

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 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

In this pack you will find information about:

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



Roadmap - Step 3

New rules will apply from 17 May, allowing friends and family to meet indoors for the first time this year.

Step 3 of the government's roadmap out of coronavirus restrictions means that businesses who were unable to offer outdoor hospitality will be opening for the first time. Hospitality businesses can now allow people to eat and drink inside ensuring that they follow the guidelines.

For businesses that are already open, Step 2 advice remains and this additional information can be used alongside it.

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 are allowed to reopen no earlier than 17 May. As per outdoor venues, table service only is allowed. Groups are limited to six people or two households indoors and up to 30 people are now allowed outdoors, as well as at weddings and wakes.

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

Remember to check your local authority website for the latest information about the roadmap for businesses.

Frequently asked questions about **Step 3** of the government's roadmap are answered below:

1. What are the new rules for people sitting indoors?

When sitting indoors, the rule of 6 or two households will apply. There is no limit to the number of people from two households who can sit together. Each household can include a support bubble.

2. Is there still a requirement to order, eat and drink whilst seated?

For premises that serve alcohol, even if alcohol is not being ordered, people will be served at their tables and will still need to order, be served and consume food and drinks whilst seated.

If a venue does not serve alcohol, customers can order and collect food and drink from a counter, but they must consume the food and drink while seated at a table.

3. For outdoor hospitality in Step 3, can people sit in groups of up to 30 together, or is it still tables of six?

People can sit as a group of up to 30. Businesses will need to assess if they can safely accommodate this number of customers to reduce the prospect of groups mixing.

4. Has anything changed with regards to music allowed indoors or outdoors?

Live music performances are now allowed indoors and outdoors. Check updated government guidance for the performing arts for more information.

Take steps to help prevent customers raising their voices, because this can increase transmission risk. Try to discourage people from cheering or singing along. People should also avoid close contact activities such as dancing. Consider asking performers to be supportive of these measures.

5. What else has changed that I need to be aware of?

For those premises that are opening up for the first time since last year, there has been a change in the requirements for NHS Test and Trace. Previously only one member of each party needed to check in, however now every person over 16 needs to check in or leave their contact details.

Remember to do your risk assessment in advance to make sure your venue is COVID safe, including all the measures referred to in this pack such as adequate fresh air, regular cleaning and signage. Implementing these measures for your business will help to minimise risk.

The checklist for businesses in this pack provides a handy reference on what you might need to consider to be COVID safe.

In preparation for Step 4, the government will complete a review of social distancing and other long-term measures such as the rules on one metre plus or the wearing of face coverings, and may change them if it's considered safe to do so.



Roadmap - Step 4

The government moved to Step 4 of the roadmap on 19 July which ended most legal restrictions.

Step
1

Up to six people in two households can meet outdoors. No meeting indoors except for household or support bubble.

Step
2

Hospitality venues reopened. Ordering eating and drinking seated. Maximum 15 at weddings and wakes.

Step
3

Hospitality indoors opened with table service only, both indoors and outdoors. Up to six people, two households indoors and 30 outdoors including at weddings and wakes.

Step
4

- Social distancing not legally required
- Face coverings not legally required
- Nightclubs re-opening
- Limits on numbers in indoor or outdoor venues not legally required
Businesses may choose to limit numbers following a risk assessment.

Additional information about Step 4

Whilst there are no longer legal requirements for the above, it is in your interests to encourage behaviours which keep staff and customers safe.

Testing is still encouraged and isolating is still required if you test positive, are contacted by NHS Test and Trace or advised to do so by the NHS COVID-19 app.

Businesses should be clear about what is expected of staff and customers whilst on their premises. The government has released guidance - found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/restaurants-pubs-bars-nightclubs-and-takeaway-services> - on how to protect staff and customers, including:

- Completing a health and safety risk assessment that includes the risk from COVID-19
- Providing adequate ventilation
- Cleaning more often
- Turning away people with COVID-19 symptoms
- Enabling people to check in at your venue
- Good communication and training
- Encouraging employees to be vaccinated

Frequently asked questions about **Step 4** of the government's roadmap are answered below:

1. Can I ask people to wear a face covering on my premises?

There is no legal requirement for people to wear face coverings, however it is recommended that they are still worn in crowded spaces. You may choose to ask your staff to wear one to help protect themselves and others.

If following a risk assessment you are asking customers to continue to wear face coverings, for example indoors, you need to make sure it is clearly communicated.

2. Are there still social distancing rules?

Whilst the government has removed social distancing rules and there are no limits to the number of people in groups, you may want to monitor this to prevent overcrowding and mitigate transmission of the virus.

3. Even though it's not the law, I still want to protect my staff and customers.

How do I best do that?

Although the law has changed, simple measures such as good ventilation and making sure your space is not overcrowded will still help stop the spread of COVID-19. Putting in these measures can help staff and customers feel safe.

Outbreaks can mean temporary business closure, so minimising risk will protect your business too.

4. Is it still table service or can people order and stand at the bar?

There's no requirement for table service and people can order at the bar and eat or drink standing up. Again, you may want to monitor this, for example to make sure that there is adequate ventilation.

5. Do I have to display a QR code or ask for a COVID Pass?

There is no legal requirement to display a QR code or for you to collect customers' contact details. However, continuing to do so is encouraged as this will support NHS Test and Trace and limit the rates of infection.

NHS COVID Pass

The government is also recommending that high risk settings, such as nightclubs, use the NHS COVID Pass where people are likely to be in close proximity to each other.

From September, the government will undertake a review to assess the country's preparedness for autumn and winter and further changes may be published.

Further information is also expected from the government on the requirement to be vaccinated to attend events.



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 for 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



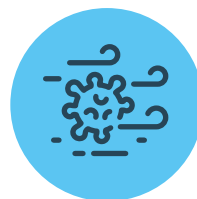
Face

Employees and customers wearing face coverings inside will help limit the spread of the virus



Space

When social distancing is required, markers can be placed inside and outside for queues and customers can be advised of their responsibility to socially distance. You may limit the number of customers and some customers may have to wait for tables. One way walking systems can be used.



Fresh air

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

continues overleaf →



Cleaning

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



Service

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



Limit face-to-face contact

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



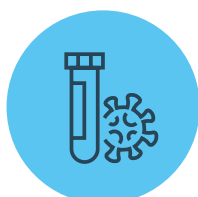
Track and Trace

When required, ensure all customers in a 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



Self-isolate

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



Test employees

Encourage employees to be tested - even if they have no symptoms, as one in three people don't show symptoms

Outbreaks can mean temporary business closures, so minimising risk will protect staff, customers and your business.

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 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

Social distancing guidelines at work

The spread of the virus can be reduced by maintaining social distancing whenever possible. Mitigating actions may include:

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- 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 important for everyone, including hospitality sector employees.

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 may be able to order tests for your employees 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
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More detailed advice can be found on the Health and Safety Executive government website:

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



Fresh air

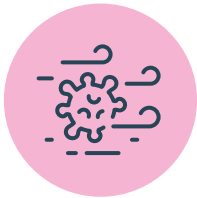
The law says employers must make sure there's an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace. This has not changed during the pandemic.

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:



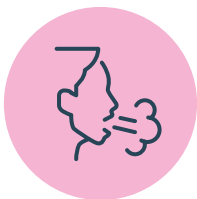
Making sure infected employees (or any visitors with COVID-19 symptoms) do not come into the workplace



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 (CO₂) monitors. Checking CO₂ 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

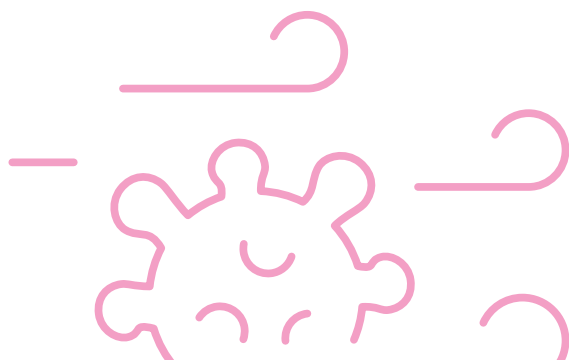
Fire safety in your premises

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.

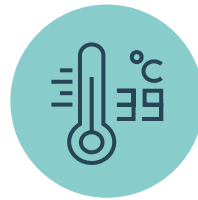
People should self-isolate if:



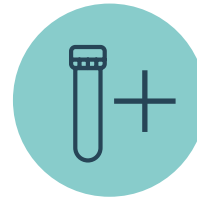
Someone in their household or support bubble, or a close contact, has symptoms



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.

Guidance may ask employees to:

- 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

		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			

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.



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



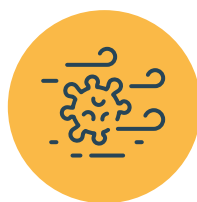
Toilet numbers

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

Premises may require customers to be seated to place an order

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

Gateshead

business@gateshead.gov.uk

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

North Tyneside

PPcovid@northtyneside.gov.uk

my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1429/coronavirus-covid-19

Northumberland

public.protection@northumberland.gov.uk

www.northumberland.gov.uk/coronavirus

South Tyneside

Environmental.healthmailbox@southtyneside.gov.uk

www.southtyneside.gov.uk

Sunderland

covid.questions@sunderland.gov.uk

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, 19th July 2021 (version 3).

