Tip Sheet: Recovery Readiness - Workplace Advisory

A "how to" guide to a Safe Return to Work

In preparation for the eventual stabilisation of the Covid-19 pandemic and the easing of the stay at home restrictions, the following tips have been assembled to help advise, support and manage the safe re-opening of your business.

Tip 1: review government guidance to confirm your business status under the measures currently in place (effective from 13 May 2020)

Under the government guidelines, the following "*essential*" retail businesses are authorised to stay open, subject to following stringent social distancing rules:

Food shops including supermarkets and market stalls; pharmacies; petrol stations; home and hardware stores; garages; car rentals; pet shops; corner shops; newsagents; post offices; banks; bicycle shops; off licences; laundrettes and dry cleaners. From 13th May, garden centres may re-open. In addition, food deliveries, takeaways and on-line retail are permitted.

"*Non-essential*" businesses are not currently permitted to open, these include:

Restaurants, bars, cafes, clubs; hair and beauty salons; tattoo and piercing parlours; massage parlours; retailers such as clothing shops; outdoor and indoor markets that do not sell essential goods; auction houses; car showrooms.

There is now new specific guidance, covering 8 workplace settings which are allowed to be open, from outdoor environments and construction sites to factories and takeaways. The 8 workplace guidance documents are available under [Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance](#)

Action:

➤ If your business <u>is</u> permitted to open and you wish to consider a phased or full re-opening, continue reading this fact sheet for further information to guide you through this process.

➤ If your business <u>is not</u> currently permitted to open, please note that Government will continue to review restrictions, as outlines in the Government's Recovery Plan, and certain sectors may be able to reopen subject to conditions. Use the current time to familiarise yourself with the roadmap to re-opening, to enable your business to partially or fully reopen safely at the earliest permitted date.

Tip 2: Review the Roadmap to Recovery

There are several steps a business will need to take before it is ready to reopen safely, complying with strict social distancing guidelines. It is likely that your business will open in stages. To help evaluate these steps in relation to your business, there is a wealth of advice available either online or via our Growth Platform advisers; further detail is provided in Appendix 1.

The steps are summarised below, with further detail provided in the following sections:

1. Prepare your building – your premises and any shared areas

2. Prepare your staff – plan and communicate

3. Review transport accessibility

4. Prepare a Social Distancing Plan for your business operations

5. Review your touch points and access risks – for staff, visitors and customers

6. Communicate with confidence to staff and customers

Step 1: Prepare the Building – your premises and any area controlled by a landlord

You must ensure the building within which you operate is clean, in accordance with government guidelines which can be found here:

Review the following questions, taking into account any common areas that your landlord (if applicable) has responsibility for:

- o Building Access: How will building access for employees, visitors and customers change during the re-population?
- o Building Common Areas: How will common and shared spaces like receptions, lifts, canteens, toilets, bicycle storage areas etc be cleaned and maintained until things return to normal?
- o Cleaning Protocols for Cleaning Staff: Are cleaning staff trained on safety protocols and cleaning methods? Will they wear masks and protective gear while cleaning? Will they change gear between tenant spaces?
- o Cleaning Specifications: If you need additional cleaning services in your premises, how will those be provided?
- o Air Filtration: Will air filters be changed and will filter material be upgraded to higher filtration and efficiency?

Step 2: Prepare your staff

Key to reopening your business is demonstrating to your employees that sufficient steps have been taken to ensure their safety and wellbeing on returning to work. It is critical to build trust and confidence with staff to ensure that they feel safe to return.

Behavioural changes require the workforce to do things differently, such as applying strict clear desk policies to ensure workstations can be cleaned and social distancing respected within the workplace. Behavioural changes will take time to develop, with the help of training and, most importantly, communication prior to and during the re-opening period.

- o Understand the employee base – there may be individuals due to their socio demographic and/or functions within your business that should be prioritised.
- o Review the employee/customer journey within the workplace – to reduce contact and ensure social distancing.
- o Determine occupancy impact – e.g. balancing the extended working from home process and the occupancy constraints of the office, whilst maintaining social distancing;
- o Develop protocols – there are many areas where new protocols need to be developed and others enforced strictly, such as clear desk policy to enable effective cleaning of the workstation. The communication and

messaging of the protocols will need to be clear to reinforce behavioural change, whilst ensuring staff have trust and confidence of their safety.

o Evaluate social distancing options for the specific business, e.g. offices – remove every other desk, stagger work attendance with home working, revised shift patterns.

Step 3: Review Transport Accessibility

The transport planning teams within Liverpool City Region are working on detailed back to work plans to enable safe use of trains and buses, together with increased cycling and walking capacity on the local roads. Car use is discouraged where possible to avoid increased congestion and air pollution.

Further information on services with detailed timetables will be issued shortly. Click [here](#) for information on the Merseytravel website.

Step 4: Prepare a Social Distancing Plan for your business operations

Each business needs to prepare a tailored plan to ensure that staff, customers and visitors can be accommodated safely. There is significant support online to assist with creating the plan and access to advisers if one to one advice is needed.

There is now new specific guidance, covering 8 workplace settings which are allowed to be open, from outdoor environments and construction sites to factories and takeaways. These 8 workplace guidance documents are now available under [Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance](#)

This provides tailored advice for different scenarios, as follows:

1. Construction and other outdoor work
2. Factories, Plants and Warehouses
3. Labs and Research facilities
4. Offices and contact centres
5. Other People's homes
6. Restaurants offering takeaway or delivery
7. Shops and branches
8. Vehicles

Businesses may also wish to review advice provided by trade associations and similar groups on how to work out government guidance in their sector.

Consultancy advice is being provided by various companies, business bodies and via our pro bono business support – see Appendix 1 for full details.

Step 5: Review your access risks for deliveries and customer; reduce Touch Points and Increase Cleaning

To minimise the risk of the Covid-19 virus being spread, it is essential to reduce the potential for employees, visitors and customers to share touch points. This should be ensured through increased cleaning procedures and control of access and touch points.

Areas to review are:

1. Touchless ingress/egress, clean desk policy, food plan (e.g. staff bring own lunches and eat separately) and cleaning common areas.
2. Supply disinfectants near or on each desk or work area, particularly those that are shared.
3. Protocols for safety and health checks, building reception, shipping/receiving goods, lifts, visitor policies and customer engagement.

Examples of modifications may include:

- o Controlling the entry points including deliveries
- o Reconfiguring gathering (e.g. kitchens) and lobby areas for social distancing
- o Implementation of temperature screening
- o Installation of plexiglass screens
- o Clearly communicating building protocols by signage and floor markings

Step 6: Communicate for Confidence

Once Building and Personnel strategy are determined, agree with stakeholders the protocols and processes for re-occupancy and communicate to staff the steps that are being taken, as well as the behavioural changes needed to keep the returning staff safe. Recognise the fear that many will have in returning, communicate transparently and listen/survey regularly. Clearly set employee

expectations with an emphasis on making them feel secure, e.g. HR policies regarding illness, support for caregivers and guest and visitor policies.

Tip 3: Engage with Trade Unions or Health and Safety Executive

If your employees are members of a recognised trade union, consult with the union on your safe return to work plans. Unions can assist with working practice consultations and trained health and safety representatives. The TUC has prepared a report, setting out considerations to be made to ensure a safe transition from lockdown, looking at how to safely return to work outside the home, the enforcement measures needed to protect employees, and how best to protect employees' livelihoods: TUC

If your employees are not members of a recognised trade union, you may consult with your local HSE (Health and Safety Executive) representative. Note that where HSE identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant PHE guidance to control public health risks, e.g. employers not taking appropriate action to socially distance or ensure workers in the shielded category can follow the NHS advice to self-isolate for the period specified, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. These actions include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements with the PHE guidance. More information can be found here

Tip 4: Review Guidance and Procedures

Ensure you review the latest Government guidance for when remaining businesses and premises can safely open as the Covid-19 pandemic response evolves. This will have an impact on how businesses operate, for example, restaurants may open initially with outside seating and table number restrictions, easing to full capacity over a period of several months.

Click here for the latest Government Advice and Guidance

In addition, businesses should implement a feedback loop to ensure that suggested amendments and improvements can be incorporated. Staff should feel empowered to offer suggestions and feedback to allow the business to work optimally and ensure they feel their concerns and ideas are being taken into account.

Appendix 1 – Sources of Advice

Please contact a Growth Platform advisor if you would like direction on what source of advice you are most likely to require.

Office Businesses Consultancy:

Knight Frank:

https://www.knightfrank.co.uk/blog/2020/04/20/covid19-office-reoccupancy-roadmap

Cushman and Wakefield:

https://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/insights/covid-19/recovery-readiness-a-how-to-guide-for-reopening-your-workplace

CBRE:

https://www.cbre.com/covid-19/Reopening-The-Worlds-Workplaces?article=7c4fc873-6d81-48a1-9284-d86c35a1f379&feedid=fab9f8b5-57a6-4d15-b9e2-f5bd185db42e

KPMG:

https://home.kpmg/uk/en/home/insights/2020/04/responding-to-covid-19.html

Other Useful Sources:

Confederation of British Industry https://www.cbi.org.uk/

Professional Liverpool: https://professionaliverpool.com

British Retail Consortium: https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/social-distancing-in-retail-stores-and-warehouses/

Hospitality and Leisure Industry: https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/page/coronavirus

Manufacturing: https://www.makeuk.org/coronavirus