TOURISM SOUTH EAST

RECOVERY TOOL KIT

COVID-19 has and continues to pose a challenge to businesses, both in terms of the impact of lockdown as well as the process of restarting as these restrictions are being eased. None more so than in the tourism sector and this toolkit is designed to highlight the key considerations to help you restart your business.

Contained within this toolkit are links to useful websites and documents which can form a guide to assist you in this process. In addition to these suggestions please also keep up to date with the Government guidelines and review your documentation and your procedures regularly.

Can you open?

At the time of writing not all businesses can reopen and there is the possibility that if the Government's five tests are no longer being met then the lockdown could be reinstated.

Details and explanations of these five tests can be found here:
www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52374513

The list of businesses that can reopen, along with dates, will be published by the Government on their official website. Currently this can be found here contained within the list of businesses that should remain closed:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close

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GETTING READY
identifying and addressing the risks

Prior to reopening or restarting your business you should prepare the relevant risk assessments and work towards implementing the controls required once you are allowed to start trading again. Each of these risk assessments should be tailored specifically to your business and address the requirements of being 'COVID-Secure.' Please be aware that these documents are based on current guidance which is likely to change over time.

The starting point for this risk assessment should be the HSE with their clear guidance on the subject
They also have a good, easy to understand guide

The Government also has an excellent website to assist in the preparation of this risk assessment:
www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

There is a handy subsection to the above which gives detailed guidance for the businesses who operate within the Visitor Economy containing practical considerations to addressing the risks and making changes to business operation: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/the-visitor-economy

Returning to the HSE, they have examples of risk assessments and a handy template to make the process easier. They stress the importance of making sure that it is suitable for each individual business.
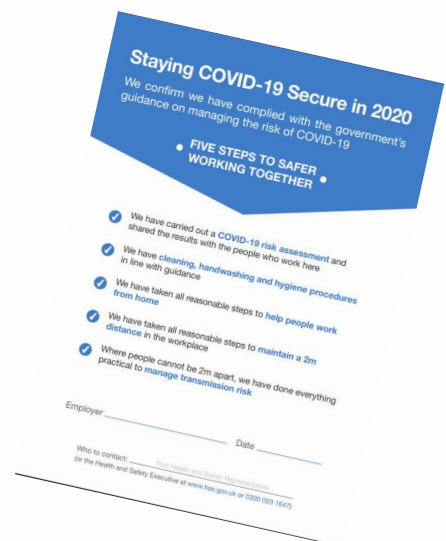
HSENI go further and actually produce a COVID-19 example Workplace Risk Assessment which clearly sets out a number of the more generic risks which will be encountered.

It is of paramount importance that the whole of your workforce is able to buy in to the risk assessment. They should be consulted during the process and be empowered to offer suggestions at this point as well as when your business reopens. It may be prudent to have an action plan to identify issues and how to address them.

The HSE again provides the starting point with this document: Talking with your workers

From a practical point of view the key areas to address can be found within the Government's 5 Steps to Working Safely document. Once you have written your risk assessment then these will help shape your method statement.

Once you have completed your risk assessment then the following poster should be printed, completed and displayed

REOPENING PREMISES

If your business has been physically closed for some time then it may be that some significant work is required before it can be reopened. While this may by physical deep cleaning alongside repairs and maintenance there are a whole host of other areas which should be considered.

Specific service providers
The first consideration should be to assess whether your service suppliers can still meet your requirements and any additional ones caused by COVID-19. While initial thoughts turn to the core utilities such as gas, electricity and water, of equal importance should be the other contractors who ensure that your business can run effectively and safely.

This could include the following:
- Contract cleaners
- Waste removal and pest management
- Logistics
- Agency staff
- Laundry

All aspects of your business operation need to be carefully considered and, where appropriate, your business specific procedures issued to them.

Utilities
It is of paramount importance that the utilities (gas, electricity, water, telephone, internet) used within your business are checked, working and safe to use. Water is especially important and systems should be restarted with the appropriate procedures in place to avoid risks associated with coliforms and legionella. HSE contains useful guidance: on this www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/ Hot water systems will need to be in full working order for cleaning and additional hygiene.

Fire safety and alarms
All emergency systems will need to be checked which should the following:
- Functional test of the fire alarm system.
- Test of the emergency lighting system.
- Visual inspections for fire extinguishers and escape routes and assembly site.
- Operational checks on fire doors and smoke venting systems.

Statutory inspections and restarting plant and equipment
All inspections required under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) and Pressure Systems Safety Regulations (PSSR) have been completed before restarting operations. Ventilation and extraction systems should also be checked to ensure they are in good working order. Equipment should be restarted in line with documented procedures bearing in mind potential failure due to lack of use.

Changes to the working area
Potentially one of the biggest challenges will be the physical reorganisation of the premises or workplace to comply with the Governments 5 Steps to Working Safely document. The HSE has published guidance which helps to identify where changes need to take place: Social Distancing along with their short guide: Working Safely

Specifically, businesses will need to look at the following areas:
- Staff changing facilities
- Handwashing stations and sanitiser
- Layout and 2m social distancing
- Barriers and screens
- Signage and information posters
- Use of equipment
- Health and Safety: First Aid

It may also be prudent to produce and update a site plan especially if there are restrictions or changes to the movements of people, materials, and products within buildings. This could also include tips on safe working practices.

REOPENING FOR STAFF

When you are confident that the preceding checks are in place, and that you are allowed to reopen your business, the next stage to consider is the physical return to the workplace of your staff, other visitors (suppliers, for example) and customers. Depending on the set up and nature of your business this can vary dramatically and should be identified within the risk assessment.

As an employer the duty of care you have for the health, safety and wellbeing of your staff remains unchanged.

The purpose of the risk assessment is to enhance this in response to COVID-19 with the introduction of appropriate controls to protect them from foreseeable hazards. Staff returning to the workplace should therefore be aware of these changes and mindful of the responsibilities they have to themselves and their colleagues.

When bringing staff back they should be consulted on the changes (which may require additional training), along with the processes for additional hygiene requirements, working at a distance and other specific issues.

The guidance from the NHS need to be employed should there be an instance of staff contracting COVID-19 along with the Government's own policy.

Consideration should also be given as to how staff get to the workplace. This guide contains many useful pointers which should be followed, especially if members of staff are required to share a vehicle: Coronavirus Transport and travel guidance

There has been, and continues to be, significant debate about the effectiveness of Personal Protective Equipment specific to the control of COVID-19. Please ensure that you keep up to date with the changes in guidance. Where specific PPE is used for a workplace activity this should, obviously, be continued in line with your existing guidance being mindful that this is its primary purpose rather than as protection against COVID-19.

Control measures for consideration to help you achieve the best possible protection include:

- Hand Hygiene – following guidance on hand washing procedures and the frequency.
- Hand sanitising stations – following guidance on suitable and effective hand sanitizers.
- Cohort working – keeping dedicated teams of people working together in certain areas.
- Maintaining 2 metre distancing or working back to back facing away from each other.
- Shift working – staggering working patterns and arrivals/departures.
- Prompt self-isolation if you experience any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19

If a risk assessment identifies PPE as the only safe way to work then suitable PPE for the tasks, including training on its use, storage, maintenance of the equipment and continued supply should be identified.

Personal Protective Equipment overview
The personal protective equipment overview gives a summary of the government guidance for the use of PPE to protect against COVID-19, outside of health care settings. This is being constantly reviewed. Please keep up to date with the latest guidance.

REOPENING FOR VISITORS & CUSTOMERS/ AUDITING

REOPENING TO VISITORS

Other visitors, in this instance, refers to people who will enter your workplace who do not fall under the categories of staff or customer.

This is most likely to include delivery drivers bringing in supplies, or contractors working on your premises. Suitable signage and/or other documentation will need to be produced to ensure that they are aware of the measures in place for, as an example, accepting deliveries.

REOPENING TO CUSTOMERS

Once more a good starting point is the working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) document with specific reference to the top level considerations for all parts of the visitor economy

This document, in turn, provides links to trade bodies and resources covering most areas of the sector. The alignment of your business to this specific set of guidelines is of paramount importance to address the challenges of reopening during this time.

Smallbusiness.co.uk have a really handy and regularly updated guide to making sure that retail businesses are COVID-Secure: How to re-open your business post lockdown - What we know so far

Helpful tips include limiting customers and working out ways in which the five steps to working safely can apply to both staff and customers.

The official Government documentation can be found by following this link which sets out the key considerations which should be addressed: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches

AUDITING AND KEEPING UP TO DATE

It is vital that once the risk assessments, method statements, and procedures are in place they are adhered to and reviewed as the situation develops and changes. New advice, regulation and guidance is being issued on a daily basis, this should be constantly reviewed for your business and specific setting.

Setting up an internal auditing process to ensure that the basics are in place (Is there still soap and paper towels, for example) and that the plans are still workable is a simple way to check that everything is on track.

We hope this information is of use to you as we work towards the 'new normal' and come to terms with COVID-19.

SECTOR SPECIFIC REPORTS AND UPDATES

When you are confident that the above is in place and that you are allowed to reopen your business. The next stage to consider is the physical return to the workplace of your staff, other visitors (suppliers, for example) and customers. Depending on the set up and nature of your business this can vary dramatically and should be identified within the risk assessment.

Tourism South East
www.tourismsoutheast.com   Latest news
                             Industry Reports and Data
                             Useful Information

Association of Leading Visitor Attractions
www.alva.org.uk

Association of Independent Museums
www.aim-museums.co.uk/coronavirus-resources/

British Holiday and Home Park Association
www.bhhpa.org.uk/covid19hs/

British Marine Federation
https://britishmarine.co.uk/coronavirus

BIAZA Guidelines for Zoos and Aquariums
www.biaza.org.uk/covid-19-guidance-for-zoos-and-aquariums

Coach Tourism Association
www.coachtourismassociation.co.uk/

Confederation of Passenger Transport
www.cpt-uk.org/

Confederation of British Industry
www.cbi.org.uk/coronavirus-hub

Federation of small businesses
www.fsb.org.uk/campaign/covid19.html

The Professional Association for Self-Catering guidelines
www.pascuk.co.uk/covid-19

Federation of small businesses
www.fsb.org.uk/campaign/covid19.html

Tourism Alliance
www.tourismalliance.com/index.cfm

UK Inbound
www.ukinbound.org

UK Hospitality
www.ukhospitality.org.uk/page/coronavirus

Visit Britain
www.visitbritain.org/