



COVID-19 Reopening Resources and Guidance 2021

APRIL 2021

About the ActSmart COVID-19 Reopening Resources and Guidance Document

After many retail businesses were told at the beginning of the third lockdown to once again close their doors and move online where possible, there is no question that the lockdown will change the way that consumers shop in the long-term.

Research suggest that customers now place a higher value on customer service than they did before COVID-19, but that they still may feel uncomfortable physically visiting many shops for a long-time as of yet. While we have seen a great shift towards online shopping over the last few months, it is now time to start planning for customers walking through high-street doors once again from 12th April.

The following guidance is for shops that are now reopening after previously closing. The aim of the document is to enable retailers to operate efficiently while implementing social distancing and other safety measures with various advice and resources.

The safety and wellbeing of every member of staff and customers is ActSmart's number one priority, and therefore it is important that virus control restrictions continue to limit transmission. Any recommendations or changes to normal practice should be communicated to your insurance provider. ActSmart is not liable for the guidance presented in this document.

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1 Resources

To help independent businesses IRC member Indie Retail teamed up with The Behaviours Agency to create a selection of Covid-19 Behavioural-led retail posters specifically designed to adhere to Government and BRC guidelines.

Intended to help keep customers and employees safe and well in a retail environment, they inform them of:

- the steps being taken to meet the Government's guidance
- the expectations of customers and employees to ensure the Government's guidance is met.

These posters were designed with behavioural science in mind, with bright colours and clear messages to grab the attention of your customers and ensure the guidance is memorable.

Information on where to place these posters and why they are necessary is explained in section 2 of the document.

[Social distancing poster- Think Distance Think Cow- Download here](#)

[Shop alone poster- Think Shop Alone- Download here](#)

[Clean shop poster- Thinking of You- Download here](#)

[Hand sanitiser poster- Think Clean- Download here](#)

[Contactless payment poster- Think Contactless- Download here](#)

[Thank You For Thinking- Download here](#)

2 Getting back up and running safely after business closure

It is critical to point out that outside of the non-exhaustive recommendations below, it is the responsibility of each business to decide the most appropriate methods to implement social distancing and other COVID-19 control measures in their business. The business leader must maintain an open dialogue with colleagues to reassure and discuss any concerns with the safety of their role. **First and foremost please consider your own safety and the safety of your staff before choosing to reopen.**

The government has issued [guidance](#) to help businesses in the UK to get back up and running and workplaces operating as safely as possible. The guidance is broken down according to type of workplace rather than sector, with specific guidance relevant to retailers being summarised alongside the ActSmart issued guidance below. The full Government guidance on working safely during COVID-19 in shops and branches can be found [here](#).

Thinking about risk

All employers should carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment. You could use the [Health and Safety Executive Shop Risk Assessment Tool](#), as well as the re-occupancy check list included in section 4 of this document. We recommend sharing the results of your risk assessment with employees.

Employees

Who should go to work?

- All employees should work from home, wherever possible.
- [Clinically vulnerable employees](#) who cannot work from home should be offered the safest possible on-site roles, if the level of risk is acceptable. [Clinically extremely vulnerable employees](#) must remain at home.
- Consider the impact of protected characteristics on level of risk for employees, making [reasonable adjustments](#) where necessary so all employees are treated equally.

Workforce Management

- Create distinct groups of workers to minimise the number of contacts each colleague has.
- Minimise person-to-person contact during deliveries and minimise contact during exchange of documentation.
- Clearly communicate changes in workplace policies and procedures, avoiding face-to-face interactions where possible.

It may be an idea to adapt the way your business operates to reduce contact with customers further, while still providing essential services. This could be done by continuing business with reduced in-store staff by:

- Managing the retail side of your business online, with customers buying through your website and collecting in store.
- Managing the workshop side of your business on an appointment only basis.

Inform employees that they must continue to follow NHS guidelines.

The guidelines found [here](#) need to be followed, including but not limited to washing hands regularly and covering a cough or a sneeze with a tissue (and disposing of the tissue immediately) or your sleeve.

Social distancing at work

A distance of 2m should be kept between all staff and customers at all times. ActSmart have provided a poster to enforce social distancing while queueing that retailers can print out to put on display in their stores that can be found in section 1 of this document- 'Think Distance Think Cow'.

The full Government issued social distancing guidelines can be found [here](#).

Outside the store

- Display the 'Think Shop Alone' poster linked in section 1 of this document in the door or window of your shop pre-warning customers of social distancing measures.
- Limit the number of customers in the store at any time. The layout and size of the store will dictate how many customers you will be able to have in store at any one time.
- For small shops which may only be able to accommodate 1 to 2 customers in store a one in one out rule should be implemented. This will likely involve outside queueing.

- See the Government guidance [here](#) on considerations for outside queuing in urban areas and green centres. It can be difficult to have a 'one size fits all' rule so queuing logistics may be decided by local councils or decided among high street shops themselves.
- Consider having separate entrance and exit points if possible. We recognise that for many shops this will not be practical but if it is possible please do so.
- Use 1 staff member to manage queues outside (if available) and to explain the social distancing requirements and control the number of customers entering store at any one time.
- Place clear signage outside of the store explaining the social distancing measures in place that customers should follow.
- Liaise with neighbouring stores/ shopping centre management to ensure that your queuing systems operate effectively and where practical implement shared queuing areas.
- Place markings outside the store to assist correct queue spacing.
- Encourage customers to shop alone wherever possible. Please bear in mind that this is not always possible especially for customers with children, disabilities etc.

Inside the Store

- Provide cleaning options at front of store and on the counter. This could be hand sanitiser, disinfectant wipes or other options. You should then display the 'Think Clean' hand sanitiser poster from section 1 in store informing your customers that they must use it.
- Increase the amount of cleansing of the shop. The retail areas and workshops of your shop, especially all contact points such as doors, handles and surfaces, should be cleaned regularly and after every time they are touched. To reassure customers that you are regularly cleaning the shop you should then display the 'Thinking of You' poster signed by a manager from section 1.
- Use floor markings inside to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas and where queueing is likely (this may not be necessary if only 1 person is allowed in the store at any one time).
- Place clear signage throughout the store reminding customers of the social distancing measures and asking them to follow these rules. POS provided in section 1 of this document.
- Ensure aisles can accommodate 2m social distancing (if this cannot be accommodated you will need to put in place a 1 in and 1 out rule).
- Larger stores should implement one-way systems using floor markings and signage.

- Erect flexi-plastic barriers to protect those working on the tills. Links to where you can purchase these can be found in section 3 of this document.
- Leave non-essential doors open to minimise the number of people who touch them.
- Try and keep to contactless payments where possible. Card contactless payments can be made for transactions up to £30 or £45 depending on your terminal provider. There is no limit on phone payment apps such as Apple Pay or Google Pay. Retailers can print out the 'Think Contactless' poster to put on display in their stores linked in section 1 of this document.
- If you have a customer toilet we suggest these should be shut.
- In-store cafes should continue to be closed unless selling food for consumption off the premises.

Inbound and outbound goods

- Consider whether the frequency of deliveries can be reduced by ordering in larger quantities less often.
- Where possible, have a single colleague load or unload vehicles or using consistent pairs of colleagues where required.
- Try to implement non-contact stock deliveries by encouraging drivers to stay in vehicles during the exchange of goods.
- Schedule deliveries if possible to avoid crowding. If they can be outside of opening hours this is beneficial.
- Deliveries should be via a back door where possible.

3 Sourcing materials for shielding/social distancing

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. Face coverings are referenced in the new guidance [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) and [Staying alert and safe \(social distancing\)](#).

Do not encourage the precautionary use of PPE other than were usually necessary within the business, as it is extremely limited for providing additional protection against COVID-19. Face coverings (not face masks) can be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure for infected individuals, for the benefit and protection of others. If used, face coverings should be washed daily. Please refer to [section 6.1](#) of the '[Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)' for further clarification on the use of face coverings.

The following suppliers can provide various elements of social distancing protection. The list is created for signposting purposes only, ActSmart has not endorsed any of the following companies.

Gloves and masks

- ppesuppliesdirect.com/virus-protection/
- stevenagepackaging.co.uk/

Protective counter screens

- plasticonline.co.uk/protective-counter-screens.html
- socialdistancingkits.co.uk/
- jade-aden-interiors.co.uk/
- rhinocuttingmat.co.uk/products/sneeze-guard-cough-screens/

Sneeze guards and face shields

- vkf-renzel.co.uk/
- rapuk.com/2020/04/rap-repurposes-its-specialist-food-packaging-designs-and-technology-to-make-ppe/
- printing.com/uk/covid-19-essentials?source=F316

- [acrylicprotection.com/](https://www.acrylicprotection.com/)
- [tevenagepackaging.co.uk//](https://www.tevenagepackaging.co.uk/)

Point of sale and informational stickers

- [socialdistancingkits.co.uk/](https://www.socialdistancingkits.co.uk/)
- [displaymode.co.uk/](https://www.displaymode.co.uk/)

4 COVID-19 re-opening an empty building checklist

The following re-occupancy check list was provided by IRC member BIRA for the use of small businesses. Use this template to record important checks of your premises before returning to work after lockdown. Stay alert to government announcements on return to work and complete **before** re-occupation.

Building Re-occupation Checklist				
	Yes	No	N/A	Action Required
Statutory Checks				
Is the five-yearly fixed wiring (electrical installation condition report) within date and rated as satisfactory?				
Is the gas safety certificate(s) in date for annual review?				
Plant rooms: Has all plant and equipment been suitably serviced?				
Has PAT testing been completed where relevant?				
Have all pressure vessels been examined as per the scheme of examination?				
Fire Safety				
Have you reviewed your Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)?				
Are boiler rooms and electrical cupboards free from combustible storage?				
Are skips and bins a safe distance away from your building(s)?				
Have you informed your Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) of your re-occupation (where necessary)?				
Has the fire alarm system been serviced within the timescale outlined by the contractor?				
Has the fire alarm been tested weekly during the lockdown period?				
Is the fire alarm functioning correctly?				
Have all fire doors, maglocks, acoustic closing mechanisms and other associated equipment been checked for functionality?				
Are all fire extinguishers in place and free from defects?				
Have all fire suppression / sprinkler systems been suitably maintained and checked for sufficient pressure (where appropriate)?				
Have fire dampers been maintained (within the last 12 months)?				
Have the automatic smoke vents been maintained (within the last 12 months)?				
Has the lightning protection been tested and maintained (within the last twelve months)?				
Emergency Lighting				

Has the emergency lighting system been serviced (within the last 12 months)?				
Has the emergency lighting been tested monthly during the lockdown period?				
Is the emergency lighting system fully functional?				
Building Security				
Is there any damage to the structure, roof, windows or fixtures?				
Is the CCTV system functioning correctly?				
Is the intruder alarm functioning correctly?				
Contractors				
Have contractors been re-engaged (where possible)?				
Can contractors be controlled on site?				
Have measures been put in place to ensure contractors (and other visitors) with identified symptoms are not permitted entry to your premises?				
Water Safety				
Has your Legionella Risk Assessment been reviewed?				
Is there a re-commissioning plan (where necessary)?				
Has weekly flushing of all unused/little-used outlets (including external taps) been completed during lockdown?				
Have temperatures been checked against acceptable ranges?				
	Recorded temperature			
<i>Cold water storage tank (maximum 20°C)</i>				
<i>Hot water storage tank (minimum 60°C)</i>				
<i>Sentinel tap (furthest tap from the boiler – minimum 50°C)</i>				
Have all spray fittings been removed, descaled and replaced?				
Is Thermostatic Mixing Valve (TMV) maintenance up to date?				
Has the system been disinfected/chlorinated (including water tanks) where necessary?				
Utilities				
If any utilities have been temporarily shut off, have these been turned back on?				
Equipment				
Are all first aid kits in place, in date and fully stocked?				
Has the defib(s) been checked for safe operation?				
Has all equipment been switched on and checked for correct function?				
Are all necessary guards in place / undamaged?				
Has equipment been serviced or maintained as necessary by a competent person?				
Have the annual services been completed on all oil / electric boilers?				
Have all six-monthly LOLER checks been completed by a competent person?				

Have all window restrictors been checked to ensure they are in place and safe?				
Staffing				
Have risk assessments and plans been reviewed and agreed with vulnerable persons?				
Has your Lone Working Risk Assessment been reviewed?				
Are there sufficient staff on site to undertake safety-critical roles e.g. first aiders, maintenance, fire wardens?				
Is there sufficient supervision and support of staff?				
Does re-occupation need to be staged to maintain social distancing?				
General				
Has signage been erected informing customers to use contactless payments wherever possible?				
Where reasonably practicable, have suitable Perspex screens been installed at counters?				
Has a pest control contractor visited the premises recently and are suitable controls in place?				
Is any asbestos likely to have been disturbed during lockdown?				
Has the insurance company been informed of the recommencing of activities within the premises?				
Has re-occupation been considered within the Business Continuity Plan?				
Have all touch points within the facility been considered and controlled for both staff and customers in line with the risk assessment?				
Can social distancing measures of at least two metres be observed, where reasonable, at all times? Including both internal and external areas.				
Can social distancing and subsequent queues be safely established in external areas without impeding walkways or presenting further risk?				
Have suitable signs and floor markings been installed to inform and maintain distancing measures of at least 2 metres?				
Can a one way system be implemented with an 'in' and 'out' door?				
Has a COVID-19 Re-occupation Risk Assessment been completed to ensure controls are implemented to protect staff?				
Where public welfare facilities are present, can these be either closed or adequately controlled?				
Have areas where customers may congregate (such as a café) been closed to prevent gatherings?				
Has the risk assessment been communicated to all staff to ensure their awareness of requirements?				
Have all areas to be occupied been deep cleaned?				

Do you have sufficient cleaning staff, stock and processes in place to ensure that your premises remain safe?				
Are there sufficient hand-cleaning facilities made available, such as soap and hot water or hand sanitiser?				
Do trees and boundary walls within your grounds appear visually safe?				
Have you reviewed your last General Risk Assessment (GRA)?				

Action required	By	Priority	Time scale	Completed

5 Let the UK know that you are open

An online map and postcode search facility at weareopen.uk has been set up to highlight shops remaining open during the COVID-19 outbreak.

With many high street shops relying on physical footfall, it has become difficult for many small retailers to get the word out that they are still open and operating in some way. The 'We are open' map provides a much-needed platform for independent retailers to communicate to their customers and the wider general public that need their products and services that they remain open for business.

To keep customers fully informed, the directory allows retailers to clarify the extent of opening whether it be fully open, by appointment only or as an online/delivery only basis.

In addition, business owners can also include offers available specifically for key workers, helping them to communicate that their shop is keen to help those working so hard to help us.

Consumers can simply enter their postcode to see the confirmed open independent retailers in their area. They can also search by sector, business type or by retail-specific filter options to refine their search.

Retailers can confirm their opening status now at: weareopen.uk/register. All UK independent retailers can add a listing onto the site completely free of charge.

6 Workplace COVID-19 testing

Implementation of a workplace testing programme

The Government has produced the following guidance for employers which should be taken into account before testing is implemented:

Guidance, Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing: guidance for employers and third-party healthcare providers

This guidance advises employers to:

- Consider the scope of any testing programme, including who will be tested, frequency of testing, arrangements for individuals who refuse to be tested and how test results will be used.
- Think about how they intend to communicate with staff about the testing programme. Employers are "strongly advised" to consult with staff associations or unions before implementing any policy.
- Be aware of their data protection obligations in processing data and how they will communicate to staff how personal data will be used.

The guidance advises that any individual identified as a contact through such an internal system (as opposed to NHS Test and Trace) will not qualify for SSP but instead should be allowed to work from home if possible. Where that is not possible the guidance advises that individuals may be entitled to full pay unless their employment contract provides otherwise.

Other issues you will need to consider are whether you will operate an internal tracing system to identify those during their employment who may have come into contact with an employee who has tested positive as a result of the testing programme.

If you have any further questions regarding vaccines, masks and testing please contact the ACT as we have access to legal advice in regard to commonly asked questions around these topics and will do our best to help.

Rapid flow Testing

All businesses, regardless of the number of employees, can now access free rapid flow Covid-19 tests, the Government has announced.

As part of the Government's roadmap to cautiously lift restrictions, businesses of all sizes, including those with fewer than 50 employees, can register to order free lateral flow tests for their employees.

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus 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 positive cases can isolate immediately, breaking chains of transmission.

Businesses have until 11:59pm on April 12, 2021, to register for the Government's workplace testing scheme, which will remain free until the end of June.

[Register now](#)

Home Testing

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) recently [announced](#) that home testing for Covid-19 has been expanded to businesses with over 10 employees.

From 6th April, the workplace testing programme will supply home test kits to companies with over 10 employees where it is not possible to set up testing on-site, due to a lack of space or because companies operate across multiple sites.

Home testing kits will be picked up by staff from their employer with clear instructions about how to take the test. Staff will then complete the home test in the normal way, before reporting their results to the NHS using the provided gov.uk address.

Employers with fewer than 10 people are currently being encouraged to access regular testing through the community testing programme, now offered by all local authorities in England. You can locate your closest community testing site [here](#).

The Government has indicated that plans are being worked on to allow staff of small businesses to order tests online to be sent to their home, we are awaiting for further clarity on this.

The Government has also extended business testing registration to **12th April** to access free business testing (this includes home testing and workplace testing). For more information and to register, click [here](#). The current Government free testing offer is until the end of June however, this is subject to being expanded if variables such as transmission rate are still high.

7 Use social media to invite customers back

Indie Retail recently partnered with Maybe*, the Social Media Management Platform.

Having an active social media presence is becoming essential for businesses in today's retail landscape.

An engaged audience on social media can do wonders to get people through your door and increase your sales, the challenge is often how to generate, maintain and increase that engagement.

The Maybe* platform saves you time and money by making it much easier to engage customers on social media so you can improve your business results.

Maybe* has created a 7 step plan that shows you how to use your channels to entice your customers back in-store on April 12th and beyond.

- 1 Engage your audience
- 2 Safety first - reopening messaging
- 3 Tempt me and inspire me
- 4 Collaboration - promote your destination
- 5 Create your Local Rewards
- 7 #ILoveLocal
- 6 Using Facebook ads

[Access the free guide now](#)

8 Further information

The ActSmart COVID-19 Reopening Resources and Guidance document 2021 was created with information relevant as of today's release date, 1st April 2021.

We will continue to provide regular COVID-19 updates, resources and advice that is relevant to IBDs on our website [here](#), as well as any additional news stories [here](#).

If you have any questions about any of the information above or you require any additional information please do not hesitate to [contact us](#) and we will do our best to help you.