

GUIDE FOR REOPENING OF RESTAURANTS POST COVID-19



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Overview.

Intro

With coronavirus lockdowns starting to lift across the world, restaurants are reopening. Will eating out ever be the same again after COVID-19? There are many safety measures and guidelines that are necessary in reopening restaurants. We've put together a guide with suggested safety measures, resources and checklists to help you open your restaurant effectively post-lockdown.

Overview

- Restaurants are beginning to reopen around the World, but with a very different look and feel to before the coronavirus pandemic.
- Proposed guidelines being introduced include a phased-in reopening that limits capacity to 50% or less of total dine-in seating.
- Other restrictions may include requirements for protective gear to be worn by service staff, social distancing of patrons waiting for a table, disposable menus and table sanitation guidelines.
- Stay up-to-date with current affairs and Government guidelines and regulations should be followed precisely in the reopening of restaurants.
- Effective marketing and communication is important to differentiate yourself from your competitors.



Preparation

For my restaurant to come back from the Covid-19 pandemic, we must:

- Take a proactive approach, making our restaurant stand out as the clear choice over our competition.
- Prepare a plan to change the way we do business which best serves the interest of public health. Public health includes our staff and our guests.
- Identify and execute changes that communicate a safe and sanitary environment so that my restaurant can provide a safe and better guest experience
- Update policies, procedures and systems in each area of our business.
- Give our staff a copy of our action plan to instil confidence in our staff and guests.
- Confident staff will be able to demonstrate assurance needed for our customer to comeback with confidence.
- Effectively communicate our plan to all stakeholders
- THRIVE, not just survive



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Section 1.

Health, Safety and Hygiene

Objective and Purpose

The Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated an industry wide push to radically upgrade traditional health, safety & hygiene standards. New regulatory requirements, some of which are temporary and some that could be permanent, mandate that we change our systems, policies and procedures to new standards.

Make your restaurant feel like a safe spot to experience food & beverage.

For comprehensive details, download HM Government guidelines by clicking on this link:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb96e8e86650c278b077616/working-safely-during-covid-19-restaurants-takeaway-delivery-240520.pdf>

Key Considerations

1. WELLNESS CHECKS – STAFF, GUESTS (TEMPERATURE CHECKS, SYMPTOMS)

- Several symptoms are common with COVID-19. If a member of staff has these symptoms they should be encouraged to stay at home in accordance with the government self-isolating guidelines days. Here are a list of symptoms from the NHS website:
 - high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back.
 - new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
 - loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Identify and protect clinically vulnerable individuals (and those living with them) by offering them the safest available on site roles, enabling them to stay 2m away (or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) from others. If this is not possible, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.
- Provide support for workers around mental health and wellbeing.
- NHS link for updated Coronavirus symptoms: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

2. SOCIAL DISTANCING – STAFF, GUESTS, SUPPLIERS (2M APART, OR 1M WITH RISK MITIGATION WHERE 2M IS NOT VIABLE)

- See Section 4 – Dining Room Management for more information

3. COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT & COMPLIANCE

- Use the checklists in this guide to carry out a thorough risk assessment within your restaurant, before creating new COVID-19 checklists

4. CREATE NEW CHECKLISTS

Create daily operations checklists, including:

- Cleaning of work surfaces and equipment
- Cleaning of dining room
- Sanitation breaks
- Daily employee meetings (as a reminder)
- Ensure inventory of sanitizers and masks

5. PROTECTIVE WEAR

- Generally, every member of staff should wear a facemasks at all times
- Other Personal Protective Equipment includes visors, gloves and disposable aprons.



6. SANITATION PROCEDURES

- Safety and good-habits should be promoted, such as washing hands regularly.
- Set up sanitation 'station' for guests to sanitize before their meal
- Staff should inform guess where the sanitizing stations are located when they are seated
- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection paying particular attention to shared equipment and high traffic and touch areas
- Consider disinfecting tables before seating guests, and clean cutlery should only be brought out once guests have been seated

7. EQUIPMENT

- Consider buying new equipment to ensure compliance with the guidelines and creating a better and safer environment for your guests and staff.
- This includes: Screens, temperature check guns, technology, and supplies
- Source suitable cleaning and disinfection consumables
- Thoroughly clean all equipment and check temperature levels before restarting and restocking
- Check your fridges and freezers are working properly or whether they require maintenance after a period of inaction
- Check probe thermometer is working properly, and probe wipes are available



8. SITE CHECK

- Pre-Opening clean - Determine if you can undertake a thorough clean or if a professional deep clean is needed
- Premises signage - Consider buying appropriate signage to ensure compliance with the guidelines and creating a safer environment for your guests and staff.

9. COVID-19 TRAINING

- Provide necessary training to your staff to ensure they are aware of new guidelines and procedures within your restaurant
- If necessary, change job descriptions accordingly.

NOTES

Required Actions

Use this form to assign projects and tasks needed to meet the objectives of this plan.

ACTION REQUIRED	ASSIGNED TO	DATE ASSIGNED	DATE DUE

Section 2.

Dining Room Management

Objective and Purpose

The phased-in approach for reopening your dining room requires significant adjustments to your dining room layout, hosting and guest welcome process, wait list handling and service procedures in order to earn the trust of your guests.

Take a moment to think about your customer's journey through your premises. It can be surprising just how much they interact with the environment, with other customers, and with your staff. Consider where along that journey, and how, you can help keep your customers safe.

Guests must feel assured that you have gone the extra mile to provide a safe and sanitary environment in which they can dine without fear of being infected by your staff or other guests.

As a restaurateur, your priority is obviously the safety of your team and your guests. But after ensuring a safe environment, you'll need to get proactive – and creative – to stay afloat during the current period of lower dine-in business.



Key Considerations

1. GUEST ARRIVAL

- Parking – Providing additional parking or facilities such as bike racks to help people walk, run, or cycle to work where possible.
- Regulating entry so that the premises do not become overcrowded. Reduce congestion, for example by having more entry points to the workplace. If you have more than one door, consider having one for entering the building and one for exiting.
- Encourage Use of Food Door Openers and Automatic doors where possible
- No hand shakes with guests
- Providing handwashing and hand sanitiser facility on arrival
- Clear social distancing signage - Placing 2m markers on the floor to maintain social distancing inside the premises

2. TABLE SPACING

- Re-arrange furniture to ensure groups of guests are sat 2 metres apart (or 1 metre with risk mitigation, where 2 metres is not viable, is accepted)
- Use appropriate screens where it is not practical to keep furniture 2 metres apart
- Avoid tables near toilets or in passage way
- Review the government advice on social distancing in the workplace in ***Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)***

3. SOCIAL DISTANCING

Plan 'Stations' by marking spots on the ground to ensure appropriate distance in the following places:

- Waiting space
- Cashier stands
- Restrooms
- Service areas

4. MENUS

Consider:

- Single-use disposable menus
- Plastic coated– Cleaned & sticker-sealed after use
- QR & Barcode scan - Option to open by customer on smart device



5. TABLE TURN HYGIENE

- Anti-bacterial spray and wipes after each use and before seating guests
- Wipe chairs

6. TABLE-TOP HYGIENE

- Removal of salt, pepper mills & decorative
- No cutlery, china & glassware on table pre-laid
- No napkins pre-laid, serve with cutlery & china
- Condiments upon request
- Sachet & sauce pots only

7. WAITING AREA OR COLLECTION POINT

- Designated area away from seated guests
- Avoid queues and regulating queues to ensure safe distancing
- Markings on where to queue

8. PUBLIC TOILETS

Consider:

- Signage to avoid over crowding
- Hands free soap dispenser
- Hands free taps
- Auto hand dryer
- Paper towels
- Foot door opener

9. SIGNAGE

Consider:

- Floor markings & graphic
- Cones
- Posters

10. CASHLESS PAYMENTS

- Payments via app on customer phone
- Touch payments on table
- Clean PDQ device



NOTES

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Section 3.

Kitchen Management

Objective and Purpose

While food hygiene is always an important consideration for the hospitality industry, now more than ever, it is crucial to follow strict health and safety protocols across your food and beverage business. Kitchen being heart of the operation that needs utmost focus.

There is no evidence to suggest that Coronavirus can be transmitted from food, or food packaging. Despite this, there are certain extra precautions your business should take, in order to minimise the risk of transmission.

Key Considerations

1. Ingredient and Product checks
 - Check use by dates, and ensure storage has been in-line with manufacturers' instructions
 - Check that you can obtain your usual raw materials, and ensure that any new suppliers are reputable and can meet your requirements
2. Before kitchen staff handle food, they should approach a cleanly prepared workstation & utensils.
3. Allowing kitchen access to as few people as possible
4. Minimising interaction between kitchen staff and other workers, including when on breaks
5. Extra care should be taken by all employees to wash their hands routinely. This is especially essential for all staff that prepare and handle food
6. Putting teams into shifts to restrict the number of workers interacting with each other
7. Spacing workstations 2m apart (or 1m with risk mitigation, where 2m is not viable) as much as possible, recognising the difficulty of moving equipment such as sinks, hobs and ovens. Consider cleanable panels to separate workstations in larger kitchens



8. Providing floor marking to signal distances of 2m apart
9. Using 'one way' traffic flows to minimise contact.
10. Minimising access to walk-in pantries, fridges and freezers, for example, with only one person being able to access these areas at one point in time
11. Minimising contact at 'handover' points with other staff, such as when presenting food to serving staff and delivery drivers
12. Requesting staff change into work uniforms on site using appropriate facilities/changing areas, where social distancing and hygiene guidelines can be met.

NOTES

Required Actions

Use this form to assign projects and tasks needed to meet the objectives of this plan.

ACTION REQUIRED	ASSIGNED TO	DATE ASSIGNED	DATE DUE

Section 4.

Your Guest Experience

Objective and Purpose

The goal of any restaurant is to imprint a positive and lasting experience that makes guests want to return. It is typically the sum total of a variety of elements that leaves guests feeling fulfilled and wanting to repeat the experience. The guest experience is influenced through numerous touchpoints the customer encounters during their visit. We call this the guest journey.

The guest journey differs between dine-in, takeout, curbside service and delivery. For this reason, we need to identify the various touchpoints for each of the services we offer incorporate safe, hygiene practices and ensure the guest experience we deliver in the aftermath of Covid-19 is memorable and encourages them to return.

HOW DO I REASSURE CUSTOMERS?

Your customers are going to be unsure about many things, including where they can sit and how to order. They may even be scared to approach you and ask due to social distancing. Be proactive and greet anyone who's looking a bit lost and talk to them through the new processes in place. This way they know what their experience is going to look like and can just focus on enjoying it.

WHAT IF A CUSTOMER IS DOING SOMETHING WRONG?

We all want to stay safe during this time, and it's easy to get exasperated when somebody doesn't follow the rules. However, if a customer makes a mistake like entering the wrong door or breaking social distancing, it's probably an accident.

Don't reprimand your customer. Instead, politely ask them to follow procedures and be prepared to explain and help them understand why.

CREATING RAPPORT WHEN SOCIAL DISTANCING

It can be difficult to engage with customers when you're standing far apart.

Things like a cheerful tone of voice and open body language can all help to make your guest feel welcome. If you're wearing a mask, 'smiling with your eyes' can make the overall effect less hostile.

PROVIDING A GREAT TIME

Despite how different the experience is going to be, customers are nevertheless going to be desperate to get out and have fun with friends and family.

Even with restrictions and safety procedures in place, it's still possible to give everyone a great time.

RETAIN ATMOSPHERE

Social Distancing may make the place seem a little empty. You may have decided to remove table decorative for hygiene, but be sure to replace this with something else which is easier to manage but makes your restaurant look beautiful. Music and lighting will matter more than ever. Keep them at the right levels and work with your team to keep everyone happy and the atmosphere buzzing.

Key Considerations

1. Parking
2. Menu offerings
3. Supply chain disruption
4. Online ordering
5. Phone calls
6. Delivery touchpoints
7. Curbside pickup touchpoints
 - Service
 - Designated wait spots
 - Payment
8. Dine-in touchpoints
9. Communication
 - Directional signage
 - Sanitation awareness

NOTES

Required Actions

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Section 5.

Marketing Plan

Objective and Purpose

Communicating with our guests has never been more essential than it has during these past few weeks and the weeks and months ahead.

Your marketing plan needs to effectively communicate your brand and your devotion to providing a safe and sanitary environment.



Key Considerations

1. KEEP COMMUNICATING

- Whilst you may be used to your customers coming to your venue excited and at ease, now many of them will be anxious and worried.
- Try to be more conscious of how you communicate, not only to reassure your customers but to make sure they have a great time.

2. CREATE COMPELLING CONTENT

This is a great way to boost your brand and keep your customer attention. Here are some ideas on the type of content you can create for your restaurant:

- Behind the Scenes – People love your food, but they also love you and how you make them feel. Take your audience into your kitchen and dining room with your marketing content.
- Changes in your restaurant – this is extremely important in order to instill confidence with your guests. You may have implemented the above checklists and have the best dining experience amongst your competitors, but your customers must know about it, to help them feel comfortable returning.
- Show your faces and how you're coping – Behind each restaurant, there is a very human story to tell. Whether you're supporting your staff by offering health and wellness classes, or creating memories in your teams in store, don't be afraid share this with your audience.

- Share Recipes and Live Cooking Shows – This can build equity in your brand and an appetite to dine with you later. Don't be afraid to try this as you're not actually giving secrets away, and you'll always be the expert – that's why they love dining with you.
- Use your Smartphone – You don't need a professional team to create great content and imagery!

3. UPDATE INFORMATION ON YOUR WEBSITE & SOCIAL CHANNELS

- Your customers will want to know how you're dealing with COVID-19, your new opening times and any menu changes. Make sure this information is easily available.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA

- Connect with regular customers & Reach a new customers across various social media platforms
- Try something new – now may be the time to try new social media channels (like TikTok) and features like live streaming on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube
- Type of content – social media today is very much about creating engaging video and photo content – don't be afraid to try it out.
- Find Partnerships and Influencers – There are many type of external relationships that could help your restaurant brand, from partnering with charitable initiatives, to food bloggers and more.



5. WEBSITE

- Online orders
- Menu
- Takeout, Delivery and Curbside offerings

6. CUSTOMER DATABASE

- Utilise your customer database to update them on what changes you've incorporated into your restaurant, and when you're opening. It's usually easier getting your core customers back into your restaurant.

7. PERSONAL INTERACTIONS

- Ensure your waiters and drivers are adhering to social distancing guidelines and all time and communicating your brand effectively with customers.

8. ONLINE ORDERING

Here are some of the benefits of offering a seamless Website & Mobile Phone Ordering platform:

- Convenient and preferred method for customers to order from you
- Reduce your operating costs
- Stay ahead of your competition
- Better Control
- Loyalty Schemes to encourage repeat custom
- Collect Data for Marketing
- Better Reporting

Required Actions

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ACTION REQUIRED	ASSIGNED TO	DATE ASSIGNED	DATE DUE

Section 6.

Financial Forecast

Objective and Purpose

The phased-in approach to restoring dining rooms to full capacity almost certainly means that takeout and delivery will remain a significant part of your sales mix. For this reason, you must modify your financial projections to determine if you can be profitable with reduced dining and make adjustments to your budgets.

Key Considerations

1. Sales Mix (Dine-in, Takeout, Delivery)
2. Menu costing
3. Sales forecasting
4. Staff scheduling
5. Break-even
6. Cash flow projections
7. Profit & loss projection
8. Budgeting



NOTES

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Visiting a restaurant, bar or any kind of hospitality venue is going to be unusual for the foreseeable future, and it will take some getting used to.

Your customers sit at the heart of everything you do. Creating a safe and friendly experience and going that little further is really important in keeping your business afloat during this tricky time.

Effective communication through marketing and understanding how these changes affect your finances is crucial in giving your businesses the best possible chance of thriving in the current situation our industry finds itself in.



Need a hand getting your Restaurant ready?.

We'd be happy to work with you to ensure you're compliant, getting returning customers, and maximising your profitability. We take a flexible approach tailored to your individual needs.

Contact Us here for a free, no-obligation discussion on how we can help

Or

Visit our website for more information on our services

www.hospitalityconsultantslondon.com