I know all customers have to be seated but am I allowed to take walk-ins or is it booking only and is there any time limit on how long customers can stay?**

There is nothing to stop walk-ins, however if long queues are frequently an issue for your business, you may wish to consider implementing a booking or pre-ordering system to minimise this. There is no legal limit on how long customers can stay.

**4. Do customers have to have a meal and can I offer shared platters?**

You do not have to serve a meal in order to sell alcohol. Sharing platters are permitted only with your own household.

**5. I want to erect a gazebo so we can start inviting customers back - is that still classed as indoor?**

Gazebos can be erected outdoors but at least 50% of the walls must be open and removed from the shelter. Open sides must not be closer than one metre to other walls, fences, hedges or other obstructions that will impede ventilation.

**6. I need more specific information - where do I go to find it, is there anyone I can ask?**

Get in touch with your Council public protection/inspection team who can advise you of the changes - see the **Got Questions?** page in this pack which has a weblink and an email address for local help.

More information on the government guidance for businesses and employees can be found here:

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

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



What questions do you want to ask about steps 3 and 4 on the government roadmap? Let your local Council public protection or inspection team know.



# Reminder of key messages

**One of the main ways to suppress the virus is to maintain the right behaviours.** We know that when you are busy it's sometimes easy to forget that hands, face, space must be maintained.

## What this means when welcoming back your employees and customers

Here are some things you can do:



### Hands

Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. Customers and employees should be provided with hand hygiene stations



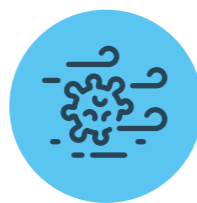
### Face

Ensure employees and customers wear face coverings inside



### Space

Place social distancing markers inside and for outside queues. Limit the number of customers. Some customers may have to wait for tables. Implement one-way walking systems. Advise customers of their responsibility to socially distance



### Fresh air

Provide good ventilation e.g. open windows or doors where possible



### Cleaning

Frequent and deep cleaning. Focus on high frequency touch areas such as door handles



### Limit face-to-face contact

Change the way employees work to limit their contact time with customers and each other



### Self-isolate

If required, ensure employees follow self-isolation guidance as instructed by NHS Test and Trace



### Service

Provide cutlery and condiments only when food is being served and ideally serve single use condiments. Encourage contactless payments



### Track and Trace

Ensure all customers in the party are using the NHS QR codes or another system to allow contact tracing and keep a clear record of employees on duty each shift



### Test employees

Test employees - even if they have no symptoms, as one in three people don't show symptoms

More information on the government guidance for businesses and employees can be found here:

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

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



# Social distancing for employees

## What this really means

All businesses should have carried out a COVID risk assessment for their business. It's important to review this regularly and share findings with your employees, so they know what you're doing to keep them safe and what you expect of them in keeping your customers safe. Your risk assessment must be written down if you have more than five employees.

## Travelling

To minimise the risk of spreading the virus through having too many people in a confined space, walk or cycle to work where possible. Where this is not possible, use public transport or drive but wear face coverings when required. Car sharing with someone outside your household is high risk and is classed as close contact.

The advice is that if employees cannot work from home and have to travel to work with someone not from their household, they should:

- Try to share with the same people each time
- Clean any shared vehicles between shifts or on handover
- Open windows for ventilation, and
- Travel side by side or behind other people, always wearing a face covering.

Generally, the advice is to maximise the distance between people in the vehicle and to clean the vehicle between journeys, paying particular attention to surfaces which have been touched such as car door handles.

More travel advice for passengers can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers)

## Social distancing guidelines at work

Ensure employees maintain social distancing guidelines wherever possible, including arriving at and departing from work. This means 2m apart, or 1m apart with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable. Mitigating actions may include:

- Keeping the interaction time between employees as short as possible
- Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (where each person works with only a few others)

## Breaktimes

Think about how you might organise these differently. Breaks should be staggered where possible to minimise contact between employees. If cigarette breaks are taken or employees are using the same kitchen area, social distancing must still be maintained.

## Workplace Testing

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms can get a free NHS test. You can also order rapid lateral flow tests to regularly test employees with no COVID-19 symptoms.

Regular testing is a vital part of the government's roadmap to cautiously ease restrictions.

Around one in three people with COVID-19 don't have symptoms, which means they could be spreading the virus in workplaces without knowing. Rapid testing detects cases quickly - in under 30 minutes - meaning those who test positive can self-isolate immediately, breaking chains of transmission.

You can register to order tests if:

- Your business is registered in England
- Your employees cannot work from home

Register to order COVID-19 tests for employees

<https://www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests>



# Importance of cleaning

## The risk of COVID-19 infection depends on many factors including:

- The type of surface contaminated
- The amount of virus shed from the individual
- The time the individual spent in the setting
- The time since the individual was last in the setting

COVID-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, aerosols and through direct contact.

Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated when people with the virus cough or sneeze or touch them. The risk is greater when people are close to each other.

Increased cleaning of frequently touched surfaces reduces the risk of infection.

Anything that is touched by lots of people will need more regular cleaning than normal.

## Examples of frequently touched surfaces include:

- Work surfaces like desks, platforms and workstations
- Handles on doors, windows, rails, dispensers and water coolers
- Common areas like toilets, reception, changing rooms, corridors and lifts
- Vehicle handles, steering wheels, seat belts and internal surfaces
- Control panels for machinery, control pads and switches
- Computer keyboards, printers, touch screens, monitors and phones
- Taps, kettles, water heaters, fridges, microwaves and cupboards
- Shared equipment like tools, machines, vehicles, pallet trucks and delivery boxes
- Post and goods coming in or being shipped out



Consider putting in place measures to clean surfaces and objects after each use where possible. If this isn't practical (for example lift buttons that are used throughout the day) then make sure they are cleaned often.

Reducing clutter and removing difficult to clean items can make cleaning easier.

Any comprehensive cleaning regime should involve deep and periodic cleaning.

Deep cleaning is a thorough clean of all frequently touched surfaces at least once a day.

Periodic cleaning is cleaning at different times throughout the day. It can include cleaning items immediately after use as well as cleaning surfaces on a regular basis throughout a single day.

## Reducing the need for cleaning

Reducing people's contact with surfaces and objects is better than relying on cleaning once contact has taken place. Think about how you can change the way you work to:

- Limit the movement of people around your workplace as far as possible
- Reduce people's need to touch surfaces or objects

Ways you could limit movement or reduce people's need to touch objects that you can consider include:

- Allocating specific work areas or vehicles to specific employees
- Creating small groups who can work independently on tasks
- Closing off spare workstations and putting away items that you don't need
- Propping open doors to avoid the need to touch handles (excluding fire doors or other doors that must be kept closed)
- Fitting automatic sensor-operated doors or foot plates to doors so they can be opened with feet rather than hands
- Issuing door hooks to employees so they don't have to touch handles
- Reducing equipment available to reduce the amount that needs to be cleaned

More detailed advice can be found on the Health and Safety Executive government website:

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



# Fresh air

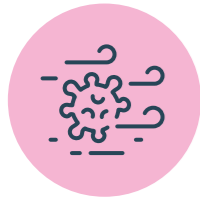
The law says employers must make sure there's an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace. This has not changed during the pandemic.

Good ventilation reduces the concentration of the COVID-19 virus in the air and therefore reduces the risk from airborne transmission, which happens when people breathe in small particles (aerosols) after someone with the virus has occupied an enclosed area. The risk is greater in areas that are poorly ventilated.

## You can reduce the risk of aerosol transmission by:



Making sure infected employees (or any visitors with COVID-19 symptoms) do not come into the workplace



Providing adequate ventilation with fresh air



Limiting the number of people in an area



Thinking about minimising activities that increase deeper breathing (including singing, physical exertion and shouting)



Ensuring your employees spend less time in occupied areas

## You can also identify poorly ventilated areas by:

- Looking for areas where people work and there is no mechanical ventilation or natural ventilation such as open windows, doors or vents etc
- Check that mechanical systems provide outdoor air, temperature control or both. If a system only recirculates air and has no outdoor air supply, the area is likely to be poorly ventilated
- Identify areas that feel stuffy or smell bad
- You may wish to use carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors. Checking CO<sub>2</sub> levels will help you decide if ventilation is poor. The monitors are less effective in areas used by few people

## If your workplace has poorly ventilated areas, you should:

- Open doors and windows to create a through breeze where you can
- Open windows for short sharp bursts of 10-15 minutes regularly throughout the day if you can't leave them open
- Consider mechanical ventilation using fan ducts to bring fresh air in from outside or a combination of natural and mechanical ventilation to maximise fresh air

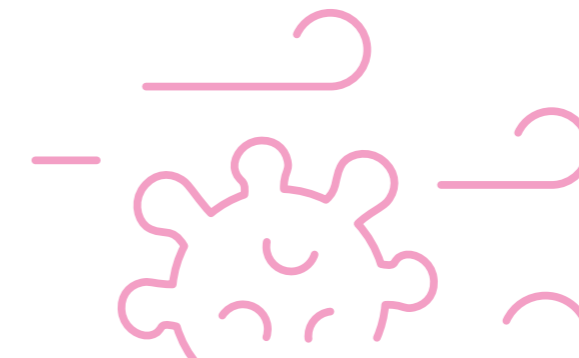
## Fire safety in your premises

It is important that, as changes are naturally made to control the spread of COVID-19, they are also considered in the context of your premises' fire safety risk assessments to help manage and mitigate the risk of fire as much as possible. Significant changes should be identified and recorded. Make sure you address the following areas:

- Risk reduction
- Fire alarm systems
- Interim measures

- Means of escape
- New or emerging risk
- Vulnerable people

We would advise you to review your fire risk assessment regularly.



# How to help employees to follow self-isolation guidance

Some of your employees may need to self-isolate.

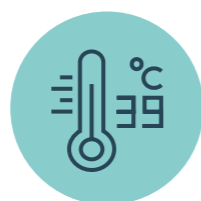
## People should self-isolate if:



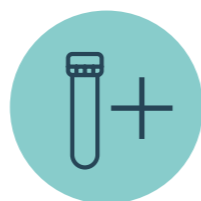
Someone in their household or support bubble, or a close contact, has symptoms



They are told by NHS Test and Trace that they need to self-isolate



They develop COVID-19 symptoms



Positive COVID-19 test result

## A close contact is defined as the following:

- A household member or a sexual contact
- Someone who has travelled in the same car or vehicle
- Someone who has been face-to-face less than 1 metre away
- Someone who has been within 1 metre (not face-to-face) for one minute or more
- Someone who has been 1-2 metres away for 15 minutes or more in total throughout the day

**Not usually considered to be a close contact** is an interaction through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 is, as long as there has been no other contact such as those in the list above.



Please check the latest guidance if an employee has returned from abroad as they may need to quarantine.

## Encourage them to follow the guidance below:

- Stay at home and begin to self-isolate for 10 days from when symptoms start, **and**
- Arrange to have a COVID-19 test

## If someone has tested positive or is self-isolating:

- Do not go to work, school or public places (including shops)
- Do not use public transport/taxis
- Do not have visitors in their home (except for people providing essential care)
- Do not go out to exercise

## When to self-isolate

A person is infectious from two days before symptoms start until 10 days after their symptoms started. This is known as 'the infectious period'.

In these examples:

### Someone **with symptoms**

- Symptoms start on the 16th
- The **infectious period** is from the 14th to the 26th
- The person has to self-isolate for 10 full days from the 17th to the 26th

### Someone **with no symptoms**

- Test taken on 16th
- The person has to self isolate for 10 full days from the 17th to the 26th

In both of these examples the person could go back to their normal routine on the 27th (day 11).

If you know that an employee has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, **it is your legal duty to not allow them to come into work** or work anywhere other than where they are self-isolating (usually their home) for their full self-isolation period. Failure to do so could result in your firm facing a fine, starting from £1,000. Remind them that they may not leave their house for anything (even shopping). Reassure them that they are doing the right thing by keeping themselves and others safe.

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			



# Checklist for businesses

When inspectors come to visit it's their role to provide advice and support to help you minimise health and safety hazards in your business and to enforce legislation to protect public health where necessary. In responding to the pandemic these inspectors have been working to support businesses in making sure that employees and members of the public are adhering to social distancing guidance and following the guidelines set out by the government. Your adherence to regulations and guidance will help increase customer confidence in the safety of your business and encourage customers to return.

## What the inspectors are looking for:



### Risk assessments

Risk assessments have taken place (see overleaf)



### Signage

Good signage for rules, including hand washing and social distancing. Some rooms may be limited in capacity and signage may be required to reflect this.



### Sanitation

Hand sanitiser is provided as well as good hand washing facilities



### Toilet numbers

The number of people using the toilets at any time is monitored



### Contact tracing

Contact tracing is in place either via a QR code or via NHS Test and Trace



### Fresh air

Adequate ventilation

continues overleaf →



### Following guidelines

Government guidelines in respect of people mixing are being followed, for example in relation to the number of households, rule of six and bubbles



### Seated orders

Orders are being taken from customers who are seated only

## Risk assessments

You should carry out a risk assessment and build up a picture of the risk to decide if you need to take action to reduce it.

When thinking about ventilation for example, you might want to look at reducing how many people use or occupy an area. The more people who use or occupy an area the greater the risk that an infected person is there, increasing possible exposure to aerosol transmission.

Other factors to consider are: how long people spend in an area; how large it is or how many people at any one time will be present; what tasks may take place; are there any features that affect ventilation and what ventilation is there currently.

You should tell your employees about the outcome of any risk assessment. This will help them understand how they can play their part in reducing the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus.





# Got questions?

---

More information about COVID-19 in your area can be found via the web pages below or you can get in touch by email if you have any queries.

## County Durham

ehcp@durham.gov.uk

[www.durham.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.durham.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## Gateshead

business@gateshead.gov.uk

[www.gateshead.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## Newcastle

psr@newcastle.gov.uk

[www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure/public-healthservices/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure/public-healthservices/coronavirus-covid-19)

## North Tyneside

PPcovid@northtyneside.gov.uk

[my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1429/coronavirus-covid-19](http://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1429/coronavirus-covid-19)

## Northumberland

public.protection@northumberland.gov.uk

[www.northumberland.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## South Tyneside

Environmental.healthmailbox@southtyneside.gov.uk

[www.southtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.southtyneside.gov.uk)

## Sunderland

covid.questions@sunderland.gov.uk

[www.sunderland.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/coronavirus)

# Thank you

---

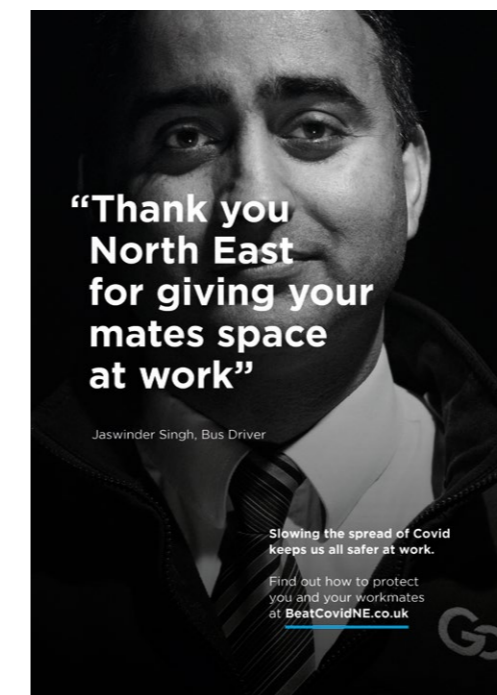
Thank you for all you are doing to keep your employees and customers safe.

Please let us know how you are getting on with these additional measures. If there is anything you need support with, or any further information you would like to see in this pack, please get in touch.

## Beat COVID-19 campaign

This campaign has been developed with seven local authorities in the North East to encourage people to follow the rules in the fight against COVID-19. The key message is one of thanks to the people of the North East for following the rules. You can find Beat COVID-19 resources such as posters and social media posts which you can use in your workplace here:

<https://www.beatcovidne.co.uk/campaign-materials/workplace-assets/>



This pack is produced through a collaboration of local council partners across the North East. The information in this pack is correct at the date of issue, 12th April 2021.

12th April 2021

