

Practical advice for retail businesses

Islington is monitoring the situation regarding the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak closely. The following advice has been prepared by our environmental health team to help you implement official Government advice and legal requirements during the staged relaxation of lock down.

Our environmental health duty line is operating by email only at commercial.envh@islington.gov.uk if you have more specific queries.

What can employers and employees do to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Staff and owners should not work if they have any of the symptoms of COVID-19. Infected workers can pass on the virus by coughing, sneezing or simply by touching goods or surfaces with their hands. You may wish to share our return to work checklist with your employees who have been off sick.

You must carry out a risk assessment for your business to protect yourself, your employees and customers from risk of infection. For guidance on how to do this visit [HSE webpages](#).

Steps to reduce spread of infection must include the following, even if symptom free:

- Implement comprehensive social distancing measures.
- Ensure good hand hygiene – it is essential that staff are able to wash their hands thoroughly and frequently.
- Ensure hand washing facilities have running hot and cold water and adequate supply of soap and hand drying facilities.
- Ensure hand washing facilities are disinfected at the start and the end of the day.
- Ensure staff know how to wash their hands properly [How to hand wash \(video\)](#)
- Provide staff with barrier cream and/or hand cream to reduce risk of irritation from frequent washing.
- Encourage good cough/cold hygiene practices – catch sneezes and coughs in disposable tissues and wash hands thoroughly afterwards.
- Implement thorough cleaning procedures including increased cleaning regime for all hand contact surfaces including door handles, entrance doors, credit card readers, light switches etc.

Social distancing measures

Where employees attend work social distancing must be implemented to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This involves maintaining a distance of 2 metres (6.5 feet) between people and reduced social interactions.

To implement social distancing for both staff and customers all types of businesses or premises must:

- Limit the number of people who can come into your premises at any one time. You will need to make an assessment based on the size and type of your business, but customers must be more than 2m apart and 2m from all staff. If your entire store is not visible from the entrance you must have a member of staff advising waiting customers when they can enter without breaching your maximum customer levels
- You should consider:
 - Staggering staff start and finish times to avoid rush hour
 - Staggering your opening times with other businesses around you to avoid obstructing the pavements with queues
 - Setting aside some of your opening hours for vulnerable residents to use your business.

- You **must** implement control measures for queueing outside your premises
 - Tape or paint marks on floor 2 m apart
 - Put up signage asking people to keep 2 m apart ([see our 'Help us keep our shops safe' poster](#))
 - Consider which side of your premises you want your external queue to form-you may need to consult with neighbouring businesses to get this right.
- You should implement a one way system inside the premises, whenever possible. This should be for both customers and employees to follow and include deliveries. This is particularly useful if your aisles are less than 2m wide.
- If your aisles are less than 2m wide you will need to close or partially close aisles to stack shelves
- If you have more than one entrance you should reserve one as an entrance and another as an exit.
- Hand sanitisers should be provided by businesses where possible, at entrances for customers and throughout business for staff.
- Wipes should be provided for customers to clean the handles of shopping trolleys and baskets.
- Touch points e.g. trolleys, keypads, door handles etc., should be cleaned frequently with an appropriate disinfectant.
- Keep doors open where possible to minimise contact.
- Where possible you should use spacing measures e.g. Tape strips, tape crosses, tape squares, stickers or footprints as floor markers at tills or queues and in areas of high footfall to indicate to customers how far 2m is. A visual reminder is a very good prompt.
- Use a ticketing system where appropriate.
- Install Perspex screens between self-service tills or between staff on tills and customers. Operate with every other till open so as to allow more space.
- Where possible use contactless rather than cash. If workers must handle money, it is important to wash hands afterwards. You should also have a quarantine system for cash for a minimum of 3 days before banking.
- Put clear signage near your door explaining your business's own control measures and if applicable throughout your premises to remind customers of your one way system and other safety precautions
- You may consider tannoy announcements to remind customers and staff of your control measures.
- You should appoint a member or members of staff to be responsible for ensuring members of staff and members of the public follow your control measures. These staff should receive appropriate training and you must identify measures you expect them to take if people flout your rules.

You may wish to use our simple [business opening checklist](#) to make sure you have considered all of these areas for your business.

Business owners have a duty to manage the risk associated with Covid19 for both employees and customers. Failure to do so may result in enforcement action being taken under the HSWA.

For detailed up to date information visit:

- [Guidance for retail employers and businesses](#)
- [Guidance for businesses with attached office space](#)
- [Guidance for businesses with attached warehouse space](#)
- [Guidance for businesses offering takeaway or delivery](#)

- [National council for voluntary organisations has some good advice for its members see](#)
- [PHE has some good posters you can download](#)